ARTMAKING IN TWO VANCOUVER HIGH SCHOOLS 1920 TO 1950

by

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This dissertation examines the art learning that students were exposed to within the diverse school cultures at Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School (Kits) and Vancouver Technical School (Van Tech) from 1920 to 1950 in Vancouver, Canada. These cultures shaped the opportunities for various forms of art learning. From 1920 to 1950 Kits was a coed, middle-class junior/senior high school aiming to produce well-rounded citizens prepared to take their place in society or to take further education before starting their career. From 1921 to 1940 Van Tech was an all-boys, primarily working-class high school with a vocational orientation that prepared students to enter a trade; girls taking practical training were included in the school in September of 1940. I suggest that issues of gender, class and, to a lesser extent, race shaped the diverse cultures in these two schools and the art learning opportunities the schools provided. Kits offered art courses with the expectation that art would give students a productive avocation, enrich their cultural life, and add to the general refinement of society. At Van Tech, aspects of art learning were embedded in most of their technical courses. Art-related skills were to be utilized in students' future employment in the trades. The different intentions of these two schools affected students' art learning as well as the kinds of art they produced.

This study is based primarily on interviews with former students in the schools at the time. It also incorporates an analysis of the text and images in the yearbooks and extant artwork of former Kits and Van Tech students. It describes their art learning experiences alongside those prescribed in British Columbia’s art-related textbooks and curriculum documents and in consideration of the pre-service training available to their art teachers through the city’s art school. Art media and skills and subject matter in the students' artwork are considered in light of those set out in the official BC art textbooks. Subjects there were largely limited to simple objects from nature and around the home, historical subjects and idealized landscapes, as well as conventionalized, space-filling decorations. The study shows the extent to which concepts of class, gender, and race were embodied in the subject matter of Kits and Van Tech student artwork, especially that appearing in the school yearbooks. Images show that Kits students looked to their environment primarily to document their adolescent life while Van Tech students depicted people and events from the larger world as well as revealing the increasing industrial concerns of Vancouver as an emerging city. In this way the study shows the extent to which subject matter as well as skills and media were at least in part determined by the diverse nature of the two schools.
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CHAPTER ONE—Introduction

My mother grew up in the Vancouver school system in the 1920s convinced she wasn't artistic because in art classes she couldn't do washes. A wash involved painting a flat area of colour without any visible brushstrokes. Apparently my mother's methodical, newly-certified teacher believed there was no point in attempting other art activities if you hadn't mastered the wash. Indeed, British Columbia's official art textbook at the time supported this view, stating: "The pupil will first master the laying on of flat washes as outlined... before proceeding to the drawing exercises." The B.C. government-funded Survey of the school system in British Columbia, known as the Putman Weir report, endorsed the art education textbook even while criticizing reliance on a single text to teach a subject and while advocating the philosophy of progressivism. In 1927, in my mother's first year in Kitsilano's newly established junior high school, instituted in response to the Putman Weir report, a dynamic artist-teacher encouraged her particular efforts, valuing an individual's own ideas and approach in art class while disregarding the textbook and one's ability to do a wash. Since my mother's contradictory experiences happened only a couple of years apart, the first in elementary school and the second in junior high, she assumed they related only to the teachers' differing personalities. During research for my master's thesis, I came to see these art class experiences in terms of two different teaching models: Art for Industry and Art as Creative Self Expression; but they can also be seen in other terms including pre-progressive and progressive approaches, and utilitarian and fine art emphases. The Putman Weir report upheld the former approach but also allowed for the latter. Consideration of the impact of this report on the education of my parents initiated

1 The Vancouver School Board's 1924 Annual report of the Vancouver board of school trustees [hereafter referred to as VBST Report] shows that her teacher, Dylora Swencisky, at Lord Tennyson Elementary School, received her certification that year.
4 Referred to then as Kitsilano Junior/Senior High Schools. In this dissertation the schools have been referred to in various ways. Kitsilano High School (prior to 1927), Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School(s) after 1927, and at times Kitsilano High Schools (1940s); familiarly referred to as Kits. Vancouver Technical School is referred to as Van Tech. I am using the term secondary schools to refer to schools including Grades 7 to 12 (in some cases to Grade 13), even though the word was established after the period covered by this study (by the Chant Commission in 1960).
5 Various art education writers have labeled approaches to art teaching according to certain categories which allow for identification of broad trends in art teaching. Later in this chapter I reference the writers and note the seven categories that I posited in D. Wendy Stephenson. (1998). Artmaking materials in the classroom during the Depression era and World War II years as revealed in some art education texts for teachers. Unpublished master's thesis, University of British Columbia Vancouver, Canada.
my interest in studying the history of education in Vancouver schools from the 1920s to 1950, and specifically art education. I feature Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School (Kits), my mother’s school, and Vancouver Technical School (Van Tech).

Research Questions

I wish to explain art learning in these two selected Vancouver public secondary schools, Kits and Van Tech, and the extent to which the practice of art learning changed from 1920 to 1950. Specifically I considered art skills and media and art subject matter at Kits and Van Tech during this time compared with what was recommended by the various official sources. I have aimed to show how formal and informal approaches to art learning were shaped by the particular cultures of the individual schools.

The research questions that this dissertation has attempted to address are as follows:

1. To what extent did the cultures of Kits and Van Tech affect the formal and informal art learning in these schools?
2. In what ways did class, gender, and race play out in the art learning in these schools?
3. To what extent did the skills and art media recommended through formal sources manifest themselves in the in-class instruction and extra-curricular art learning in these schools?
4. To what extent did students’ exploration of subject matter in their artmaking provide evidence of personal life, the character of their school, local art concerns, or the broader interests of society, and how was subject matter different in the two schools?

Historiography

When one thinks of literature on the history of art education in B.C. in the first half of the twentieth century, one automatically thinks of the work of Tony Rogers, as there are so few other major studies to turn to on this subject. His master’s thesis, entitled The beautiful in form and colour: Art education curriculum in British Columbia between the wars examined how art was taught in B.C.’s elementary schools and the two provincial Normal schools from 1923 to 1937, as seen against the official curriculum documents in effect at that time. As an extension to this, Rogers wrote a PhD dissertation entitled W. P. Weston, educator and artist: The development of British ideas in the art curriculum of B.C. public schools. These studies reveal social and economic factors of art education in the province during William P. Weston’s study.

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career (to 1946) and the effect of these issues on art education. He posited that Weston held
the pre-eminent position in art education influencing B.C.'s elementary schools. Rogers
explained how Weston transported British art education practices to B.C., practices that had
been in effect in Britain when he taught there before immigrating to Canada in 1909. Rogers
examined reasons for Weston's significant role due to his teaching of the province's
elementary art teachers during his long tenure as art master at Vancouver's Normal school,
his constant presence as art teacher of teachers at the Victoria summer schools, his influence as
a co-author and sole author of B.C.'s two official, consecutive art education textbooks (1924
and 1933 respectively), as writer of elementary art curriculum guides, and as chair of the art
curriculum committee for art in secondary schools.

Rogers outlined broad forces shaping art education in B.C. society, dominated by
immigrants from Britain who encouraged the importing of British ideas in art education.
Rogers introduced three other major personalities involved in B.C. art education, all of whom
were born and trained in Britain. He acknowledged the separate spheres of influence of
Charles Scott, principal at the art school; John Kyle, director of technical education for the
province and in charge of the Victoria summer schools for teachers; and Spencer P. Judge,
supervisor of drawing for Vancouver. Scott and Judge were co-authors with Weston of the
1924 art text, whereas Weston wrote the 1933 text alone. While these textbooks focused
primarily on art for the elementary grades of B.C., they were utilized in art teaching through
Grade 10.8 Rogers explained that Weston, Scott, and Kyle were also artists in their own right,
and he presented in detail the development of Weston as an artist. In this study, the areas of
influence of Scott, at the art school, and of Kyle, in technical education, indirectly had the
most relevance to the teaching of art in the secondary schools. In acknowledging in his
studies, the paucity of sources on B.C. art education, Rogers included an insightful literature
review of books on general education in B.C. and texts on art education in other parts of
Canada as well as in the United States and Britain.9

Letia Richardson, in a 1987 exhibition catalogue entitled First class: Four graduates
from the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, 1929,10 presented the art and
described the lives of four accomplished women artists from the first graduating class of

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8 These texts may have been used longer in some circumstances due to the lack of any other B.C.
art education textbook serving the secondary grades.
9 As a follow-up to these studies, Rogers reported his findings in 1984, 1985, and 1990 as indicated
in reference listing.
10 Letia Richardson. (1987). First class: Four graduates from the Vancouver School of Decorative
Vancouver's art school. The exhibition re-assessed their art taking into account the art itself and the socio-political context at the time that Lilias Farley, Irene Hoffar Reid, Beatrice Lennie, and Vera Weatherbie were producing the art. Basically the exhibition attempts to understand why these artists of so much promise failed to have work that was critically acclaimed and careers that were publicly acknowledged, despite their diligent efforts to continue to develop their careers. In the process of explaining some of the gender-based social forces and aesthetic shifts that worked against these women in their recognition as artists of note, Richardson provided insight into the time period, 1925 to 1929, when these artists were attending Vancouver's art school. Despite there being no art gallery in the city until 1931, the Vancouver arts scene was charged with much creative energy with artists sharing studios, sketching together, and meeting socially. Richardson explained how the vital character of the art scene in the city was altered by the events and aftermath of the Second World War, including the loss of support systems that had encouraged and supported these women. This was at a time that women after the war were expected to resume the domestic sphere to make way for the men returning from the war. Richardson also explained how these female artists, focusing on representational pieces, resisted the trend that favoured abstract works so that their work seemed out of step with what became mainstream, primarily male, approaches.

This exhibition catalogue gives insight into the early years at the art school when four of the art teachers that I focused on in my study were at the art school, three of them as students, Margaret Lewis, Vito Cianci, Jack Shadbolt, and one as a teacher, J. W. G. (Jock) Macdonald. Knowing about their art school training is valuable because how pre-service art teachers learned is generally reflected in how they taught. Richardson acknowledged Cianci’s presence at the art school in saying that as a capable student he was given the role of organizing a store of art supplies on the premises. In explaining why some students left before graduating, she mentioned that Cianci left as he had a teaching certificate from the Normal school and left on acquiring a job. She also introduced Macdonald (who was later to teach at Van Tech) as an instructor from England who was hired to teach design and crafts. She explained that he and Frederick H. Varley, a member of the Group of Seven hired at the same time to teach drawing and painting, along with students created an arts-focused social scene around themselves. In describing the post graduate studies that these four student artists undertook, Richardson noted that with the exception of Lennie

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11 Two other exhibition catalogues documenting the history of the art schools are the Vancouver School of Art: The early years, 1925-1939, and Vancouver School of Art: The growth years, 1939-1965, produced in 1980 and 1983 respectively by the Emily Carr College of Art and Design.
12 From its opening in September 1925 until 1933, the art school was called The Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, subsequently called the Vancouver School of Art until 1978 when the
studying at the California School of Fine Arts, the others remained for a fifth year “to develop their work further under two of the best art instructors in Canada.” In this comment she is referring to Varley and Macdonald. Macdonald’s excellence as an art teacher seemed to get lost in considering Macdonald as a high school art teacher at Van Tech.

Richardson described the social activities in which students and staff participated in a milieu without hierarchical conventions so that students, instructors, and art connoisseurs socialized together. She considered gender, and to a lesser extent class, along with aesthetic, political, and social forces that shaped the art scene in Vancouver at the time.

Donald Soucy’s PhD dissertation, Training for art-related employment: Community support for Halifax’s Art School, 1887–1943, while not addressing art education in B.C., was useful to consider as it examines the varying purposes of art education that the Halifax art school was trying to serve over time according to its changing external supporters. Soucy summarized that the most common goal for art at the school was art training for employable skills; there was a commitment to train artist-workers. He explained that the varying purposes of the Halifax art school were similar to that of the art schools throughout North America that had late-19th century origins. Many of these had shared goals that included improving the graphic skills of industrial designers, providing instruction in the fine and decorative arts, and the training of teachers for public and private schools. The Halifax art school also aimed to elevate the public’s taste and appreciation of design. Soucy described the art school’s two 19th century philosophical roots. The first was utilitarian art training to serve industrial needs as advocated by Henry Cole, head of the British art training system. The “South Kensington System” was brought to North America by several graduates, most notably Walter Smith in 1871. It became associated with training aimed to provide mechanical and industrial careers for men and with improved products for commerce.

The other root was romantic idealism concerned with aesthetic education and the role of imagination and genius in art and art as a cultural study to refine morals and elevate taste and as having close ties between art, nature, and spiritual experience. This was advocated by John Ruskin. Soucy showed how in aiming to enhance an individual’s aesthetic sensibility, William Morris, as leader of the Arts and Crafts movement, transformed Ruskin’s ideas in his name changed to the Emily Carr College of Art and Design. Today it is called the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.
interest in organizing production so that one’s labour could become a pleasure to the worker.\textsuperscript{13}

Soucy also explained the changing meaning of the word “art” over the first half century of the Halifax art school’s existence showing how, in different contexts, it included fine art, applied art, commercial art, industrial art, craft, and design. He also described in detail the activities of art learning that went on in the various classes and explained some gender and class implications in providing various kinds of art training. This included educating some young people to work in the trades while steering them away “from the overcrowded professions.”\textsuperscript{14}

Many of these considerations were useful and relevant to me in examining the different types of art learning that were offered in the two schools that are the subject of my study.

In \textit{Framing the past: Essays on art education},\textsuperscript{15} a collection Soucy edited with Mary Ann Stankiewicz, he examined dichotomies in approaches to art education. The dichotomies are summed up in a graphic that originally appeared in William Whitford’s 1929 text\textsuperscript{16} as he attempted to visually represent the shift in early 20th century art education history as a pendulum that swung from a fine arts orientation to an industrial arts approach. Aspects of this shift are reflected in many of the articles in the collection. The opening chapter on art education historiography by Soucy, entitled “A History of Art Education Histories,” was particularly valuable as it provides references by country of author and also by subject, such that there is a substantial list (almost three pages) of studies by Canadian authors and on Canadian subjects. None of these other chapters, other than those by Richardson and Rogers relating to the above, is about art education in B.C.

Some information provided in unpublished manuscripts has been helpful. One such study, by Margaret Morris, \textit{The roots of art education in British Columbia: A general history},\textsuperscript{17} featuring primarily art education in Vancouver, provided some basic information and an overview of dates and locations of some major art educators during the time period covered in my study. While the writing is largely anecdotal, the write-ups on the interviews provided some insight into the experience of the Vancouver art teachers who were close to the end of


\textsuperscript{14} Soucy. \textit{Training for art-related employment}, (p. 199).


\textsuperscript{17} Margaret Morris. (1978). \textit{The roots of art education in British Columbia: A general history}. [Unpublished manuscript produced for a UBC graduate course, Arte 541, with Dr. Graeme Chalmers, in art education]. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.
their active careers and most of whom are no longer alive. A large chart shows the location of some of the main Vancouver art educators at any given date from 1900 to 1980.\textsuperscript{18}

G. S. Hodder also provided some useful information in an unpublished manuscript entitled \textit{Art in the public schools of British Columbia: 1875-1960}.\textsuperscript{19} Without attempting to provide an analytical framework in what he referred to as a preliminary study, Hodder reviewed the annual public school reports of the province and other official sources as related to art in the school curriculum to suggest an overview of the history of art education in the province. He drew on the reports of superintendents, inspectors, principals and directors of the various provincial institutions. One of his observations was that art in B.C. schools during that 85-year period had primarily a technical or vocational emphasis. Curricular change in art has been infrequent and gradual. Hodder stated that an analysis of high school and teachers' examinations in drawing could reveal the content of art as a school subject and the nature of teaching methods as taught at the Normal school. He suggested that the country in which art teachers received their training should be considered in order to understand the sources of external influence in art education. Hodder's study concluded:

During the most critical period of growth, 1907-1938, the art curriculum was influenced by one man, John Kyle, whose long career in the B.C. education system involved him in art supervision, Normal School Summer School teaching and administration, correspondence education and industrial education, including being responsible for the Vancouver School of Art.\textsuperscript{20}

In keeping with this belief in the importance of John Kyle in the art education of the province, Hodder subsequently wrote on John Kyle to accompany an exhibition at the Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery at the University of Victoria.\textsuperscript{21}

Some other sources, not about art education, were useful to me and relevant to understanding some forces affecting education in B.C. in the first half of the 20th century. One was Timothy Dunn's \textit{Work, class and education: Vocationalism in British Columbia}.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{18} This is despite some lack of visual clarity. For instance Morris' chart suggests J. W. G. Macdonald was teaching at the art school to 1944 when in fact he left there in 1933 to start, with Varley, the B.C. College of Art and subsequently joined the staff of Van Tech in September 1939 where he stayed until June of 1946. Also, the text places Jack Shadbolt at the art school from 1938 to 1966, not recognizing that he taught at the art school only one year before going overseas during the war and, after administering the Canadian war artists program in 1944, returned to the art school after the war ended (confirmed in the information panels at the Vancouver Art Gallery art exhibition “Canvases of War,” shown in the summer of 2004).


\textsuperscript{20} Hodder. \textit{Art in the public schools} (p. 59).


that provided information on the concept of vocationalism from 1920 to 1929 and its ramifications and insight into the educational, economic, and social trends in the province. He examined the extent to which vocationalism was as concerned about a “search for order” to preserve societal relationships and stability as to provide vocational instruction. He considered the role of vocationalism in terms of the orientation of mass public education to prepare youth for “socially efficient citizenship” mainly through industrial occupations that maintained the existing class stratification. Dunn suggested that teaching marketable work skills was secondary to producing compliant workers with responsible attitudes, accepting of one’s place in the social order. Similarly Jean Mann’s master’s thesis, Progressive education and the Depression in British Columbia, provided useful background on the political and social situation in B.C. during the Depression while it examined aspects of progressivism as played out in B.C. schools in this time period.

Harold Pearse, as editor of a text compiling a variety of chapters on the history of art education in Canada, currently in press, is attempting to address the shortage of existing information on art education in Canada. Hopefully this forthcoming book will provide much needed information as well as inspire more academics and graduate students in history and art education to produce additional historical studies on Canadian and B.C. art education.

The Study

My dissertation is a case study of two schools that utilizes oral history interviews along with content analysis of school yearbooks and visual analysis of student art images. Before deciding to focus upon Kits and Van Tech, I read the available yearbooks, and/or histories, student newspapers, or other publications of 10 public high schools in Vancouver. These schools included Britannia, John Oliver, King Edward, Kitsilano, Lord Byng, Magee, Point Grey, Prince of Wales, Templeton, and Vancouver Technical. I then interviewed at least one student from each of these Vancouver high schools (except for Prince of Wales), as well as two art supervisors, three art teachers teaching just subsequent to my chosen time period, and, for comparison purposes, one student of the 1920s from Alberta. I subsequently interviewed 14 former students from Kits and seven from Van Tech and I had informal communications with several others from these schools. Unfortunately I did not interview

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25 Most of the yearbooks and school newspapers were in the individual school’s archives; some of them were in the Vancouver City Archives; some I saw through former students; some of the
any teachers from these schools. Jack Shadbolt, who I had hoped to talk to, as he had taught art at Kits from the late-1920s to the late-1930s (some part time and not all years), died at the age of 89 a couple of years before I received my ethical review approval to begin interviewing. Margaret Lewis, who was central to Kits' art program for many years, teaching there from 1929 to 1963, at nearly 100 years old was no longer receiving visitors. In the interest of maximizing the number of interviews, I chose not to undertake follow-up interviews except where clarification was necessary or I needed more time to look at existing artwork.

Rationale for Choice of Featured Schools

Polarity of class, gender and, to a lesser extent, race encouraged my choice of Kits and Van Tech as subjects of this study. Both Kits and Van Tech were unique schools in different ways and thus differed from each other. After 1927 Kits was a co-ed junior and senior high school [Figure 1.1]; in a middleclass neighbourhood that was primarily white; Van Tech was, until 1940, an all-boys school [Figure 1.2]. serving a larger, primarily working-class area, and having an increasingly diverse student population. The location of the schools suggest that Van Tech students came from the poorer east side of the city with students presumably coming from a lower socio-economic class than those attending Kits on the more affluent west side of the city, but such a summary of class is in some ways overly simplified. The closer proximity of Kits to the province's university at the western extremity of the city meant that students there had a greater likelihood to assume that they could choose to attend the university if they qualified. But some students from Van Tech did attend university and many students from Kits went directly into jobs, but class is just one reason that makes the choice of these two schools interesting by comparison. With Van Tech beginning as a boys' school, gender is also useful in comparing the kinds of art learning undertaken within the two schools. The apparently diametrically opposed objectives and cultures of the two schools made the unraveling of the kind of art training students received at the two schools seem intriguing, hence my decision to focus on these two schools. I posit that the focus on the art learning in these two schools may provide greater insight into aspects of art learning in Vancouver than would be possible by giving equal emphasis to the art programmes of more than a dozen secondary schools in the city at that time.

histories of the schools were in the UBC collection with B.C. historical texts, or in UBC Library's Special Collections.
Initial Preconceptions/Misconceptions

In starting to examine the art in Vancouver secondary schools, I was challenged to define the concept of art as I considered it to be undertaken in Vancouver schools. My restricted assumption was that only studio production carried on in an art class according to a prescribed curriculum guide should be considered art for my purposes. I didn’t want to consider even that which was being learned in clubs, despite the fact that several Vancouver secondary schools (including Kits) had clubs focusing on various forms of art integrated into their regular school schedule. In researching Van Tech, however, I found there was evidence of significant art learning taking place in the school several years before there was a design or art course in the curriculum. Thus I realized that art learning was going on in the schools beyond the confines of the art classroom, or art course, and that such art learning needed to be recognized and acknowledged along with that which was being taught according to an official art curriculum document. I also realized the necessity of having an open concept. I couldn’t call something art, usually involving aspects of drawing, design, lettering, or painting, when it was happening in an art classroom at Kits and then ignore similar learning when it was occurring in drafting, metalwork, woodworking, tailoring, printing, or applied art courses, or in extra-curricular activities. The validity and value of art learning in such a variety of contexts was confirmed by my interviews with former high school students. For this reason, I broadened my definition of art learning; it is now inclusive and ignores the boundaries of subject area, classroom, and designations of in-school or after-school activities.

Relevant Definitions of Skills and Media

The following terms defining skills and media are based on the main way that these terms seem to have been used in the high schools at the time of my study. Different sources have different definitions especially in determining the boundaries between each of these skills or subject areas. For instance the popular and accessible American text, Applied art by Pedro de Lemos, included almost all of the following designations in his text indicating that the author considered them applied art. Indeed aspects of the following can be utilized in applied art, but the terms I used try to distinguish these activities further to be able to discuss them more fully.

Fine art and art as terms are used broadly here to refer any form of visual language or graphic representation to be appreciated for its own sake, for purely aesthetic value rather than to

26 The British Columbia Department of Education curriculum documents were titled Courses of study until the 1928/29 year; subsequently they were called Programme of studies.
serve some useful function, not for the enhancement of some utilitarian object to make it more special.

**Drawing** refers to making a picture or plan on a surface using pencil, pen, charcoal, conté, pastels, or other implement, generally not including a brush. Drawing could have a utilitarian purpose or can be done for an aesthetic end only.

**Drafting** refers to making detailed plans or drawings of an object or construction before it is to be made in physical form.

**Design** refers to the process of planning things by a drawing or other graphical representation that shows how something is to be made. Design also refers to patterns or shapes, sometimes repetitive, or the form or structure of something.

**Painting** refers to making an image in paint, generally in colours, with a brush.

**Hand printing** was the duplication of images by hand in limited numbers as opposed to large numbers by commercial press. For Kits and Van Tech during the time of this study this involved primarily silkscreen and linoblock printing.

**Silkscreen printing** here refers to a form of artist-edition print (rather than commercial procedure) done with an image applied to a screen with some areas cut away or otherwise removed. The image was inked by hand directly over the receiving paper, not with a printing press.

**Linoblock printing** involved cutting an image into a piece of linoleum that when inked prints as a relief, whether through a press or just with pressure applied to it. The raised portions of the image printed on the paper. The resulting image printed in reverse of the cut image.

**Applied art** refers to the process by which artistic embellishment is added to a utilitarian object to beautify and ennoble that object. In this way it was a design that was applied rather than being part of the formative process. Often this was two-dimensional design added to a three-dimensional object.

**Craft** refers to a decorative or practical article produced with materials worked together toward an aesthetic goal of making that product a pleasure to use, to feel, and to look at due to its form, shape, colour, texture, etc.

**Lettering** refers to the graphic communication of ideas using the alphabet, including hand lettering in posters and other limited-number pieces.

**Industrial arts** was the branch of education that aimed to develop skills needed by workers in industry and at the time included woodwork, metalwork, printing, and electricity. Electricity is not discussed here as a result of having little art learning involved at Kits and Van Tech.

**Woodworking** refers to the skill or craft of making items out of wood or parts out of wood, whether parts of a building, furniture, or objects that could be primarily utilitarian but could also involve enhancements and decoration, including architectural or historical design ornamentation.
Metalworking refers to the process or technique of making or shaping objects out of metal. While these can be simply utilitarian, the metalwork of concern here has some decorative elements or enhancements.

Printing designated a branch of education that aimed to develop the skills needed by workers in the printing industry. In this context it involves page layout and the choice and setting of type as well as the actual printing.

Photography refers to the art, hobby, or profession of taking photographs and developing and printing them. Photography is primarily discussed as photos that were used in student yearbooks in conjunction with drawing.

Lens of My Critique: Issues of Class, Gender, Race

Education anthropologists George and Louise Spindler stressed the need to put “education in its cultural context and into a framework of relativism” as “it is a universal human tendency to regard the situation in one’s own society as normal.” This I know was true for me as, having lived as an adult in middleclass culture, I couldn’t see school culture clearly until I got away from studying Vancouver’s middleclass, west-side schools. It was in reading Clive Cocking’s collection of interviews with former students of Vancouver’s Britannia High School, the original east-side Vancouver high school, that I began to be aware of diverse assumptions about school culture. Becoming aware of these attitudes helped me see aspects of school culture in looking at other schools and thus to see them more clearly.

Differences in many of these aspects motivated me to focus on Kits, a west-side Vancouver school, and Van Tech, an east-side Vancouver school. I wanted to see the role of school culture in affecting the kinds of art learning opportunities that existed. The Spindlers also noted in education research the influence of the researcher’s personal cultural knowledge on observation and interpretation of behaviour in situations being studied. This can have either

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30 Assumptions revealed in the Cocking interviews of former Britannia students include the positive role of the family in reinforcing the efforts of teachers on behalf of the student, the level of caring of the teachers for their students, the relationship of school facilities to achievement, the basic philosophy of the school, level of principals’ control, the school’s attitude to diversity, encouragement of leadership development, the school’s attitude toward sports, stressing participation for all rather than focusing on finding and training elite athletes, the importance of sport as compared with the visual and performing arts, the desire to produce a first professional in the family, and feelings of responsibility to make the best of one’s capabilities especially toward creating a more just society. The interviews in the Cocking book all show the pride Britannia students felt for their school, despite being aware of the inequities in the Vancouver school system that positioned them as underdogs for not having a gymnasium (only a basement with a dangerous cement pole in the middle of it) and lacking basic sports equipment, such that at times they had to borrow from other schools between their games so that Britannia teams could participate in inter-city sports. The sense of west-side/east-side inequality prevalent into the 1950s and expectations of leadership motivated some Britannia
positive or negative effects in determining a researcher's level of consciousness and making social relations and hidden assumptions either perceptible or invisible.

For myself, while doing graduate studies, having lost my own basic mobility (if only temporarily at that time), I have a heightened awareness of physical access. In being confronted by the many banks of stairs at or in early Vancouver schools, such as at the original front entrance of Britannia High School. I am aware of such potentially insurmountable barriers or at least the pain of having to try to climb such stairs. Thus I am confronted by the assumptions of able-bodiedness in pre-1950s school architecture that may not automatically strike someone who has never experienced challenged mobility. In terms of class, I grew up unaware of any feelings of class-consciousness by living in a small, isolated-at-the-time community where all residents were in the same situation. Our fathers worked in blue-collar jobs outside the community and our mothers were in the home full time or worked locally in part-time jobs that they hadn't trained for. Nevertheless our local elementary school and the high schools in North Vancouver, to which we were subsequently bused, were characterized by hidden assumptions of middleclass respectability. It wasn't until I arrived at university as a teenager that I became sensitive to the question, "What does your father do?" A few years later, in the late-1960s, I was struck in applying for an editorial job at MacLean Hunter in Toronto in being asked the same question on the application form, but then I could choose the preferable-at-the-time, but still intrusive, question, "What does your husband do?" As a female, white Canadian, I was never so aware of my colour, and country of origin, as in applying for an editorial job in the early 1970s through an all-black placement agency in Washington, D.C. Also in terms of colour, at about that same time, I felt my vulnerability and powerlessness in being the only white person on a filled-to-capacity bus heading for a black suburb on the north side of the Potomac River. A few years later and throughout the 1970s, as a career-oriented, head-of-household single parent, gender inequities were particularly apparent to me in a way that gender unfairness has been heightened for women who have tried to gain equal access to positions in fields routinely dominated by men.

I've mentioned these particular situations to provide some insight into my background experiences of class, gender, and race, as well as physical ability. I have also acquired some understanding of the issues of class, race and gender as they related to the experience of my parents, aunts and uncles in the education system in Vancouver schools during the time period of my study, and my grandparents, all of whom were in Vancouver by 1908 after being educated elsewhere. Some of their experiences revealed to me aspects of the inadequacy of British accomplishment education and theoretical learning as preparation for life in the early

students to subsequently go into politics, most notably Dave Barrett and Robert Bonner (grads of the
Vancouver environment. This insight has helped me understand the context for the introduction of the practical reforms outlined in the Putman Weir report as well as recognize the impact and potential impact on students' lives resulting from the changes made within the Vancouver school system due to the report.

Sources

The primary sources of information that I considered in this study have been high school yearbooks, the interviews of students from these two schools and other educational institutions, and the artwork of Kits and Van Tech students. Besides considering information from the text of the yearbooks of Kits and Van Tech, I also analyzed student art in these two sets of yearbooks along with art appearing in other school publications and in collections of existing student art done during Kits and Van Tech students' high school years. All of the information from these sources I considered in light of the official sources including textbooks, curriculum documents, art exams, and other official sources mandating what art learning should be taking place in the schools at that time. These official sources outlined the kinds of art learning, including the various skills and media, that were intended to be taught, and these documents provide insight into the kind of subject matter suggested as suitable for student art.

As art teachers at Kits and Van Tech from 1920 to 1950 are no longer available to us to tell us about their teaching, this study relied primarily upon interviews with students at the school during that time. It also considered the views of some educators who were in a position to know something of the art teaching at Kits during the time period examined in this study. Relevant views of some students who attended Vancouver's art school, and were aware of the training that pre-service school art specialist teachers were receiving there, also provide some insight. My approach to finding people to interview was to search the schools' yearbooks for names of students involved in art at the school, preferably students having at least one piece of art reproduced in a yearbook. Based on those names, I sent letters to the individuals I could find in the phone book asking them if indeed they were the former student named in the yearbook. This approach meant I was able to track down fairly easily people with distinctive names (Henry Zitko, Peter Snelgrove, Hamish Cameron, Stephen Ursulescu, etc.), while it was more difficult to make contact with those having more common names. In one case, I sent letters to people having the same name at three different addresses. Two kindly phoned me to say they were not the person I was looking for, while the other one admitted he was the right person but politely declined to be interviewed (the only such response). In some cases letters were returned to me unopened marked "person mid-1950s) becoming premier and attorney general respectively.
unknown.” In one case I found an original lead through a Google computer search that allowed me to locate a former student living in Europe. I followed up as usual with a letter of introduction and subsequent written exchange. Again this was possible due to his having a distinctive name, Rolph Blakstad. In response to the questions that I e-mailed and faxed, Blakstad wrote well-thought-out answers sent along with a disk of images of his existing art work from his Kits high school years. As for other people living out of town, after sending my regular letter of permission, I did a telephone interview with them, taping my end of the telephone conversation and making notes or filling in a data sheet (summary of relevant information). One such person provided an audiotape of his end of the conversation as well (Wytenbroek). Current names of former female students who had changed their name were generally given to me by other interviewees or by people who had organized school reunions. Again, I approached these former students by letter asking to interview them and they phoned me agreeing to be interviewed. We made arrangements to meet, usually in their home, or to conduct a telephone interview at a mutually convenient later date. For about a year I had a web page, describing the goal of my research, included on “B.C. Homeroom,” a website devoted to the history of B.C. education created by education historian Patrick Dunae. I made an initial contact with one former student through that source.

I had more leads for interviews than I was able to follow up on as I was initially trying to strike a balance between the 10 schools and covering all time periods from the 1920s to 1950. While I had decided, early on, to focus on Kits as one of my featured schools, it was fairly late in the project when I decided to include Van Tech as the second of two featured schools. If I had decided in the beginning to limit the study to two schools, I would have spent my time interviewing more former students from Kits and Van Tech and not interviewed students from other schools. Nevertheless information on the other schools provided some insight, and I have all the periods covered for the featured schools, though I would have liked to have interviewed more students of non-European descent. Short Chinese names tend to be too numerous in today’s telephone directory to pin point. Elderly former students may also live with other relatives rather than having a telephone listed in their own name so some are difficult to track down. My ethics review expiry date meant I ultimately had to stop and be satisfied with the information from the interviews that I had completed to that time.33

31 All those I interviewed agreed to being named in my research.
33 Some specific student artists who I would have liked to have interviewed: Sing Lim, George Obokata, and Al Bushell at Van Tech in the 1930s, who were accomplished student artists doing much illustrative work for the yearbook (VT) and the lino printer’s manual (VTPM) published by the
I have considerable contact with seniors in my regular life and some seniors who went to Vancouver schools I have known for some time. Also whenever I met seniors with a Vancouver accent I could not help but ask them what schools they went to. So I have talked with more people than those I officially interviewed many of whom provided me with some insight, if not specifics about an art activity then about the school's culture or the time period. People listed as "informal contacts" are people with whom I did not do a taped, transcribed interview but to whom I have attributed at least one piece of information or opinion. I have organized the lists of interviewees that follow by school with the two, featured schools separate from other educational institutions. The dates following a name indicate dates of attendance; some of these are approximations based on discussions with the interviewee in trying to pin point the time they were at the school(s) or the date they graduated. Under the schools, interviewees are listed by date of attendance at the school. An asterisk behind a name indicates that I examined existing art by this person from their personal collection. Dates in parenthesis indicate dates of interviews.

TABLE 1.1—Interviewees from Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School

Dorothy Howard, from 1927–31; also see King Edward (December 5, 1999 and March 11, 2001)
Eva Williamson, grad of 1935 (February 6, 2002)
Russell White, 1933–37 (October 26, 2001)
John Wytenbroek, 1935–41 (February 20, 2002)
Bill Basil, grad of 1940 (March 4, 2003)
Peter Snelgrove, 1939–44 (February 14, 2002)
Joy Coghill, mid-1940s (May 15, 2002)
Rolph Blakstad,* grad of 1947; also see Lord Byng (June, 2003)
Louise Williamson, grad of 1948 (April 29, 2003)
Hamish Cameron,* grad of 1950 (April 23 & May 30, 2002)
Stephen Ursulescu,* grad of 1950 (February 7 & 23, 2002)

Informal communications with people associated with Kits
Lyla Brown, grad of 1949 (April 3, 2002)
James U. Gray, early-1940s; also see King Ed (February 26, 2002)
J. A. S. (Jim) Macdonald, 1949–51; also see Vancouver's art school (February 28, 2002)
Marion McBain, grad of mid- to late-1930s (July 31, 2001)
Ted Charlesworth, grad of 1951 (May 2002)
Allistair Ross, art teacher beginning 1963 (March 10, 2002)

34 In cases where the individual was unsure of the dates, we tried to determine them based on relevant facts, such as whether the war had just begun or just ended, when the family moved into the neighbourhood, etc.
### TABLE 1.2—Interviewees from Vancouver Technical School

- Clarence Falk,* early-1930s (May 14, 2003)
- Malcolm Nelson, grad of mid-1930s (May 28, 2002)
- Bill Wong, grad of late-1930s (September 7, 2002) Note all references to Wong refer to Bill Wong unless specified otherwise.
- Bob Banks,* grad of 1941; also see art school (June 2003)
- Henry Zitko, grad of mid-1940s (May 16, 2003)
- Jim Rimmer, grad of late-1940s (May 18, 2003)
- Margaret Strathern,* grad of late-1940s (June 27, 2003)

### TABLE 1.3—Interviewees from Other Schools

- Britannia
  - Irene Alexander, mid-1930s; also see art school (May 28, 2001)
  - Anna Wong, mid- to late-1940s (August 13, 2002, informal)
- John Oliver
  - Doug Anderson, grad of 1947 (August 31, 2001, informal)
- King Edward
  - Dorothy Howard, senior matric 1933–34; also see Kits
  - James U. Gray, senior matric mid-1940s; also see Kits and art school
- King George
  - Ivor Parry, 1941–44 (January 2002, informal)
- Lord Byng
  - Myrtle Bains, early-1930s (May 2001, informal)
  - Rolph Blakstad, 1941–43; also see Kits
- Magee
  - Ron Turner, grad of early-1940s; also see Point Grey (September 9, 2001)
- Point Grey
  - Ron Turner, late-1930s to early-1940s; also see Magee
- Templeton
  - Anna Wong, mid-1940s; see also Britannia
- Vancouver's art school
  - Irene Alexander, late-1930s to early-1940s; also see Britannia
  - J. A. S. (Jim) Macdonald, student of early-1950s, student teacher of Moira Macdonald 1950; see also Kits
  - James U. Gray, mid-1940s; see also Kits and King Ed
  - Bob Banks, 1946–48; also see Van Tech
- Out of city
  - Bob Steele, began art teaching 1950 at Abbotsford Secondary (November 25, 1999)
  - Dermott McInnes, early–1920s Alberta student (March 5, 2001)
Role of Memory

I decided to interview primarily people who were identified in the yearbooks as being good at art or interested in art in school. I believe that people who loved art as students and were involved in art at school are likely to remember more about art that those who had little interest in art as a subject or activity. People not so inclined toward art generally do not remember much about what they did in art class, and at best remember one or two incidents in a classroom. This was confirmed for me in considering what I remember of my Grade 10 science course, social studies course, and art course. On Grade 10 science and social studies I only remember about two or three incidences that reveal what we were learning in those classes, whereas I remember enough about Grade 10 art classes to construct the basics of the instruction, month to month, on what we were learning and the teacher’s approach. To me this confirms that I can remember because my interest was what went on in art class. It was a course that I found extremely stimulating and rewarding. Grades 10 to 12 are the grades my informants most often talked about. The Putman Weir report supports my belief in this; the authors explained that individuals have not one memory faculty but many, and that people have “good memories for certain things, usually those that appeal to their interests, and a shockingly bad memory for others.”

There is one shortcoming in depending upon the memories of some of the early art enthusiasts and that is that many of them went on to use their art learning in their professional lives or did art on their own throughout their lives as a hobby. Those people who were interested in art may have had other sources of art learning concurrently or subsequently to what they had at high school. They may have been learning from a relative or in Saturday morning art classes at the art gallery or at the art school. This means that some of them cannot be sure what they learned in which learning situation. Did they in fact do scratchboard drawings at Kits for instance or did they do that in another setting at the same time or after? Despite such potential occasional uncertainty, an enjoyment of what these people did in art class has helped them to remember what art learning was about in the school, and often they have participated fully in extra-curricular art-related activities. That is why I have chosen them as informants. Of surviving artwork of former students, Rogers said, “Examples of the children’s art work have largely disappeared. That which remains is more likely to be the exceptional rather than the humdrum.” I believe that the examples of student art that I have included in this dissertation are not humdrum. They appear as a portfolio of images at the end.

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35 For me this is just over 40 years ago, whereas my interviewees were reflecting at least 54 to more than 70 years back.
36 Putman Weir report (p. 40).
To a certain extent the information in this study is weighted on the side of the experiences of exceptional art students rather than average or below-average students, although not entirely. But in having interviewed mainly students who loved art in school and in presenting their artwork, I have indicated the range of what was possible during this time period for students who made the most of the opportunities for art learning that their school provided.

**Yearbooks as a Source**

High school yearbooks are a unique genre. After studying yearbooks of 10 Vancouver schools published prior to 1950, I was struck by the similarities of content and style amongst yearbooks of the various schools while at the same time being so different from other publications. I suspect that commercial printers may have provided schools with guidelines or given them copies of school yearbooks that they had previously printed. Also school yearbook production staff likely used the previous issues of their own school yearbook as a guide. Similarly, certain teachers, often English teachers and art teachers, were likely to have served several years as sponsors of the school yearbook thus providing a certain continuity of style and content for their school’s annual. The school year’s sports activities, individual or graduating-class pictures (graduate personality profiles), literary and dramatic sections routinely appeared in annuals, all prefaced by the principal’s message giving some hints of highlights of the school year. Special paper dividers labeling these various sections often featured hand-produced prints or drawings done by students. These are a valuable source of illustrations, hand lettering, and cartoons by students generally recognized in the school as being among the most capable student artists in the senior grades.  

My use of the high school yearbooks was to reveal some of the art skills that students were learning and the broadening of art subject matter within the schools. The choice of art to feature in yearbooks was limited due to restrictions relating to the publishing process and other factors such as the suggested varied editorial control and apparent purposes of the yearbooks. Also the printing process itself dictated to some extent the range of media that could be in used in the art images. Van Tech has an unbroken publishing record for its yearbook, beginning with the first edition in the spring of 1922, and the Van Tech library has at least one copy of every issue. Thus I was able to have access to this excellent research source; I feel this made up for the fewer interviews conducted with Van Tech students. The Kits yearbook, on the other hand, after putting out its first issue in the 1930-1931 school year missed publishing some years during the 1930s and, due to a paper shortage did not produce an issue.

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37 Rogers. *The beautiful in form and colour* (p. 6).
38 I decided to not include King Ed as a featured school because its early yearbooks were typeset only with no visual matter.
in 1943. For this reason I received less information from the Kits yearbooks than I did those of Van Tech. I made up for this in doing almost twice as many interviews with former students from Kits than from Van Tech.

Kits yearbooks are exemplary among the high school yearbooks that focused on the personalities of the students and documented in words and visuals the most notable events of the school year. The Kits yearbooks received awards, or were in the running, for many years.39 So while the approach of Kits’ yearbooks was typical of other Vancouver high school yearbooks, their standards placed them among the best-produced annuals in the province. The yearbooks documented the main athletic, social, artistic, and literary events of the year while revealing the personalities of the most accomplished students and graduating students. Covers, section dividers, cartoons, and photographs integrated with cartoons are the main art in these publications. Some financially-necessary advertisements contained in the yearbooks were drawn and lettered by the students despite the commercial printing of the publications. In some cases, as with the yearbooks of other schools, individual pages were designed and hand-printed by students and inserted even though the yearbooks were professionally bound.

Van Tech’s yearbooks are visually rich. Seeing the student-produced visual matter appearing within the pages of these publications confirmed my interest in featuring this school in my study. Students’ linoblock prints, cartoons, and hand lettering and, in the late-1940s, pen and ink drawings, enliven the pages. The typesetting and the printing were done in the Van Tech printing department classes. While there was greater student involvement in the actual production of the Van Tech yearbooks, there seems to have been a greater editorial control by the staff than in the production of other school yearbooks. Van Tech’s yearbook seems to have aimed to be a showpiece of the school’s capabilities in producing a professional, student-typeset, and student-printed product. Until 1947, it promoted the city of Vancouver and surrounding area as if aiming to portray a favourable image of the city to an external audience. A full page of each yearbook was given over to listing the names of the technical schools, Canadian and international, with which Van Tech exchanged yearbooks. Clearly, the yearbook editor played to this external audience, almost as much as trying to appeal to Van Tech’s student body. Another advantage is that Van Tech yearbooks regularly reviewed the school’s history in the context of writing about the retirement or death of staff members or anniversaries of the school. These articles and editorials written by long-time staff members provided valuable insight into the philosophy of the school while extolling the virtues of technical education.

Existing Artwork

Other than the multitude of examples of art images appearing in the yearbooks, I have examined the artwork of six former art students of the two schools. While seeing original art is particularly rewarding, some of it has been undated and mixed with the individual's more current work, or the collection includes art the student did outside of school or after the student left the school. Another problem I encountered regarding the original art is having insufficient time to spend with it and being unable to examine it concurrently with the art of another student. Without being able to bring all the art pieces to one location to examine them at the same time, useful comparisons cannot be made readily.\(^{40}\) For this reason the artwork in the yearbooks of the schools was invaluable. I was able to photocopy many of the images in the yearbooks and then compare them in different ways regarding subject matter, media, and the time that they appeared in the yearbook. Many of the art images carried in the yearbooks are originals too, especially the linoprint and silkscreen prints, in that they were printed directly from linoblocks and screens that the students cut. The images were then integrated into the pages of the yearbook when the publication was bound.

Consideration of Art Models

Kits and Van Tech, having come into being as a result of the social responsiveness of Vancouver's education system to perceived community needs, had totally different mandates and different school cultures. The art learning in these two schools supported their different purposes. Several writers have defined such purposes in terms of historical art teaching models, which they have labeled in different ways\(^{41}\). The set of models that I found most inclusive and relevant to art programs from the 1920s to the end of WWII involved seven different approaches. These I initially posited for considering approaches to art as a subject taught in American schools during the Depression era and World War II years.\(^{42}\) The original art models I categorized were Art for Industry, Art for Creative Self Expression, Art for Daily Living, Art for Social Uses, Art for School Art’s Sake, Art for Art’s Sake, and Art for Subject Integration.\(^{43}\)

\(^{40}\) One exception was the Grade 10 sketchbook of Hamish Cameron. It was extremely helpful to have been able to photocopy it in its entirety.


\(^{42}\) Trends in art education since 1950 are thus not included; visual literacy, for instance is not considered here.

\(^{43}\) Art for Industry aimed to train designers to create appealing products in demand as goods; Art for Creative Self Expression provided children with an artistic outlet for emotional and personal
Art as a school subject often has had to transform itself to survive in the curriculum as suggested by the description of these varied art models manifested in the United States as art educators strove to keep some form of art in the schools through the Depression era and World War II years. In Vancouver in the 1920s to 1950s maintaining art and design education in the students' programme didn't seem to be an issue. At Kits during this period, a cultured citizen was sought to elevate public taste, so art was deemed to be an important part of a well-balanced liberal education. At Van Tech during this time, drawing and design were part of students' technical training even before design or art was offered as a separate subject. So in these schools, art as it was practiced there didn't need to be defended.

**Formal and Informal Art Learning**

Art learning in the schools was achieved through both formal and informal art learning. What I am referring to as “formal art learning” is that set of skills and knowledge that was promoted in the officially-prescribed texts and programmes of study and as evident through the provincial art exams. I am also including the skills that pre-service and in-service teachers were taught. Pre-service training includes aspects of art known to have been taught to pre-service art teachers at Vancouver's art school where they attended for specialist art training. Information on what pre-service teachers were learning was outlined in the art school's yearly prospectus and student publications. Courses available at the art school during its first five years of existence (1925-30) were relevant to this study, as four of Kits' and Van Tech's art teachers were studying or teaching at the art school during this time period. By the term “informal art learning” I am referring to art learning that students put to use in the school's extra-curricular activities, including clubs, many of which were supervised by teachers. Painting sets for a school play, making posters to advertise a special event, designing a page layout or doing an illustration for the yearbook, or drawing cartoons on a banner for a dance expression; Art for Daily Living provided design and applied art training in recognition that all people have some need for knowledge of art throughout their lives whether managing the appearance of their clothing, their homes, their businesses, or their communities; Art for Social Uses was instituted so students could learn how to design and create products needed in the then war-torn society needing posters for propaganda, illustrated maps, etc.; Art for School Art's Sake was that leisurely Friday afternoon approach to art where activities involved traditional, undemanding, and largely anonymous school projects undertaken without much thought as to how they might be used in the student's later life; Art for Art's Sake involved trying to parallel the approach in student artmaking to the styles of art that existed in the recognized art world; Art for Subject Integration aimed to create projects to support other school subjects in order to keep some, primarily illustrative, form of art in the curriculum.

44 One student publication produced annually by the art school between 1926 and 1930 was The Paint Box. (1926-1930). Vancouver, B.C.: Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts. A later one was Behind the Palette (1940s). Vancouver, B.C.: Vancouver School of Art.
are typical activities offering opportunities for informal art learning. Such activities involved similar media and similar skills as those learned in an art class.

Outline of Chapters

The following provides a brief summary of the subsequent chapters in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO—Educational, Social, and Artistic Milieu

In recognizing the importance of school culture in shaping formal and informal art learning in a school, I have examined various elements of culture that went into making up the character of Kits and of Van Tech during the time of this study. I have done this in recognition of the educational, social, and artistic milieu of the time.

CHAPTER THREE—Art Learning at Kits

This chapter introduces the art teachers, describes the culture of the school, and describes elements contributing to informal art learning at Kits primarily through the extra-curricular activities. It also describes the aid of specific resources in the school and in the community that aided student art learning. This chapter describes art-related clubs in the school and shows how teachers created certain opportunities for serious art students in contributing to students' artistic development.

CHAPTER FOUR—Art Learning at Van Tech

Like the previous chapter, this one on Van Tech introduces the teachers of art and describes aspects of the culture of the school. It examines elements contributing to informal art learning primarily through the extra-curricular activities that contributed to students' learning of art skills.

CHAPTER FIVE—Art Media and Skills at the Two Schools

This chapter discusses art media and skills at Kits and Van Tech. It provides descriptions of the kinds of art learning evident in Kits and Van Tech including art and fine art, many aspects of drawing, design, painting, hand printing (silkscreen and linoblock printing), applied art, craft, lettering, industrial arts (woodworking, metalworking, drafting, and printing processes), and photography. Where relevant, I point out issues of class, gender, and race embedded in these aspects of formal art learning. I provide reproductions of artwork by students at Kits and Van Tech as specific examples of the kind of art the students were doing to 1950.
CHAPTER SIX—Art Subject Matter at the Two Schools

This chapter explores the kinds of subject matter that Kits and Van Tech students featured in their artwork. I am interested in the broadening of initial school subject matter, as revealed in the early art textbooks, as compared to the subject matter in the art of students from Kits and Van Tech. I show that the school art of these two schools reflects the nature of the schools as well reveals local art interests and the broader concerns of society. Relevant reproductions appear in the portfolio of images at the end of this document.

CHAPTER SEVEN—Conclusion

In this chapter I discuss some of the differences evident in approaches to art learning at Kits and Van Tech to 1950 in relation to the motives, purposes, and ideology relevant to the two schools at the time. I consider the findings in light of the overall perception of class, gender, and race. I suggest how these differences reflect the kinds of schools Kits and Van Tech were and how they resulted from different attitudes and goals. In this final chapter I also acknowledge implications for research and suggest how future research could contribute to what has been done here.

Personal Endnote

Kits is the school my mother attended; Van Tech is the school I wish my father could have attended. In undertaking this research I have tried to understand their experiences, and that of their sisters and brothers, relating to mandated educational changes in the Vancouver school system and in terms of issues relating to gender, class, and race. While my family’s experiences are not described in this text, I hope some of what I know of their history has informed my understanding of that time in Vancouver. I have empathy for both Kits and Van Tech. For me, one school doesn’t outweigh the other.
CHAPTER TWO—Educational, Social, and Artistic Milieu

This chapter provides some background to the establishment of Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School (Kits) and Vancouver Technical School (Van Tech) revealing their shared roots and explaining how they were set up to serve different needs and different populations within the city of Vancouver. It provides insight into the city’s educational, social, and artistic milieu of the time that they came into existence and that helped shape these two high schools and that ultimately resulted in different approaches to art learning.

A Young Vancouver Initiates First High School

The first high school in the city, originally called Vancouver High School, was established in 1890 only four years after Vancouver was incorporated on April 6, 1886. At that time the first houses clustered around the harbour were built out of wood; so were the sidewalks. Looking back, Charles Scott (1927), first principal of Vancouver’s art school, described the beginnings of the city:

Fifty years ago, no railroads ran into Vancouver. The embryo city as represented by wooden shacks huddled around Hastings and Carrall Street encompassed by woods and water. English Bay was reached by a trail.

Perhaps not surprisingly the famous Vancouver fire of June 13, 1886, burned the city to the ground. A one-room school, precursor to Vancouver High School, was one of the few buildings to survive the city’s fire, but the building was moved and changed into a multi-grade school when the city reestablished itself. The rebuilding process started the very next day with the setting up of a voluntary fire department and a realty office operating out of a huge hollow stump. High school education was not neglected long; the older cities of Victoria, New Westminster, and Nanaimo all had a high school before Vancouver High School was established. Scott continued:

Gradually the good citizens realized that wooden shacks were inadequate, trails became streets and avenues, street cars appeared as a means of transporting a growing community, residential suburbs sprouted.... Churches, schools and banks made imposing landmarks in streets that had

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45 K. A. Waites, K. H. McQueen, & T. Pattison. (1941). The first fifty years, Vancouver high schools: 1890 to 1940 (p. 32). Vancouver, B.C.: Vancouver School Board.
47 Waites et al. state that high schools had been founded at Victoria in the academic year 1876/77, at New Westminster in 1884/85, and at Nanaimo in 1885/86 (p. 32).
now become busy enough to necessitate traffic control. Department stores expanded so that the merchandise of the world might be at our very door.\textsuperscript{48}

**Different Populations, New Needs Launch Kits and Van Tech**

Over the next few decades the pioneer high school, renamed King Edward High School, routinely dispersed parts of its student body to create additional high schools as new populations and new needs were identified and new funding was acquired. This is how Kits and Van Tech began in this relatively young high school system. September 1917 is a good place to start my look at Kits\textsuperscript{49} and Van Tech as the ideas for both schools had already been conceived, although at this time, there was no hint of what vital and dynamic Vancouver secondary schools they were to become by 1950.

**Establishing Kitsilano High School on its Own Site**

Kits was initiated on the more affluent west side of Vancouver to serve the growing population on the southwest shore of False Creek. Its mandate was to be a community high school offering matriculation (university entrance, which at that time was completion of Grade 11) and a general graduation course. Four Grade 9 classes from King Edward formed the nucleus of this new school that was provided with the loan of four staff members.\textsuperscript{50} In the first school year (1917/18), Kits students were housed in an elementary school just outside the district. In the second year of the school’s existence students moved into the Kitsilano neighbourhood sharing accommodation with Henry Hudson Elementary School where they stayed until January 1920. At that time Kits moved into its new, wooden-frame, one-story building on the south side of the school’s current school site. This is located between 10\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} Avenues at Trafalgar. This building held four classrooms and an auditorium. The rest of the site was overgrown with willows, and stumps and bog surrounded it.\textsuperscript{51} A block-long trail through bush led down to West Broadway, the major east/west corridor of the city. The school added two and three rooms a year and other wooden structures; by 1922 the school had a staff...
of twelve. For about five years following the establishment of Kits High in its original, albeit temporary, building, the school was under constant construction with new wings and other additions. Yet the school was developing a cohesive student body and its own distinct culture. Kits was building a reputation for scholastic and athletic achievements.

Beginning with the wooden structure on the existing site, art was the responsibility of Spencer P. Judge, its first art teacher. Judge shared his time between Kits and King George High Schools in the West End. Working part-time in more than one school was often necessary in those years in order for an art specialist to get enough employment (James U. Gray). At year-end 1920, the city’s art inspector, Charles Scott, reported that drawing at Kits was not up to high school standard and would not likely attain the expected level, attained by King George High he noted, until there was a proper drawing teacher and program in place. When Charles Scott criticized Kits’ art program in this way, he presumably did not realize that with Judge and another art educator, William Weston, he would, in less than four years, be writing and illustrating B.C.’s officially recognized art textbook (1924). That text served for almost 10 years. Judge continued to teach art at Kits until he replaced Scott as art inspector for Vancouver schools beginning in 1924, when Scott was overseas and subsequently involved with the development of Vancouver’s art school. The fact that Judge was serving the alleged below-standard art program at Kits, while also conducting the apparently acceptable art program at King George, suggests that there were factors, beyond the art teacher’s ability, in order for art to flourish in a high school. A stable and supportive arts culture was not yet in place to provide augmentative activities and to bring out the best in students’ commitment to artmaking. Understandably the unsettled school hadn’t yet achieved that stable school culture, standing as it was on an in-progress construction site. But with the First War having ended, the district was growing and the school was expanding.

Van Tech’s Origin

Meanwhile back in the basement of King Edward High School during the 1916/17 school term (at that time on the Fairview site at 12th and Oak), an experiment was undertaken to offer the beginnings of technical education to high school boys. A newly-formed, technical
department was headed by J. George Lister. He was assisted by James G. Sinclair. They were a team in shaping the school over the next 14 years. The initial organization toward the establishment of the school, starting September 1916, began with 50 boys in one classroom along with a workshop, forge room, tin-shop, and a science lab (VT, 1946, n. p.).

Four teachers guided this department. There was very little equipment to do technical work within this newly created technical department. Nevertheless, besides their regular high school program, the boys were exposed to the philosophy of technical education, and additional technical math and science, along with some basic shop work. This new kind of education was apparently perceived as so successful in its first year of operation that in the following 1917/18 school year, 150 boys signed up to be part of the program. This apparent success was despite the fact that of the original 50 boys in the first class, only 23 remained. Several had found employment in technical positions due to their "short but thorough training." Also, because this was during World War I, some of the first group of students had left school to try to make their way to the front lines in Europe. Others worked on farms as "Soldiers of the Soil" to help replenish the food supply and "help our boys over there."

The mandate of this new high school was to provide technical education to high school boys "expecting to earn a living in the technical trades." The school as a separate institution opened March 1st, 1921, in leased space in a building known as the old Labour Temple, on Dunsmuir Street, in downtown Vancouver near the original Vancouver High School building. Lister was principal, Sinclair, vice-principal. The staff numbered 14 instructors.

Approximately 300 students were admitted based on individual applications that were not dependent upon the geographic location of where they lived (VT, 1930). There was minimal equipment and this facility was without school grounds, but athletic activities at that time were primarily focused on military drill and other physical training conducted by the militia in the nearby armoury. Nevertheless under the direction of Sinclair, the school was able to add sports activities such as lacrosse, baseball, football, rifle shooting and track and field sports so that each boy could "indulge in some form of training or sport."

It was also noted

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58 Until the untimely death of Lister in November of 1930.
59 References to the yearbooks of Kits and Van Tech appear in the text as (KH, date, page) and (VT, date, page) respectively. Two other school publication references are Kitsilano High School Life, appearing as Kits Life, and Lewis Elliot's Van Tech printer's manual, as VTMP. Also references to interviewees, primarily former students of the two schools, appear in the text in parentheses, for example (Ursulescu) or (Zitko). Other references, to both texts and information, appear as footnotes.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid. (p. 31).
63 Ibid. (p. 31).
that “Culture—even to a technical man—should not be lacking and accordingly an orchestra has been formed and a glee club is being organized.”64 The students of Van Tech also proceeded to gain honours for their skills in drill, rifle, and first aid. Van Tech was in this downtown location for six years before gaining a proper building of its own, on the same east-west corridor that fronted Kits. Van Tech settled at the opposite, eastern, end of Broadway. From the start, Van Tech had the benefit of having its own in-house art advocate in the person of Sinclair, who had been art master for King Edward since 1910. Sinclair could see the necessity of art training, especially training in design, as being a necessary part of technical education. He encouraged recognition of the importance of art in all technical work throughout his long tenure at the school, retiring as principal in 1944 (VT, 1944).

Educational Milieu

The Putman Weir report with its introduction to progressivism in the province was the major education policy statement during the time period covered by this study. It launched Kits and Van Tech in their new school facilities a year apart as well as having other ramifications for these two schools as discussed below.

Direct impact of the Putman Weir report on Kits and Van Tech

Both Kits, as a junior/senior high school, and Van Tech were at least partially instituted on the recommendation of the government-funded Putman Weir report.65 Released to the B.C. public in May of 1925, the Putman Weir report, a 550-page document, provided a thorough survey of B.C. schools as well as formally introducing progressive education to the province. The three strands of what has come to be seen as progressivism—child-centredness, social efficiency, and social reconstruction—were not of equal concern in the published report even though its authors, educational experts Harold Putman and George Weir, were aware of the components of progressivism and their ramifications. Social efficiency to them seemed to align with administrative efficiency and the efficiency of producing students who were work-ready without needing any additional training after graduating. Child-centredness was more relevant to elementary schools than to secondary schools, and social reconstruction was not their goal. In fact the intelligence (IQ) testing that went on was leavened with an acknowledgement of the kind of family background, perceived as “class,” that a student came from. Putman and Weir did not want students aspiring to positions beyond their social position or ability to reach. They

64 Ibid.
65 Putman Weir report. Also referred to as the Report.
were aware of the broader machinations of society aimed to maintain a cheap labour force for the expanding industrialized economy in B.C. at the time. The Report also contained some specific recommendations for changes to education in B.C. that had repercussions for Kits and Van Tech.

Promotion of junior high concept

The commissioners of the Putman Weir report were interested in the establishment of junior high schools to separate out Grades 7 and 8 from the elementary schools and Grade 9 from the senior high schools. The junior high years, constituting these three grades, were to be the exploratory years wherein students were to determine the interests that would later launch them into their life's work. The Report's promotion of the junior high school concept was enough to serve as the impetus for building Kits' new facility that opened two years after the Report was published. Kits attempted to introduce this concept of the junior high in the new building by the separation of junior high students and senior high students despite their sharing the same school site and school buildings. Some junior high students thought they were the only ones in the new school (Dorothy Howard, KH student from 1927 to 1931; Bill Basil, KH grad of 1940). They seem to have been unaware of the dual populations sharing various floors of the building at the time and the remaining wooden buildings; they thought the new building was theirs alone. To 1948 the school yearbook identified the school in the plural as Kitsilano Junior/Senior High Schools. Yet Principal H. B. King, in the 1931 yearbook acknowledged that the separation of the two components of the school had not been totally successful to that point (KH, 1931, Principal's Message).

General aspects of progressivism also included proposals to end formalism, rote learning, and reliance on a single, subject textbook. Hands-on classroom experiences were promoted. Courses were to emphasize practical, applied work not just theoretical knowledge, as they were to prepare students for their vocation and daily life, not just for university entrance. The aim also was to create the well-rounded, cultured citizen with loyalties to both Britain and Canada. To avoid social unrest, the Putman Weir report aimed to keep students in the school system even beyond the new minimum leaving age of 15, and students were permitted to stay in the system, without charge, through age 18. The commissioners of the Report also advocated school as preparing students for future employment. Toward this end they promoted vocational skills and appropriate attitudes and work habits as well as healthy, productive, life-long avocations. They saw project work

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66 Ibid.
and hands-on learning experiences as aiding toward these goals. Both were central to art learning and technical training.

The social reconstruction aspects of American progressivism, especially as advocated by American education writer George Counts, did not figure largely into the progressivism posited by Putman and Weir. While the Report stressed work preparation as a socially efficient goal of the school system, the authors did not intend to change the social strata of society. The commissioners of the Report had no intention of transforming British Columbia's existing social relations but, wanting students' to stay in school longer, they needed to encourage students' interests. So more electives were proposed, and learning by doing and handwork of all types gained favour. Art was seen as having the potential to provide enjoyment without teaching students something that would undermine class structure or even get students a better job, although art had the capacity to contribute to this goal. They believed technical training would result in skills upgrading while keeping graduates in manual-based jobs. They did not want to give these students reason to question their role or social position as working class people. In discussing the Report's perceived need to maintain the social status quo in B.C., especially in maintaining a cheap B.C. labour force, one writer stated of the Report: "Despite its wholesale condemnation of traditional concepts and practices, it is essentially a conservative document."

Because both technical training and art involved hands-on, practical, and applied knowledge rather than only theoretical knowledge, the technical programs and art courses of Van Tech and Kits respectively were perceived as being progressive in that they were preparation for one's job and one's life. While art classes could find the art-talented few, and provide them with some job-related design skills, art was seen as largely promoting a more cultured citizenry (the approach at Kits) while helping to keep students in school longer. Art was assumed, therefore, to be non-threatening to the social status quo and was thus retained in the curriculum.

Endorsement of technical education

The Putman Weir report positioned technical education as part of the social efficiency aspect of progressivism. Technical training such as that offered at Van Tech could help students get a job so they could become a member of the work force and so-called productive

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68 Putman Weir report (p. 57).
69 Ibid. (p. 172).
71 Putman Weir report (p. 92).
member of society with as little wasted time as possible. The Putman Weir report’s endorsement of practical and technical education served to support the initiation of the construction of the new building for which Principal J. George Lister had been advocating for some time (VT, 1931, p. 7). Neil Sutherland suggested that progressivism never happened in Vancouver schools as a result of some of the continuing physical structures, desks remained on runners bolted to the floor, and social organization of learning, such as short periods designated for each subject. He was referring to the child-centered aspects of progressivism as they relate to elementary education. The hands-on approach to learning was certainly in existence in Van Tech, in their specifically designed facilities, where the ability to make was at least as important as the ability to know with the school specifically designed to accomplish hands-on learning. Knowledge of child-centred elements of progressivism, however, reached B.C. art teachers through out-of-province educators and publications and perhaps through those from Alberta, where progressive curriculum documents and textbooks were being produced and relevant conferences held. Child-centered approaches of other art educators, such as Britain’s Marion Richardson and Ontario’s Arthur Lismer, whose ideas were accessible to B.C. art teachers through guest lectures at Victoria’s summer school for art teachers in the summers of 1933 and 1934, may have been relevant to some secondary art teaching.

Position of Putman Weir report on art

The Putman Weir report (1925) provided very few specific directions regarding the teaching of art. Those that were specific included the implementation of a mandatory art course in Grades 7 and 8. Art for the higher grades was to remain optional. Teachers were to continue to teach existing art skills but also stress the increased use of colour. The report


73 Particularly those in Alberta such as Donalda Dickie (1940). The enterprise in theory and practice. Toronto: W. J. Gage.

74 During the summer schools of 1933 Marion M. Richardson, supervisor of art in London, England, gave an illustrated lecture on “Art in the schools” (1933-344 Report of the public schools, p. M.31). In the summer of 1934 she lectured again promoting the development of children’s imagination through art. She summed up her views later in her book (1948), Art and the child. London: University of London Press.

75 Arthur Lismer, member of the Group of Seven and educational director of the Toronto Art Gallery and lecturer in art at the University of Toronto, addressed B.C. Teachers Federation annual meeting on “Education through art,” as reported in B.C. Teacher. (1932, Feb., p. 2). He founded the Child Art Movement in Canada and helped the National Gallery arrange a touring exhibition of Canadian child art. He gave a lecture at the Victoria summer school in 1934, as documented in the 1934-35 Report of the public schools (p. 535). Lismer believed in art as a release of spiritual forces necessary to the growth of a child.
also encouraged further study of art history, especially art by the acknowledged art masters (then perceived as primarily white, European males). Adding art history, a more theoretical aspect to art courses, the very kind of formal learning that the commissioners were generally against, aimed to provide students with cultural refinement while maintaining a studio focus. Despite this, the Report put art production ahead of art appreciation, as indicated in the statement, “Every human being has some artist ability. Even where this ability is so limited as to make training in expression of doubtful value, there is always the need for training in appreciation.”

My interest here is in defining the two attitudes to school art that the Report contained. The Report stated

> it seems reasonable... that the middle schools of British Columbia should teach art for economic reasons as well as to develop an art appreciation that will influence the manner in which her future generations shall spend their leisure moments.

One of the recommendations about art aims to find those talented few who had the potential to become commercial artists or otherwise use their art ability in their work. Another attitude related to the use of artmaking to help students develop a constructive leisure-time activity that could endure throughout their life. Teaching about recognized art masters encouraged what the commissioners of the Report saw as individual and cultural advancement. The hope was that to increase the art knowledge of students would likely contribute to making Vancouver a more cultivated, refined, and civilized place. The Report also supported the new 1924 art education textbook focusing on drawing and design. This text, written by Charles Scott, William Weston, and Spencer P. Judge, all of whom were trained in Great Britain, maintained a conservative approach. Tony Rogers concluded that the influence of this book and the subsequent one authored by Weston alone (1933) had the effect of “freezing” art education of B.C. in an earlier period. The commissioners of the Report favouring the junior high concept and the usefulness of technical education served to launch Kits and Van Tech into their new buildings; their moves into new facilities in some ways marked the real start of these schools as a response to the Report.

Nature of the two schools

Principal Lister's dream of instituting a high school specifically for technical education in Vancouver was realized in September of 1928 when Van Tech moved into its newly constructed facilities on an acre and a quarter of land. The series of buildings housed academic,  

76 Putman Weir report (p. 92).
77 Ibid.
theatre, and gymnasium space, as well as extensive shop space for woodworking, metalwork, and printing [Figure 2.3]. Also the property promised a playing field for track and field. The facility boded well as a place for practical education, having resources for hands-on learning, a place where learning to do was at least as important as learning to know. By its second year there (the 1929/30 school term), the school had a staff of 37 and 1,000 boys, slightly fewer students than at Kits. Lister died two years after the school opened; the yearbook later acknowledged “the school is his monument” (VT, 1944, p. 19).

Kits’ new concrete building which opened as a junior/senior high school in September of 1927 served boys and girls of Grades 7 to 11, then considered graduation year. Kits then had a population of approximately 1275 students, 800 of them being junior high students. There were 42 teachers on staff. For Kits the new building came with the commitment to specifically explore the concept of the junior high school. Shortly after moving into the new facility, Kits expanded to include Grade 12 referred to as junior matriculation. It was soon on the road to nourishing a well-supported arts culture. Within a couple of years students in Grade 13 (called senior matriculation) were also accommodated in the school.

Kits’ new building, while not looking all that different from that of Van Tech’s, was without such extensive space and equipment for shop work. However, Kits did have shop space for industrial arts courses in woodworking, metalwork, electrical, and mechanical drawing (KH, 1931, p. 40) and had rooms for home economics and art. A major difference impacting on art learning at the two schools at this time was the make up of the school’s population. While Van Tech started at the Grade 9 level, where art as a separate course was not required, the initial 800 Grade 7 and 8 students at Kits, for whom art was mandatory, made up two-thirds of the population thus requiring a stable of art teachers who, as a group, had the capacity for promoting stimulating in-class as well as extra-curricular art learning.

**Mandates and beliefs at the two schools**

Van Tech attempted to uphold two primary goals, the most recognizable one was to prepare students to be ready for work in industrial occupations; the second was to instill

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79 This was one year before Van Tech was to gain its newly-built facility.
80 Waites et al. *The first fifty years* (p. 106).
81 Kits chronicles (p. 3).
82 Waites et al. *The first fifty years* (p. 106).
83 From the front exterior, Kits and Van Tech school buildings look remarkably similar. Their mandates were not revealed by their external appearance. Perhaps this is not surprising since they were built only one year apart and thus there were current ideas as to how a school should look.
specific values and beliefs in students. Beginning with the formation in 1916 of Van Tech's precursor, the technical department at King Edward, the goal was

> to give the student the advantages of the ordinary high school course and at the same time enable him to acquire technical mental training and knowledge, both theoretical and practical.... The course is designed to give a training in the mechanical, mathematical and scientific principles and laws which underlie all lines of practical work.\(^{84}\)

After the school was firmly established, Principal Lister stated, "Our aim is to turn out reliable boys, not merely workers with their hands, but boys who work with a background of knowledge and reason" (VT, 1930, p. 6). A yearbook editorial in the late 1930s by an unnamed writer, possibly Principal Sinclair, indicated the school aimed to have students ready to take a job immediately on graduation. In the same issue, Sinclair stated, "Our boys are fitting into life situations more easily and with less wastage than has formerly been the case" (VT, 1937, p. 7). In another column Sinclair used rather impersonal terms in reflecting this social efficiency goal of progressivism as he urged graduates to keep in touch: "You are our product and, when we put you on the market, we are anxious to know how you shape up" (VT, 1937, Principal's Message, p. 9). Sinclair stated that Van Tech was willing to and capable of taking its proper place in training boys for industry and for life, and he boasted that industry employers had said: "When [Van Tech students] commenced work, they had a knowledge that enabled them to become immediate producers, instead of spending a year at our expense" (VT, 1937, p. 8). In terms of art, this work-ready approach meant that whatever students needed to learn about drawing and design to do their proposed future work had to be embedded into the course work at Van Tech. There was no assumption that graduates would subsequently spend time at art school, although three of my interviewees from Van Tech did in fact attend the art school as adults (Bill Wong, VT grad of late-1930s; Bob Banks, VT grad of 1941; Jim Rimmer, VT student of late-1940s). Drawing was a valued skill in almost all shop subjects (Banks, Wong). Apparently students were marked separately on the design aspect of their projects and good design was considered an aspect of professionalism in shop courses (Wong).

Beyond just teaching necessary skills for manpower training, Principals Lister, Sinclair, and E. M. White at various times revealed the school's endeavour to teach students specific work-enhancing attitudes and values. They may have considered these attitudes also as indispensable in creating a moral and political consensus\(^ {85}\) among the future workers they trained. Certainly aspects of citizenship were foremost. In his retirement message,

\(^{84}\) (1917). *Matric Annual* (pp. 40-41).
Sinclair wrote, "a good citizen means more to the State than a good scholar" (VT, 1944, p. 13), and he advised teachers to carry on "trying to make good citizens of the boys in your care" (VT, 1944, p. 13). Subsequently White upheld this emphasis on traits making for a good citizen. He wrote,

We have endeavoured to give you a healthy and wholesome philosophy of life, emphasizing those great qualities of honesty, truth, courtesy, understanding.... We have endeavored to train you to be courteous men and graceful women, to have alert and well-ordered minds, to be skilful of hand, to be good citizens. Step out into the world—not with the feeling that you know it all, but with humility and sincere desire to make your contribution to the welfare and progress of this fair Canada of ours. (VT, 1950, Principal’s Message, p. 5)

Despite these high-sounding goals, there was an equal emphasis on keeping the future graduates in their place, by teaching them to “play the game,” not to question the rules of the game, nor to try to change the rules of the game. When King George V died, the Van Tech yearbook listed six maxims that apparently hung in the king’s study in Buckingham Palace. The first maxim was “Teach me to be obedient to the rules of the game” (VT, 1936, p. 44b). This in effect confirmed that no matter how high or low on the ladder of status, one should not question but rather should do what the game of life and work required of the individual. An extension of this belief involved maintaining habits of punctuality, obedience to orders, respect for others, and industriousness (VT, 1936, Principal’s Message, p. 9), as well as courteous service, fair play, and application to work (VT, 1937, Editorial, p. 7). Sinclair stated that graduates would “experience success not because they were brilliant at school, but rather [because] they had learned how to be industrious, how to stay with the job, and give the best they had to the job” (VT, 1944, Principal’s Message). A few years later Principal E. M. White urged, “Endeavour to do more than the mere requirements of your special job” (VT, 1949, Principal’s Message).

By comparison Kits’ goals seem less concerned about having the graduate ready to take a job immediately, although some students did go directly to a job. Preparation for citizenship was at least as important as it was at Van Tech, and the time students spent at the school was life itself as well as preparation for life. This was summarized in James Gordon’s “Principal’s Message” in the 1938/39 yearbook:

During all these years what has this school been trying to do for you? For one thing, it has been trying to establish in you certain skills and habits that will be of use to you throughout life. You found also that great emphasis was placed on your citizenship and on your service to the school to the end that you might be good Canadian citizens. We have tried to give you a full and


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interesting life within the school itself. You will realize that the school served
you not only because you were a prospective adult or citizen, but because
you were a young person who, as such, had needs of your own. (KH, 1939, p.
4)

When Gordon was about to retire as principal in 1947, he added to this stating:

You have been encouraged to form good habits of work, to guide your
conduct in accordance with the highest principles, to acquire knowledge of
mankind and the universe, to make suitable friendships, to deal justly and
honestly with your fellows, and to be unselfishly helpful wherever help is
needed or sought. This is your inheritance from the school. (VT, Principal’s
Message, n. p.)

Thus Kits’ clubs and extra-curricular activities, including art-related activities, helped create
a community for living and learning for Kits students wherein skills and habits taught in
classes were reinforced, where opportunities for service to the school and to others were
created, where friendships were reinforced across the population of the school not just within
students’ own class groups, and other aspects of citizenship were played out. Art-related and
other activities formed a broad base to this social environment that seemed to allow students
to enjoy their adolescence rather than just preparing them for their adult future, which
seemed to be more the case at Van Tech. This difference in the nature of the two schools
seems to be visually summed up in Figure 2.4 suggesting the difference in the nature of the
two schools. As a neighbourhood school, Kits was more able to be a center for social life in a
way that didn’t seem to be fully possible at Van Tech. Also Van Tech’s tight-knit class groups
of 25 to 30 students, with whom students spent their entire four years according to my
informants, contributed to keeping students isolated from others in the school. For this
reason, art-minded students at Van Tech were more likely to know others with the same
interest only through examples of their artwork rather than in person (Wong; Banks; Henry
Zitko, VT grad of mid-1940s).

Social Milieu

This chapter looks at social milieu of Vancouver during this time primarily, but not
only, through the eyes of Kits and Van Tech schools. The social fabric is considered in terms
of gender, class, and race, the impact of the Depression, students’ social expectations, the
schools’ perceived relationship to Britain, their experience of the Second World War, and
relation to issues of First Nations peoples. Many of these social issues ultimately are
reflected in the art of the students of the two schools.
Gender and class

Issues of gender and class at Kits and Van Tech seem somewhat intermingled especially as regards to students' expectations for their futures. Prior to the anticipated arrival of the girls at Van Tech in September 1940, there was some ambiguity in the term technical education as it related to the kind of training the girls were to receive. References to the needs of the war had me assuming the girls would have received the same training as the boys at Van Tech. In introducing the girl's department, the 1941 yearbook stated:

The present war stresses the vital need of technically trained men and women. Tech ed offers rich opportunities to girls who can adapt themselves. Vantech extends a hearty welcome to the pioneer group of 300 girls. (VT, 1941, p. 8)

With a comment such as this, I was thinking of mechanics, as that was one of Van Tech's strengths in providing personnel for the Armed Services (VT, 1943, n.p.). But during the war years, mechanics was not a subject available to girls to study at Van Tech. It seems the term practical training\(^\text{87}\) would have been more appropriate originally. In 1943, with the approach of the first graduation to include girls, the yearbook notes that 20 or 30 girls would "get their diplomas in hairdressing, retail selling, design, tailoring, cooking, and home nursing" (VT, 1943, p. 19). While the tailoring course included fashion design (Margaret Strathern, VT grad of 1949), I have no source of information on what the separate design certificate entailed. A yearbook writer was patronizing to females in the tailoring class but at least recognized the design aspect of that course. The article stated that the girls are "efficient dressmakers (at least they think they are). This little flock of designers displayed their 'wares' at the graduation banquet. They were very charming indeed" (VT, 1944, The Tailoring Class, p. 39).

It wasn't until the 1945/46 year that girls were finally admitted into some of the boys' classes and the matriculation program (VT, 1946, Looking back on 25\(^{th}\) anniversary, p. 7). Strathern, a graduate from the first class (1949) to include females in the matric program, spoke of a teacher who begrudgingly received girls in his class. Apparently he made it clear that he was going to continue to teach as he always had and not make any concessions to the girls in the class. Thus the girls integrated into a curriculum intended for boys. Strathern mentioned learning about such things as how to rewire an electrical socket, tend to a car engine, etc., which she found very helpful later in living in an isolated area.

In spring 1940 a survey was undertaken as to why boys attended Van Tech, and a significant number of responses related to the fact that there were no girls at the school.

\(^{86}\) The left-hand side of the composite image showing adolescents is by Kits student Louise Williamson; the right-hand side of the composite image showing steel workers is by E. P. Wilson.
Characteristically, one boy wrote: "When I went to public school I was bothered by girls there, so I learned my lesson; I chose this school because there are no girls!" (VT, 1940, Why boys like to attend Tech, p. 72). There is more than one reference in the yearbook to this being a “he-man’s” school and holding up manliness as a favourable trait. This was true of teachers as well as students. Principal Sinclair wrote: “You have been exposed to the influence of manly teachers, to an atmosphere of fair play in school and in sport...” (VT, 1937, p. 9). There may have been a somewhat hidden set of assumptions about the acceptable concept of masculinity, focusing on heterosexuality, almost to the point of homophobia. One student (Malcom Nelson, VT grad of the mid-1930s) remembered some Van Tech boys locking in a cupboard one male teacher who they thought to be too feminine. After Sinclair retired, he looked back to when the school was in the old Labour Building where, due to the absence of a playground, the boys used to fight in the back lane. His comment of approval was, “Teachers never interfered. A boy has an inherent right to fight, and I deplore the fact this delightful pastime is now frowned on severely” (VT, 1946, Memories, p. 22). In more than one instance the approach of the staff and teachers to the boys was spoken of as “fatherly care.” Some of these attitudes were subtlety revealed in the images produced by the students in their artwork. Such attitudes to manliness may also account for the fact that during their time at school boys did not aspire to becoming fine artists despite an interest in art and despite relevant skills being taught in the school. This may relate to the stereotype of an artist (fine artist) being somewhat effeminate.

At Kits concepts of masculinity were generally more inclusive. In describing the Kitsilano Boy’s Choir as the first of its kind in any Vancouver high school and as contributing a new movement in city student musical groups, the yearbook states, “Boys, instead of being ashamed of their musical ability and condemning it as ‘sissified,’ are joining male choirs and displaying their talents” (KH, 1948, n. p.). Boys at Kits interested in pursuing art as a career were more likely thinking about becoming designers rather than fine artists. In Kits’ case, however, this may have been determined more by assumptions of class and related issues involving maintaining a decent and consistent income, rather than being deterred by suppositions about gender appropriateness in becoming an artist. While the Department of Education designated home economics courses as available to girls only, by at least the 1936/37 school year at Kits there was a boys’ cooking club (KH, 1937, p. 44). Kits girls too, early on, felt comfortable enough in the school’s social setting to disregard traditional gender assumptions as they involved themselves in traditionally male activities. The 1931 Kits yearbook stated,

87 Girl’s teacher Miss Boutiler stated, “the school fills a great need for a center for the practical training of girls” (VT, 1941, “The New Girls’ Unit,” p. 15).
It is very gratifying to note that all interest in shop work is not confined to the boys in our school. Grade 9, 10, 11, and 12 girls enjoy projects made through club activities carried on in general shop, electrical shop, woodworking shop, useful and decorative projects in copper and brass in the metal shop, and mechanical drawing in the mechanical drawing room. (KH, 1937, p. 40)

Female students at Kits, asked about plans for their future, seemed to aspire to a noticeably high proportion, for the time, of positions needing significant further education. Some of the goals the girls listed included physiotherapist, pharmacist, dietician, commercial artist [several listed this], Olympic ski star, to study drama, to study law, as well as the more routine positions as doctor’s office receptionist and private secretary. Some wrote that their ambition was to study at “varsity” without specifying any goal beyond that (KH, 1948, pp. 25-28). These aspirations say as much about class assumptions as gender. At the same time a sampling of what Kits boys noted as what they hoped to be doing in their future includes:

statesman; radio writing and announcing (ambition to write a musical review); ditchdigger [noted by a football player, in this context likely a joke]; a future Frankie Lane; torn between Ministry and Foreign Legion; work at B.C. Telephone; future King Edward Matric; football star and marine engineering; Varsity; an M.A. at Varsity; “a successful career”; Varsity; optometrist; pharmacist; Varsity and becoming a teacher; artist; future teacher of the accordion; King Ed and then?; Varsity; would like to take an art course down south; Varsity; future undecided; Varsity and become a pharmacist; journalist. (KH, 1948, pp. 25-29)

These designations are noticeable in that they are not blue-collar positions as were more common designations for Van Tech students. While Van Tech’s graduating students write-ups tend to focus on a student’s sports interests, some expectations for the future are also listed including electrician, machinist, or printer. Even one of Van Tech’s graduates from the late-1930s, who subsequently graduated from the University of British Columbia in mechanical engineering, did not seem to question assumptions about Van Tech’s programs leading to blue collar positions. He commented,

At Van Tech you had a sense of training for your livelihood. When you go to Tech you have a much better chance of getting any kind of job—you’d be much further ahead because you’ve got all that training. With metal work you could go to a metalworking shop; if you took woodworking, you could go to a woodworking shop. Or you could learn motors and go into mechanical. (Wong)

In reviewing Van Tech’s previous 20 years when the technical department started in the basement of King Edward High School, the 1937 yearbook, noted that the “idea of technical education was new,... ‘regular’ students in the school looked down on the new Tech boys and
made them feel that there was a wall of division between them" (VT, 1937, Twenty Years Ago, p. 73). One might assume this was based on class considerations and yet the photo of this time in the basement (VT, 1937, Twenty Years Ago, p. 74) shows boys in white shirts with ties and some with vests and some wearing overalls over their white shirts. Yet this level of cleanliness wasn’t maintained consistently by all boys. In the spring of 1930 Lister indicated that he looked forward to one unique way of having some boys upgrade their level of cleanliness. He wrote,

Presently we shall have a swimming pool under the gymnasium and ablution for certain boys will then be swift and sudden. Boys are still boys, and some still actually come to school having forgotten to wash their necks. (VT, 1937, Twenty Years Ago, p. 7)

This comment would be unlikely in the context of Kits where basic cleanliness was probably not in question even through the Depression Years. Yet designating Van Tech simply as intended for working class families is somewhat simplistic in that not all teens in a family attended Van Tech. Families had the choice of using the schools for different purposes. Those wanting straight academic work for a child were more likely to send that child to Britannia High School even while another attended Van Tech to receive technical training.88 A Van Tech student from the early 1940s stated,

At my time we took all the academic subjects to get into university plus all the tech subjects as well. And our class was the only one that did that, cause the other [matric] classes used to get some of the vocational classes but not all of them. We got all of them. We got all the credits we needed to get a tech diploma as well as the academic subjects. (Zitko)

So Van Tech wasn’t just for students not wanting to go to university, in fact the yearbook attempted to assure readers of the opposite in the case of engineering:

We make the claim that our Technical Course is the best course for students who mean to take the Applied Science course at the university...[note the] successes of past tech boys who have succeeded in electrical engineering, civil engineering, and geological engineering." (VT, 1930, Editorial, Our Varsity Boys, p. 68b)

In short it was not class, nor money, nor geography alone that determined choice of sending a child to Van Tech or elsewhere so much as families recognizing different educational goals for different members of their family. In this way Van Tech seems to have in some

88 Henry Zitko chose to attend Van Tech in the early 1940s, as he was heading for mechanical engineering at UBC, whereas his brother went to Britannia, their neighbourhood school, for a straight academic program. Similarly Bob Banks went to Van Tech in the 1940s while his sisters, headed for credentials in teaching, went to Britannia. Bill Wong’s sister also attended Britannia in the mid-1940s.
ways straddled the designations of working class and middle class, especially where the
term *middle class* is broadly defined.\(^{89}\)

**Race**

At Kits prior to 1950 race was less conspicuous than it is in Vancouver today. We tend
to think of race primarily in terms of visibility of skin colour, primarily of blacks and those of
Asian descent. One student from the late 1940s said of Kits, “Ethnicity was there, you felt it
amongst you, it was just more subtly coloured, when at all, and more privately practiced”
(Rolph Blakstad, KH grad of 1947). This student explained that students worked out their
identities through their ethnic backgrounds—his as a Scandinavian, a friend as Jewish, but Kits
was still primarily white. Arriving at Kits after attending Lord Byng Junior/Senior High
School, just a few miles away but in a slightly more expensive neighbourhood, Blakstad
realized Byng had been even more “white” than Kits. He said,

> My impression [was] that at Kitsilano there were a greater number of
> “ethnic” types than in West Point Grey. There were Sikhs, Chinese,
> Japanese, Greeks, Italians, Jews, Scots, Irish, Scandinavians, middle
> Europeans, etc. This is my impression, but looking at the yearbooks today,
> this is not [apparent] by today’s realities. (Blakstad)

The 1948 yearbook lists the main students who had participated in a fundraising shoe drive
and in doing so reveals students of some of the ethnic origins that Blakstad referred to. The
list reads: “Josie Wong, Gordie Macdonald, Georgia Hurshman, Roy Salmon, Don Knight,
Wolldemar Anderson, Milan Potkonyak, John Stark, and Neil Desmarais” (KH, 1948, n. p.).
As it was not possible to tell how long these students’ families had been in Canada, ethnic
distinctiveness was not possible for me to consider.\(^{90}\) As there was a general absence of black
students in the two schools at this time, the only racial diversity that I could determine was
for students of Chinese and Japanese descent. While again it was not possible to know how
long their families had been in Canada, I could at least determine some amount of difference
based on physical appearance, though yearbook photographs, and their names. For instance
Kits 1937 yearbook carries a photograph of 22 students in the cartoon club and two appear to
be of Japanese descent (Moritsugu and Nishio), the only ones of Asian descent (KH, 1937, p.
44). Their presence in this visual arts club, as in other arts-related activities in the two

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\(^{89}\) Principal Sinclair’s own son, James Sinclair junior, attended Van Tech in its first two year before
attending UBC where he became a Rhodes scholar and subsequent Member of Parliament (VT, 1940,
p. 39). From there he became Federal Minster of Fisheries (not to mention becoming father-in-law to
Prime Minister Trudeau), hardly a working class existence.

\(^{90}\) Blakstad created a logo type saying Den Glade Sunnmoring that accompanied all his school
artwork. This was a reference to his father's village in Norway and his father's Norweigan
schools, was generally higher than represented in the general population of the school. At Van Tech the student population of Asian descent in the late-1930s was approximately 15 percent according to counts I have done of group photographs in the yearbooks and names on class lists where Chinese and Japanese names are obvious. In 1942 Principal James G. Sinclair acknowledged that the population of the school was mixed but said, “There has never been any discrimination evident along racial lines” (VT, 1942, Principal’s Message, p. 9). One student, Henry Zitko of this time said that this was not true; his perception was that students of Asian descent had to have higher marks than others to be admitted, whereas he assumed a Caucasian student was never barred from admission. Student Clarence Falk, from the 1930s, spoke of his teacher saying to the class, “Why are you white guys letting the Japanese students beat you in getting better marks?”

There is a near absence of references to the United States in the Van Tech yearbooks, but one stands out, as it states: “Our enterprising American cousins have always been trail blazers, and doubtless their success in trade and manufacture, and the forging of many racial elements into a young, vigorous nation, was hastened by their network of roads and railways” (VT, 1939, p. 51). This quote is ambiguous and doesn’t give credit to the mixed population in outright terms, but it does seem to approve of the mingling of races to achieve one dynamic nation. In this vein, Sinclair wrote, “You are all good Canadians, and the place of birth of your parents is not so important as the place of your own birth” (VT, 1942, p. 9).

Vancouver’s First Nations people

In going through the yearbooks of about 10 schools, I was struck by the occurrence of images and stories featuring First Nations art and life. It was not uncommon for a yearbook to carry a précis of a Pauline Johnson myth on a regular basis. This interest was not restricted to schools, where First Nations students were largely absent, but rather was an indication of such a concern of society in general about the relationship between Euro-Canadian and First Nations communities. This concern was ultimately reflected in the art background. He explained to me that it meant “the happy one from Sunnmore.” Blakstad stated, “There were [at Kits] Norwegian, Swedish, and Icelandic kids, and we knew what it meant.”

91 The principal served as gatekeeper determining who was to be admitted; one admission letter written by a father for his son extolled the virtues of technical education (VT, 1920s).

92 An interest in Native art was shown by in-service teachers at Victoria’s summer school in 1925. Native designs were studied in an applied art class in pottery taught by James S. McMillan. In his report, on the summer school, John Kyle stated pots were made from local clay featuring native “designs that were worked out from direct study of the Native Indian collection in the Provincial Museum.” He added, “A growing appreciation of the skill of the native craftsman and of the significance of his work, which was gained from the material found in the Provincial Archives, strengthened the work of the students and justified the opportunity offered by this branch of applied design” (Report of public schools, 1925, p. M69).
of the two schools. Ronald Hawker in a 2003 book entitled Tales of Ghosts\textsuperscript{93} in examining art objects such as First Nations’ totem poles and ceremonial masks showed that despite the federal-government ban on the potlatch, continued creation of First Nations’ art objects asserted the identity of the people and their long-time occupation of and right to the land. He showed that the period from 1922 to 1961, far from being a period of artistic decline for First Nations people, was a period of intense artistic productivity aimed to resist the intent and effects of assimilation enforced by the Canadian government’s support of assimilationist education, ban on the potlatch, and denial of land claims. He described the process by which conflict over land and resources between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples was “fought symbolically rather an openly”\textsuperscript{94} as European immigrants sought to replace Aboriginal modes of authority with their own. In the process of describing the policies and approaches of national, provincial, and international museum collectors, removing First Nations art objects from their communities, Hawker reveals the high level of activities of both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in trying to counteract the effect of removing First Nations cultural objects. In documenting this activity he provides some social, political, and educational context for this conflict. One chapter, for instance, describes how the British Columbia Indian Arts and Welfare Society was instituted by the efforts of Victoria resident Alice Ravenhill.\textsuperscript{95} She sought to “use the production and consumption of First Nations art to better the educational system, making it both more relevant and more accessible to First Nations children.” This was in contrast with the efforts of Reverend George Raley, Methodist missionary and, to 1934, long-time principal at the Coqualeetza Residential School at Port Simpson.\textsuperscript{96} Raley “wanted to use the educational system to encourage the production and consumption of First Nations art as a means of economic integration.”\textsuperscript{97} Raley set out this proposal to an international audience in an issue of the Journal of the Royal Society of Arts (London) in 1935.\textsuperscript{98} He described how it would be possible to solve the economic problem of the poverty of First Nations people as well as encourage the return of their self-esteem and remove idleness by stimulating them to revive Native arts and regional industries. He argued “Indian [sic] arts and crafts, Canada’s first

\textsuperscript{94} Hawker. Tales of ghosts (p. 5).
\textsuperscript{95} In Tales of Ghosts, Ravenhill is quoted as saying she had been motivated in these efforts by a sense of responsibility for the advantages she enjoyed as a result of having been born into an upper-class British family (p. 92).
\textsuperscript{96} Hawker. Tales of ghosts (p. 73).
\textsuperscript{97} Hawker. Tales of ghosts (p. 82).
contribution to the world of art, must not be lost." And he stated that First Nations industries could “be capitalized and given a commercial value by means of a permanent market for tourists.” Raley believed such a revival was feasible as “there are still living some of the older artisans.”

There is evidence that French-Canadian anthropologist Marius Barbeau did not agree with the feasibility of a revival of First Nations arts. In a lecture at the University of British Columbia in the fall of 1926, Barbeau spoke on “The art of B.C. Indians.” Vito Cianci, who was at the time an art school student, as well as future Kits art teacher, reported on this presentation. He stated that Barbeau’s research in B.C. under the auspices of the Dominion government had been to “ascertain the possibility of reviving the native Indian art of this province.” Cianci reported that Barbeau had concluded that this was impossible, “as the younger generation of Indians in B.C. have not the ability or the inclination to carry on the work of their forefathers.” Apparently Barbeau thought, therefore, that “the only thing to do was to foster a new art spirit among British Columbians themselves, and thus to produce work that would bear the unmistakable imprint of British Columbia.”

Barbeau later verified his view on the inevitable disappearance of First Nations art and the impossibility of reviving it, in producing with Grace Melvin an abundantly illustrated book that was a collection of Native myths and legends entitled The Indian Speaks. Barbeau at the time was ethnologist at the National Museum of Canada and Melvin was head of design and craft at the Vancouver School of Art. In the short preface (under three-pages), which is the only commentary the book provides beyond the myths themselves, the authors confirmed Barbeau’s assumption about the inevitable disappearance of Native culture. Barbeau and Melvin were said to have had a close relationship, which may have been a factor in the widespread acceptance of Barbeau’s ideas at the art school. I think this belief in the inevitable disappearance of First Nations art was central to the approach to teaching at the art school. That approach encouraged students to take Indian art unto themselves and go on from there to find a unique B.C. style that was so much wanted. There was no sense of misappropriation; if anything teachers

99 Raley. Canadian Indian art (pp. 992-993).
100 Ibid. (p. 993).
students may have felt they were helping First Nations peoples by keeping some version of their art in existence. If Ravenhill’s and Raley’s push to encourage Native students to continue with their own traditional art forms had been recognized at the art school as a possibility, perhaps the sense of freedom of students there to use Native art in whatever way they wanted would not have occurred. As it was, Native art at the Vancouver School of Art was recognized, if not as an end in itself, at least a valid starting point for students aiming to create an art indigenous the province. Three pre-service art teachers (Lewis, Cianci, Shadbolt) and one teacher (Jock Macdonald) at the art school in its early years became art teachers at Kits and Van Tech. This seems to be at least a partial reason for the phenomenon of First Nations art images occurring in these two schools as well as being fuelled by a more wide spread concern about the implications of First Nations issues.

In this context it is more understandable that Kits’ yearbook for 1936/37 had a long-standing interest in First Nations art. The school established Haida as the official name of the yearbook. Student decision-makers, explaining why they chose this name, stated it would make the annual immediately recognizable as coming from the West Coast of Canada. It would also associate their school, they wrote, with the “tradition of fearlessness and honor” of this “most highly civilized of the tribes” with its “fierce and warlike” attributes and “high moral code” (KH, 1937, p. 61). Based on an image from a mural in the school’s main hall, the cover image of that yearbook incorporates a symbol of a “Haida monster” (KH, 1937, p. 61). This Haida monster is unselfconsciously juxtaposed against a crown and the image includes the wording “coronation issue” acknowledging Canada’s loyalty to Britain.104

Despite adopting Haida as a name and using First Nations’ art symbols in several forms in the yearbooks, Kits had what I see to be an uncomfortable relationship with local First Nations peoples.105 The school was built on the hunting grounds of the descendents of Chief Khahtsahlano without any original, formal purchase of the land or treaty with the Squawmish Indian Nation. The school and the surrounding area were named after Khahtsahlano despite the anglicized spelling of Kitsilano. The 1944 Kits yearbook carries a full-page photo [Figure 2.1] entitled “Presentation of Portrait” that shows a portrait of the

104 Despite this stated commitment to the name Haida in 1936, other names were used until Haida was reinstated in 1948. Haida has been the name of the yearbook since then. The name has also been used for Kits’ sport teams, as in The Kitsilano Haidas (KH, 1936, p. 61).

105 Presumably students from the band were in residential schools. In 1949 “the first steps, since the nineteenth century, were taken towards integrating and accommodating First Nations students in the provincial public school system. An amendment to the Public School Act enable[d] local Boards of School Trustees and the federal Department of Indian Affairs to enter into agreements for sharing the costs of schooling for aboriginal children,” (B.C. Homeroom [website], chronology of B.C. education history).
grandson\textsuperscript{106} of the former chief. Shown at the presentation is August Jack Khahtsahlano, who was born on the False Creek Indian Reserve. The yearbook cutline reads: “Major Don McKay, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia; Mr. Charles H. Scott, principal of Vancouver Art School; Mr. Scott’s painting of August Jack Khahtsahlano, August Jack Khahtsahlano himself, and Mrs. Swanamia Khahtsahlano, his wife” (KH, 1944, n. p.). The photograph subtly undermines any suggestion of a claim that First Nations people might have on the land by providing full name and title for the Indian Commissioner, the artist, and the painting while the cutline, by stating “August Jack Khahtsahlano himself; and Mrs. Swanamia Khahtsahlano, his wife,” avoids using a title. To add to the insult of verbally being treated of less importance than the white artist and commissioner, the photograph diminishes the Khahtsahlanos further by restricting them to the right one-fifth edge of the photograph, almost obscured by the framed painting sitting on an easel. There is no mention of Khahtsahalno as being grandson of the local chief of the area and no mention of the school’s relation to the land on which the school stands. One wonders, with the presence of the Indian commissioner, if this portrait is in someway attempting to legitimize, 17 years later, taking over the hunting grounds of the Khahtsahlanos. It may have been intended as a way of placating First Nations people as much as honouring them. The Kitsilano Chronicles records that, in October 1943,

> a portrait of Chief August Jack Khahtsahlano was unveiled by the chief’s wife as the chief looked on at a ceremony in the auditorium. The Chief danced and his wife accompanied him on an Indian drum. Students had raised $250 for the portrait painted by Charles Scott of the Vancouver School of Art. Mr. Scott placed the money in the Indian Spitfire Fund.

At the time of the unveiling event, August Jack Khahtsahlano apparently was assumed to be the chief, or at least credited as such at the time. Perhaps with the “chief” perceived as participating in this event, an air of legitimacy was conferred to this ceremony, a legitimacy that would not have existed if this was just any member of the First Nations band.

As I discuss in Chapter 6, traditional First Nations art symbols were one of the main subject categories appearing in the artwork of Kits students; it seems that the school preferred to maintain this fascination at a distance rather than having any more direct contact with local First Nations people. Van Tech recognized that First Nations people were in fact the “real Canadians” having “claimed Canada as a home long before we, who claim to be Canadians, ever set foot in the land” (VT, 1943, p. 16). This enlightened

\textsuperscript{106} The fact that August Jack Khahtsahlano was grandson of the chief, but was not a chief himself is asserted in the typescript book by J. S. Matthews, with August Jack Khahtsahlano. (1955). Conversations with Khahtsahlano. Vancouver, B.C. [typescript, bound, no publisher noted].
acknowledgment may have served as a rationale for including, in most editions of the
yearbook to 1947, an article and artwork focusing on a First Nations myth. Nevertheless
there is some evidence of condescension mixed with the respect revealed in presenting
these “powerful ‘natives’” of “childlike faith” (VT, 1939, Our Cover Design, p. 51).

Impact of Depression

Both Kits and Van Tech felt the effects of the Depression but in slightly different
ways. Early in the Depression, Kits Principal H. B. King, in his annual yearend message to
Kits graduates, stated, “In view of the present depressed economic state of the world..., the
world into which you are about to move does not just now seem to offer very much, and the
future does not appear a very rosy one” (VT, 1931, p. 7). One student at Kits (John
Wytenbroek, KH student from 1935 to 1941) described the experience of his family losing
their house, when his father, who had been a well-sought-after housepainter in demand by
wealthy homeowners in Shaughnessy, was left without being paid, and without further
work, when these usually well-off clients could not pay their bills. He said his family had no
apparent bitterness about their own hardship, however, as they felt there were so many
others, even those who had been wealthy, in the same situation. With money generally not
being available, remaining middle class during the Depression was more a matter of
respectability than having cash. According to one Kits interviewee (Howard), it was not
about whether or not you wore hand-me-down clothes and had patches on your clothes, it
was about how nicely your patches were applied. For several years during the Depression,
the Van Tech yearbook editorial asked the question “Have we turned the corner yet?” Or
“Have We Really Turned ‘The Corner’” as the writer tried to determine year after year if the
Depression was finally over. In 1936 this editorial stated:

Last year when writing the Editorial we predicted that better times were just
around the corner. That prediction had been made year after year, but that
elusive corner still kept itself just around the corner. As far as the school is
concerned...although the path is still rough, uphill, strewn with obstacles, yet
we have left the corner behind.

We base our conclusion on the fact that so many of our old boys are
now at work, and that throughout the year boys kept leaving school to go to
work.... (VT, 1936, n. p.)

This last line reflects the working class nature of the school. When work was available,
working class families generally couldn’t afford the opportunity costs of keeping in school
their children who had reached minimum age for leaving school. Some writers have
defined middle class families as those who could afford the lost opportunity costs and
other expenses of keeping their children in school beyond minimum leaving age. It was easier for working class boys to remain in school when there were no jobs, as in the height of the Depression. Apparently the absence of jobs was more demoralizing for Van Tech than Kits, as the purpose of Van Tech was to prepare boys for employment. Even as late as 1938, in the Principal’s Message, Sinclair, in bidding grads farewell, mentioned, “There will be the long wait for a job” (VT, 1938). A couple of years after he retired, Sinclair looked back at the Depression era at the school referring to “the effects of that awful time” (VT, 1946, p. 22). Former Van Tech students (Clarence Falk, Banks; Zitko) have indicated that the Depression didn’t really end until the Second World War began when then there seemed to be war-related work for everyone.

Perception of Canada’s relationship with Britain

While the intention of Putman Weir report (1925) was to ensure that education was “up to date and progressive,” other aspirations were also embedded into the document and loyalty to Britain was one of them. It stated:

The development of a united and intelligent Canadian citizenship activated by the highest British ideals of justice, tolerance, and fair play should be accepted without question as a fundamental aim of the school system. Such an aim... has enhanced the good name of the British Empire.

Promoting British loyalty in schools was certainly not new. The majority of existing Vancouver high schools by that time were named after British monarchs, other royals, or British notables, or alluded to Britain: King Edward High School, King George, King George V (Magee), Prince of Wales, Lord Byng, and Britannia. Similarly many Vancouver elementary schools by then were named after royalty and other eminent British personages. This is not surprising perhaps in realizing that most principals and teachers in Vancouver schools, like much of the population in B.C., were British or of British descent. Kits was proud to have been chosen to represent B.C, among competing high schools to send a student to each of two British coronations in London: one in 1937 (KH, 1937, p. 2) and again in 1953. Most yearbooks of Vancouver secondary schools noted the royal visits, often with pictures. The Kits yearbook photograph of George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the queen mother, was labeled

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108 Putman Weir report (p. 1).
109 Ibid. (p. 38).
110 Jean Barman. (1988). Knowledge is essential for universal progress but fatal to class privilege: Working people and the schools in Vancouver during the 1920s. Labour/Le travail (22, pp. 9-66). There Barman indicates that to mid-century British Columbia was largely a British settlement with 58 percent of the population being of British descent.
“their gracious majesties as we shall see them” (KH, 1939, p. 3). When asked about competing loyalties between Britain and Canada, one former Kits student (Howard) seemed oblivious of any potential conflict and said loyalty to both didn’t create any problems. Indeed artwork on the 1936 Kits yearbook cover,\(^{112}\) celebrating the coronation of King George VI that integrates symbols of the monarchy with First Nations imagery, seems a somewhat awkward combination in that Kits was really not embodied in either. Other visual references to Britain in Kits’ yearbooks are few. Perhaps partly because Kits’ yearbooks were primarily controlled by students, not staff, there are no references to the British Empire beyond continued allegiance to the monarchy.

Van Tech yearbooks revealed a greater connectedness. On the unexpected, early death of George V, which placed the young Prince of Wales on the throne, Van Tech’s yearbook officially announced, “The King is Dead! Long Live the King” and proceeded to describe “the sterling work and character of the young man who, by reason of his august father’s death was called upon to assume the responsible task of leadership as King Edward VIII” (VT, 1936, p. 44b). The yearbook also stated:

No man better suited for kingship ever ascended the British throne, and as loyal subjects of the most democratic nation on earth we of this School, men of to-morrow, render him our loyalty, obedience and support. (VT, 1936, p. 7)

With this no-better-man-fit-to-rule attitude, Van Tech revealed its impulse to officially embrace the monarchy under all circumstances, despite some at the school considering the prince a playboy and poor role model for young people. When Edward abdicated within the year, putting King George VI on the throne to replace him, Van Tech’s attitude again was unquestioning and assured students’ loyalty to the new king. In considering Van Tech’s promotion of an unquestioned loyalty to Britain, I am reminded of the concept of schooling as a colonizing strategy as described by John Willinsky in his 1998 text, Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire’s End. There he reveals colonial schooling as providing lessons designed “to make obvious Britain’s right to rule.”\(^{113}\) The effect of Van Tech’s staff’s attitudes served the same end.

One example in a Van Tech editorial is a description of “Empire posters” appearing in the Van Tech’s shop corridor. The editorial explained that the Empire Marketing Board, appointed by the Imperial Economic Committee and responsible to all governments of the Empire, funded the posters to promote Empire products. It stated that the colourful posters

\(^{111}\) Kits chronicles (p. 23).

\(^{112}\) The 1939 yearbook cover carries an image of a crown as the only visual besides the lettering.
are by well-known artists and provide good examples of the colour printer’s art along with a “useful message to all Canadians.” The posters featured such sayings such as “Empire Buyers are Empire builders” and “Buy Empire produce from home and overseas.” A summary by the yearbook editor explained: “Ask first in your daily shopping for the produce of your own country. Ask next for the produce of Empire overseas. Whenever you can find Empire produce... choose it in preference to foreign produce” (VT, 1930, p. 63). The implication of this Canada-first approach and pro-Empire stance seems to suggest that only non-Empire people are foreigners, which leaves me wondering where the United States stood in relation to Canada in this view. The United States seemed not to be a concern at all for Van Tech, unless this apparent avoidance of mentioning the US suggests an underlying fear of Canada being absorbed by the US. Generally strong continentalism was not a concept that Van Tech was entertaining for Canada’s future. More likely Van Tech wished for an enlarged role for Canada in the Empire, not an attitude apparent in Kits yearbooks. In fact no such information or suggestion comes through the editorial screen of Kits yearbooks, which are controlled by students who seemed to be very insular in outlook.

Schools’ awareness of World War II

Kits students’ experience of the Second World War seems to have been more distant, more abstract, with death and destruction from the war less real than it was for Van Tech students. It seems also to have been less personally threatening. In 1940 Principal James Gordon mentions that “many of our boys of last year have enlisted, and it is only fitting that we should remember them at this time, and wish them a safe return when their job is done” (KH, 1940, Mr. Gordon’s message, n. p.). This suggests that war was seen as a job that last year’s grads took on. In this same message Gordon quotes John Buchan’s poem, “Montrose,” including the phrase “some things are universal and undying.... They are the guardians of the freedom of the human spirit, the proof of what our mortal frailty can achieve.” This seems to keep the war somewhat ethereal. The following year Gordon summarized the war-related activities of the school as having had a “profound influence on the life of the school,” and he referred to the school term as the “War Work Year.” He wrote,

Our war work efforts...have made school life more interesting and purposeful, and perhaps more serious. Another result has been the better understanding of the meaning and purpose of discipline. Thus our cadet corps, war savings sales, war work groups, first aid clubs, Junior Red Cross, St. John’s Ambulance unit, and our Potlatch organization, which raised enough funds to support our efforts, have made this year

outstanding."

..."[Those of you graduating] will always be able to recall that in your graduating year you were able, in the midst of the world's agony, to put new life into the old school. (KH, 1941, Mr. Gordon's message, p. 3)

Indeed it seemed that Kits was most concerned about the war as a call for fundraising, typically a middle-class feminine preoccupation. The 1940 Kits Potlatch, a school fundraising fair with games and entertainment, raised $1,304 and Kits "adopted the Fort S. James, the first merchant navy ship to be built in Vancouver." One student (Blakstad) remembered his years at Kits: "The war was still on and we had to be in the cadets, the girls separated from the boys." Kits chronicles also notes the way the war directly affected the school: "blackout regulations after the shelling of Estevan Point forced the cancellation of evening activities including the planned opera [and] in 1943 a coal shortage closed the school for two weeks. The 1941 yearbook lists 200 ex-Kits students involved in war duty. In 1945 students were raising money via a memorial fair to pay for a plaque commemorating ex-Kits students killed in the war. It was unveiled in April 1946 listing 140 Kits students killed in action. While there is an apparent concern for world peace, the school itself seems to have been a somewhat isolated world for Kits students providing students with their experience of reality. After the war, Principal H. B. Smith in bidding grads farewell, said the end of the war offered grads an international opportunity:

Although we are not now engaged in a "shooting" war, peace has not yet been achieved. Upon your shoulders is placed the burden of resolving difficult problems which beset our troubled world. Through your student organizations at school you have taken an active part in serving your fellow-students. You now have an opportunity to serve your fellow-men everywhere, not only in your local community, but in all parts of the world. The field of public service is open to every one of us. (KH, 1948, n. p.)

Again this concept of public service helping to solve the world's problems was a middle-class ideal that would not likely have presented itself to Van Tech students. Instead Van Tech students were ready to fight when their country or the Empire needed them to fight. Kits' isolation, its apparent perception of lack of reality of the war, is suggested in the images that Kits students produced during the war, as described in Chapter 6.

Many Van Tech staff members had served in World War I with the British, so they passed on an assumption that upon graduation Van Tech students would join the services. One student stated, "I was surprised that a lot of the [Van Tech] teachers were ex-military from the first [world] war and I think they had that very, very British outlook and carried their military bearing with them" (Zitko). This seems to have been a reason that there was so much apparent

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114 Kits chronicles (p. 23).
115 Ibid.
indoctrination in the yearbooks aimed to move Van Tech students to enlist as they graduated. The 1940 yearbook carried Principal Sinclair’s message: “The world is filled with war and rumours of war.... Many of you will naturally gravitate towards the Air Force, where Technical boys have made a name for the School.” He added, “Many Tech ‘old boys’ have enlisted in the Air Force, and word has been received that they have done exceptionally well, both as mechanics and flyers” (VT, 1940, p. 9). Elsewhere Sinclair confirmed that the outcome of the war depended as much on well-trained ground crew as it did on pilots, navigators, and gun crew (VT, 1944, p. 34). In his 1941 yearend message, Sinclair confirmed the assumption about war service in stating, “Your academic time was curtailed so that you could have more shop training in preparation for your entering war work” (VT, Principal’s Message, p. 9). The 1942 yearbook carries an image of Winston Churchill [Figure 2.2.]. After the well-respected printing teacher, Lewis Elliott, retired in June 1942, an article stated: “His greatest regret is that the compulsory retirement law has deprived him of the privilege of serving his country in the present crisis”’” (VT, 1943, p. 8). Associating this sentiment with the popular Mr. Elliott undoubtedly encouraged students to believe enlisting was the correct thing to do.

With the Depression years having left Tech grads without a job to go to, the school welcomed the promise of purposeful war-time activity. The 1941 yearbook states, “The value of a technical education for boys has been an established fact. The present war stresses the vital need of technically trained men and women” (VT, 1941, Editorial, p. 8). Some students did not wait to graduate in order to join in the war effort. In 1943 Sinclair wrote that it had been a hard year due to the effects of the war with attendance at the school cut to less than half and there being a significant decrease in the ranks of the staff (VT, Principal’s Message, p. 6). Toward the end of the war, Principal E. M. White mentioned that 1,250 Van Tech students had joined the Armed Forces and distinguished themselves “telling of the benefits derived from the School and the training received” (VT, 1945, Message from the Principal, p. 11). Presumably this number included former as well as current Van Tech students.

The practical realities of war and war preparations were evident to Van Tech students in their own environment. The Dominion [federal] government, as a separate institution, had taken control of considerable space and equipment at Van Tech to train Armed Forces personnel, especially “Air Force aircraftsmen” (VT, 1941, p. 15). Sinclair alluded to crowded shops and classrooms cramped with the “influx of soldiers who were taking trade training” (VT, 1941, Principal’s Message, p. 9). He added, “You have been losing room after room until not one more room is left, but we have all been glad to be able to do something for the furtherance of the cause” (VT, 1942, Principal’s Message, p. 9). In keeping with the assumption that grads would go into Armed Forces, the school tried to teach “manliness, decency, and regard for the rights of the other fellow” (VT, 1943). The human devastation of the conflict was
also acknowledged: “Let me express the hope that the end of the war is not far off, when all this death and destruction will cease and human values and dignity will again be restored” (VT, 1945, E. M. White, Message from the Principal, p. 11). Yet Van Tech also made an effort to recognize the difference between military policies and political leaders of enemy countries versus the culture, history, and people of these countries.  

Throughout the war the Van Tech yearbooks carried a roll of honour naming Van Tech’s enlisted teachers and students. Apparently the total number of Van Tech men serving in the forces reached 1,409. In 1946 a roll of service nine pages long in the yearbook honoured all who had been in the Armed Forces and indicated those who had been killed, were missing in action, and were prisoners of war (VT, Roll of Service, pp. 23-32). The potential role for Van Tech students after the war, however, was rather vague: “The peace will bring a new challenge to us all—to unite the forces of mind and heart and spirit for the building of a better world. Let us not fall back into a period of selfish exploitation..., but with faith and sound intelligence work diligently for that better day” (VT, 1945, White, Message from the Principal p. 11).

In 1943, Van Tech’s yearbook, the main outlet for showcasing students’ art skills, was almost curtailed as a result of wartime exigencies. Instead fewer pages and fewer images made up that year’s “wartime economy issue” (VT, 1943, Editorial, n. p.) maintaining their continuous publishing record. As described in Chapter 6, artwork related to the war makes up a category of images having significant visibility in the yearbooks. The art in the Van Tech’s wartime yearbooks confirmed some of the attitudes to the war indicated above.

Social expectations and ongoing education

Through the yearbooks, principals at both Kits and Van Tech expressed the hope that graduating students would carry on with learning, although this was for different purposes primarily reflecting the nature of the school. In 1931, in the absence of available jobs as a result of the Depression, Kits’ Principal H. B. King advised: “See to the continuing of your intellectual life.... Your further growth is infinitely great.... You will either grow or you will decay. Growth comes from struggle and effort” (KH, 1931, p. 7). He concluded: “Your opportunities will soon come. You should be prepared for them.” With this ambiguous comment, one wonders if King was suggesting that students prepare themselves with further training or was suggesting that their schooling had already prepared them for future opportunities.

Principal James Gordon, known for his love of literature and the arts, as he retired in June of 1947 commented to graduates: “The cultural treasures of the great peoples of the earth

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116 This is discussed more fully in Chapter 6 in discussing subject matter related to the war.
have been presented by your teachers for you to see, perhaps admire, but certainly to choose, if you wish, for the adornment of your own life" (KH, 1947, n. p.). This suggested that further study of literature and the arts could be something that Kits graduates might want to engage in for personal enrichment. There are some class assumptions here in assuming that in the future Kits graduates would have the leisure to pursue these kinds of interests. In the same way, the Putman Weir report, more than twenty years earlier, had promoted the arts to create a more cultivated individual and a more cultured society.

After his first year as principal of Kits, H. B. Smith stated in his message, “In our modern society there are many opportunities for adult education.... You have been given an introduction to many subjects. The rest is up to you” (KH, 1948, n. p.). The first option he mentioned is that of going on to some higher institution of learning and specified university and the possibility of attending Normal School. This was potentially relevant to a student with an art interest, as one year of Normal School along with four years at the art school was the route a student would take if aspiring to become a specialist art teacher. During the war, duty had been assumed to take precedence over personal choice for the graduate. Four years after the end of the war, the principal’s message seems particularly optimistic. Smith commented:

Graduation for some means the end of a search for knowledge, while for others it is merely the stepping stone to advanced learning. Whatever our plans, we can look ahead to a future which has endless opportunities to offer to us. (KH, 1949, n. p.)

Despite these mixed comments about potential future learning, one does get a sense that at Kits, compared to Van Tech especially, the assumption was that high school introduced the student to what he or she wanted to do, but that further education likely might be needed.

Van Tech principals, on the other hand, seemed to assume that graduating students would be prepared to take a job immediately. In 1942 Principal James G. Sinclair in the yearbook stated: “.... industrious application to whatever may be your work will be your best contribution towards the good of the new school you are entering—this Canada of ours” (VT, p. 9). But Van Tech principals also assumed that graduates would need to continue to learn. In decrying the fact that some boys were leaving school without having finished their courses, Principal Lister stated:

But happily for us, for our city, and for Canada, we have still the good old stock who hold on to the end, and on whom the nation builds its hopes. They come in year by year, finish their courses, and quietly slip out into the world’s activities. (VT, 1930, p. 7)

The attitude of work as noble, even heroic, and as contributing to nationalism and Canada’s well being, permeates the yearbooks, so it is not surprising that graduates would want to get on with finding a job as soon as they graduated. While acknowledging that most of Van
Tech's graduates did not want to go to the university, Lister suggested that students should return to school for further training and promoted Van Tech to serve that need: "In a short while they will soon realize that their education has just begun and that they must carry on. We will be glad to see them come back, swelling the ranks of the other ex-Techs who attend at night" (VT, 1930, p. 6).

A few years later, Sinclair also alluded to Van Tech's night school program as welcoming back former students: "Either as night school students or as day pupils, we hope you will come back to add further to your store of knowledge" (VT, 1937, p. 7). He added, "This is the day of the skilled specialist. In order to compete successfully, the ambitious employee must work continually to improve himself" (VT, 1937, p. 7). The 1941 yearbook acknowledged that the student, in taking employment, must "be prepared to work from the ground up" (VT, 1937, p. 9), thus suggesting a working class outlook. At the same time Sinclair added, "He is a poor man who thinks he has had enough education and needs no more" (VT, 1937, p. 9). Yet all urging for further education suggests improvement in existing skills rather than aspiring to something beyond working class employment. Night school for trade-related training traditionally had been considered a working-class, male option whereas middle-class or leisure-class women more often had been offered afternoon courses.117 I am not aware of Van Tech offering night school courses to females during the time considered in this study.

Artistic Milieu

In the early 1920s Charles Scott, who was to be the first principal of Vancouver's art school, saw the influx of imported goods in the city as calling for the establishment of an art school in Vancouver. He believed that only in producing well-designed goods, could B.C.'s manufactured products become competitive with imported goods made abroad. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the concept of art training improving industrial design and thus supporting economic development was not a new one. Walter Smith, who arrived in North America from England in 1871, promoted this rationale for art that was central to the South Kensington school approach that was being spread during the last half of the 19th century to various parts of the world. As well as promoting this approach to art education in northeastern United States, Smith lectured on this in Nova Scotia and Ontario,118 where he promoted art education as necessary to train designers capable of creating appealing goods. In the second year of the art school's

school's existence, Scott acknowledged “Many of the students are already in business where drawing and design, modeling and architecture play a big part.” He also wrote:

With increasing wealth and leisure [in the city] had come a demand for those qualities that give satisfaction to the spirit. Housing, furniture, and dress, became more than merely utilitarian. The demand was for more beauty, [so] music, drama, painting, and architecture came in answer.\(^{119}\)

This recognition of spirit and beauty alludes to the other main aspect of art education, that of fine art. These two approaches, basically applied art (utilitarian) and fine art (idealistic), appear in much of the writing throughout the history of art education. The utilitarian-based industrial drawing programs featured practical skills as opposed to an aesthetic approach to art learning associated with fine art's goal. The latter was at times referred to as romantic idealism; it aimed to raise public taste and increase moral goodness. Both these approaches are relevant to the consideration of the kinds of art learning offered at Van Tech and Kits. That which went on in the early years of the art school's existence, from its opening in September of 1925, is relevant to this study in that the main art teachers at Kits and Van Tech to 1950 were at the art school during its early years.

**Vancouver's art school**

On the assumption that the training that pre-service art teachers received was probably reflected in what they taught to their own students, it is particularly relevant to know the kind of art training that students at Vancouver's art school received. Kits' future art teachers in attendance at the art school at that time were Margaret Lewis, Vito Cianci,\(^{120}\) and Jack Shadbolt (part time). Van Tech's art teacher who taught at the art school at that same time was J. W. G. (Jock) Macdonald. To know something of his teaching at the art school, described below, may suggest something of his approach to teaching at Van Tech. From the time of the opening of the Vancouver School of Applied and Decorative Arts, the name of the school until 1933, it was the official institution in the city for high school art teachers to receive their training as art teaching specialists.\(^{121}\) The artist/teachers at the school were of English and Scottish descent. By the second school year, 1926/27 these

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\(^{119}\) Scott. (1927). The Paint Box (pp. 20 & 21).

\(^{120}\) The art school's student publication The Paint Box lists students in full-time attendance in the 1926 and 1930 editions. According to Michael Clark the art school's librarian/archivist, the art school itself does not have attendance records for this time and the student publication does not list part-time students. An interview with Margaret Morris reported that Shadbolt attended the art school one afternoon a week during this time period.

\(^{121}\) Art school director Thornton Sharp was reporting on the 1925/26 year, in Report of the public schools (p. 98).
included Fredrick H. Varley (from England) and Charles Scott and Macdonald (from Scotland); a year later Grace Melvin, also from Scotland, joined the staff. Students in these earlier years came from families having a higher than average socio-economic status of students\(^\text{122}\) and they were mainly female. With the art gallery not being built until 1931, the art school was the centre of artistic activity for the city. Varley, a founding member of the Group of Seven, a Canadian war artist from the from the First World War, and most recently a teacher at the Ontario College of Art, had a well-established reputation as a painter. He "served as a magnet to which students and art patrons were drawn.\(^\text{123}\) "For Varley art was a total commitment. He did not separate his work from teaching or from social activities." He encouraged sketching trips, sharing of studios, and discussions with students.\(^\text{124}\) He taught drawing and painting on his arrival in September of 1926, the second year of the art school's operation.\(^\text{125}\)

J. W. G. (Jock) Macdonald

Jock Macdonald started teaching at the art school at the same time as Fredrick H. Varley, in September 1926.\(^\text{126}\) Born in Scotland, Macdonald, who had most recently been teaching at the School of Art in Lincoln, England, was hired to teach design and crafts in Vancouver. He had served and been wounded in the First World War, after which he studied at and graduated from the Edinburgh College of Art with a diploma in design and an art specialist’s teaching certificate in 1922.\(^\text{127}\) He arrived in Vancouver in 1926 to take up his post as teacher of design and craft at the art school. His joining the staff was seen as having the potential to be of "great value to the crafts and industry of Greater Vancouver"\(^\text{128}\) suggesting his assumed alignment with the original utilitarian focus of the school.

He almost immediately loved B.C. and realized that old world approaches to painting could not express his new home. He wanted to come up with a new art to express B.C., and believed the artist should look directly to nature. When he saw nature inhabited by Indian life, he documented that too, with much the same approach to subject matter as Emily Carr whom he visited on several occasions.\(^\text{129}\) Rather than use symbols from First Nations art or their stylistic approaches in his own painting, he represented First Nations life as well as the unoccupied landscape, the subject his painting done in non-teaching time with Varley at

\(^{122}\) Richardson. First class (p. 9).
\(^{123}\) Richardson. First class (p. 12).
\(^{124}\) Ibid.
\(^{125}\) In the 1926/27 Report of the public schools (p. M 57).
\(^{126}\) Ibid.
\(^{128}\) In the 1926-27 Report of the public schools (p. M14).
Garibaldi, the B.C. Interior, and Vancouver Island. In the art school’s student publication he wrote: “Glory in the beauty of your country for all the big forces of Nature are around you.” One student reporting on the activities in Macdonald’s design class in Sept. 1926, however, showed Macdonald was utilizing and passing on his industrial design training. She wrote that they were instructed to compose a design, starting from a square, in a reoccurring pattern; and to do something with counterchanging patterns, a spot pattern, then a pattern in vertical stripes. They also did overall patterns, designed a panel, and did colour work as well as studied plant forms for their application to conventionalized design in space filling. In the same publication, Macdonald (1927) wrote: “Nature is the only book in matters of design…. Extract all there is to know about God’s creations and then put down observations in own way. That is the only way to create original design.”

Macdonald was described as a “popular instructor, and with such a small class, Macdonald is able to give us individual attention.” The article also mentions the students “doing designs for chintz, drawings of plants in season, experimenting with whitewood boxes and decorating them with our own designs, as well as exercises and lectures on historic ornament.” In mentioning Macdonald and Varley regarding the decision of three pioneer graduates from the first class to stay at Vancouver’s art school for post graduate work, Richardson stated that in doing so these students were in effect deciding “to develop their work further under two of the best art instructors in Canada.” Macdonald’s reputation as a foremost art teacher is an opinion expressed commonly in Canadian art history. Macdonald was very taken with the B.C. landscape. In the art school’s publication Macdonald wrote, “Nature is the only book in matters of design…. Extract all there is to know about God’s creations and then put down observations in your own way. This is the only way to create original design.” Macdonald was one of the teachers at the art school encouraging students to look to their own environment to try to establish a unique British Columbian art.

At a time of financial hardship at the art school, Charles Scott, director of the school, cut salaries in keeping with the guidelines of the Vancouver School Board. For this and other reasons Varley and Macdonald decided to leave the art school in 1933 to set

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130 Ibid. (pp. 35 & 158).
133 Macdonald. (1927). The Paint Box 2, 47.
134 No author indicated. (1927). The Paint Box 2, 10.
135 These students were Reid, Farley, and Weatherbie as described in Richardson. (1987). First class (p. 15).
136 Macdonald. (1927). The Paint Box 2, 47.
up their own school, the B.C. College of Art. This school was well attended, but underfunded. Offering an integration of the arts along with aspects of contemporary psychology, the school was during this two years the creative centre of the city, as the original art school by comparison seemed rather conservative. However, the Depression years in Vancouver could not support a second art school and, without the funding that the original art school was receiving from the Vancouver School Board, this new venture closed down at the end of the school term in 1935. After a stint of painting in the wilderness on the B.C. coast in the company of his wife and young daughter, Macdonald was forced to return to the city as a result of health problems. He received an important commission to paint a wall-sized mural for the new Hotel Vancouver in 1939 showing a scene of First Nations life, but besides this he was without financial resources. Not being able to return to the Vancouver School of Art due to his disloyalty in starting the rival school, and the city offering few other opportunities during the Depression years, he turned to high school art teaching to support his family. This he did after receiving his B.C. art teaching certificate in 1938. Presumably he did this at summer school in Victoria where courses leading to the new specialist certification in art and industrial arts were offered for the first time. After one semester at Templeton Junior High, Macdonald accepted a position at Van Tech beginning in September 1939. I discuss some of his subsequent development as a teacher and artist in Chapter 4 on Van Tech.

Grace Melvin

Grace Melvin arrived in Vancouver in 1927 to teach crafts at Vancouver’s art school the year after J. W. G. (Jock) Macdonald and Fredrick H. Varley joined the staff. She had received her training from and been instructor at the Glasgow School of Art, the home of Charles Rennie Mackintosh known for his Scottish version of art nouveau, his most distinguished example being the architecture of the school itself. She taught pottery, lettering and illumination, and embroidery. Like Macdonald she loved the flora and fauna of B.C. and encouraged her students to look to it for subject matter and training in design. One student admitted that Melvin’s appreciation of B.C. as a new comer “opened our eyes to its beauty.” She reported Melvin as having said, “Look around you at the mountains, sea and forest primeval in this gorgeous part of Canada for you will not find colour more varied, more subtle or more beautifully displayed than in this part of the world.”

138 Richardson. First class (p. 16).
139 Zemans. The inner landscape.
141 Vancouver School of Art and Design. (1927/28). Prospectus.
142 Alexander. Amphora (p. 17).
also told her students, “You will learn more about design by studying nature than I could
tell you or you could read about in any number of books.” Melvin also became interested
in First Nations art and encouraged her students to use such art for inspiration in their own
work. With French Canadian anthropologist Marius Barbeau she co-authored and
illustrated a book on First Nations legends entitled The Indian speaks. Students at the art
school recognized that Melvin had a close personal relationship with Barbeau, probably the
source of her commitment to First Nations imagery in her art and teaching.

Along with her experience in arts and crafts, Melvin brought to Vancouver her
knowledge of the art of the broad-edged pen, featuring pen-formed letter shapes. This was
an approach to lettering which was new to Canada. Lettering, illuminating, and heraldry
were just a few of the skills that Melvin taught to pre-service high school art teachers within
the design and applied art courses. Long-time Greater Vancouver art teacher Madge
Wight, who studied under Melvin at the art school in the mid-1930s, said Melvin “had a
tremendous impact on calligraphy in Vancouver.” One suspects her influence on the pre-
service art teachers when one considers the subsequent highly accomplished, student-
produced lettering that appeared in the high school yearbooks in Vancouver schools. Kits
art teacher Margaret Lewis, at the art school as a student during its first five years, wrote an
article in the art school’s student publication about Melvin, and she stressed the lettering
Melvin taught. Lettering was a requirement at the art school for would-be art teacher
specialists.

In the early 1940s Melvin wrote, lettered, and illustrated a teacher manual and a student
workbook set entitled Applied Art in consultation with Lewis and two other Vancouver

143 Ibid. (p. 17).
144 Barbeau, & Melvin. The Indian speaks.
145 Student Madge Farmer, describing in the student publication the class activities for first year
students in the 1926/27 year, stated that, in the commercial art classes of Charles Scott, students were
“drilled in lettering, both brush and pen-work...and some lettering was finished off in ink” (p. 5). The
fact that this student says “finished off in ink” suggests that this lettering was done in two steps, first
drawn in pencil rather than done in one stroke with a broad edged pen, as students learned to do
once Grace Melvin took over the teaching of lettering at the art school (Alexander, art school student,
late 1930s to early 1940s).
146 The art school’s Prospectus for the session 1929/30, under the heading teacher training,
recommended pre-service teachers take design and at least two crafts. J. W. C. Macdonald was
teaching design and crafts that year; Grace Melvin taught lettering and illumination, embroidery, and
pottery, which were considered crafts, and Spencer P. Judge provided instruction for part-time and
evening students.
147 Morris. The roots of art education (p. 62).
148 Lewis, Margaret. (1928). Glimpses of art school life in Glasgow [about Grace Melvin]. The
educators. Published in 1940 & 1941 by the B.C. Department of Education, the student manual set was to be used in the applied art course available to students majoring in home economics. Besides this manual, Melvin’s main impact on future art teachers in Vancouver seems to have been the concept of looking to one’s own environment for inspiration, the fascination with First Nations art, and pen-based lettering, all of which are evident in the art of Kits students.

Art training for industrial arts teachers

Most industrial arts teachers in the province came up through apprenticeship programs in their particular trade whether that was woodwork, metalwork, printing, drafting, or electricity. But before the Putman Weir report officially promoted the hands-on approach to learning that was central to industrial arts in the high schools, courses were available for these tradesmen to train to become teachers. John Kyle was one of the teachers offering training to such individuals interested in the potential of becoming industrial education teachers in the future. In a report in he wrote in Report of the Public Schools, he referred to the fact that these people taking the available training would be prepared if the government became progressive enough to offer this kind of instruction in the high schools. The annual summer schools, organized by Kyle provided additional training once these people became manual arts/industrial arts teachers.

John Kyle

While I have not in this thesis documented the direct contact of John Kyle (A.R.C.A.), organizer of technical education in B.C., with industrial arts teachers, one feel his presence behind the attitudes prevalent at Van Tech regarding the importance of art training for craftspeople and for those working in the trades and in manufacturing sectors. Having started his career as a drawing master, Kyle was a designer in his own right. Kyle can be seen as being one of the several British art teachers who immigrated to Canada bringing with them doctrines of Britain’s South Kensington system of art teaching that considered drawing and design as an aid to industry in increasing the value of goods and products while also enhancing taste through an appreciation of the beautiful. He was recognized for his pioneer work in industrial education. Kyle had been appointed to the staff of the provincial Normal School, Vancouver, in November 1910 where he had been drawing

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149 Grace E. Melvin, Irene Green, & Margaret Lewis. (1940). Applied arts manual. Student manual and workbook. Victoria: B. C. British Columbia Department of Education. This was a prescribed text for home economics students by from 1942 beyond 1950.


He subsequently became director of technical education for the Department of Education until his retirement in 1938. In this position Kyle was responsible for supervision of summer courses from the opening in 1915 of Victoria's provincial Normal School. Kyle taught the advanced art course there in 1917 and served as director of the summer school from 1925 to 1936.\textsuperscript{152} Several of Van Tech's staff taught at the summer schools. This included from the first summer school's existence in 1915 future Van Tech principal James G. Sinclair, who taught art,\textsuperscript{153} and in 1923 Van Tech machine shop practice teacher Harry A. Jones, who taught "art metalwork."\textsuperscript{154} In fact the reports on the summer schools over the years generally indicate more art teachers on staff than teachers of any other subject.

Kyle wrote three texts that were published in 1931 and by the 1932/33 year these were listed as official texts on the B.C. prescribed textbook list for industrial arts. They were entitled \textit{Design for industrial arts. Book I, Woodwork; Design for industrial arts. Book II, Metal-Work; Design for industrial arts. Book III, Lettering}.\textsuperscript{155} The text on woodworking included chapters on a grammar of design, Greek contours, fretwork or piercing, decoration of the surface with viener or gouge, the panel, chip carving, wood-turning, stained woodwork, Gesso, stencilling, and borders. It is well illustrated with striking illustrations of Greek mouldings and ancient and Arab incised work in plaster. Chapters in the metalwork text included metal etching, art metal-work, metal piercing, forging, contours, practical geometry, and scales. The book on lettering provided grammar of design, lettering, spacing and proportioning, symmetry and balance, woodblock printing, linoblock printing, construction of booklets, early books, and genealogy of the alphabet. Focusing on the design and art elements in these three areas of industrial arts, Kyle provided students with a background understanding of art and design involved in the trade in which they expected to be working. These books are well illustrated and as no credits are provided for the visuals, one assumes that Kyle did the appealing illustrations himself.

As organizer of technical education, Kyle was one of the major proponents for the establishment of Vancouver's art school and one in Victoria. His rationale for art training was that art schools were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152} G. S. Hodder. (1982). \textit{Art in the public schools} (p. 19).
\item \textsuperscript{153} Miller. (1987). \textit{A history of aesthetic education} (p. 14).
\item \textsuperscript{154} Both Harry A. Jones, who had been on the staff of Vancouver Technical from the beginning of the school's existence, and T. J. Longhurst wrote \textit{Engineering drawing}, on the prescribed textbook list from when it was published in 1934 through the period of this study. Previously Jones (1931) wrote \textit{Machine shop practice (I and II)}, widely used texts.
\item \textsuperscript{155} Kyle, John. (1931). \textit{Design for industrial arts. Book I, Woodwork; Design for industrial arts. Book II, Metal-Work; Design for industrial arts. Book III, Lettering}. They were all published in Toronto by Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd.
\end{itemize}
required greatly as centres for educating the taste of the craftsmen. Most of the failures in the manufacturing of local products may be traced to certain crudeness in productions and the standard of taste must be improved. In the prominent manufacturing countries this is accomplished through the training obtained in schools of design.156

Kyle’s interest in the improvement in design to improve commercial enterprises was a belief shared by Van Tech’s principal James G. Sinclair, which he passed on to all Van Tech staff, especially those teaching shop courses. Kyle said that to achieve the goal of improving Canadian industrial products, art skills were needed “for the greatest value to be added to the material resources of the province”157 Throughout the Depression Kyle continued to stress needs of industry as related to training in art for future industrial employees.158 A similar aim was important to Van Tech High School as well, as it attempted to produce skilled tradesmen so Vancouver could produce its own well-designed, well-made products to contribute to industrial advancement.

Summary

Educational, social, and artistic forces in B.C. society aided in the establishment and early development of Kits and Van Tech, and once in their new school facilities, helped shape the diverse natures of the two schools. In turn, aspects of school culture directly or indirectly impacted the kind of art learning that was available at these two schools as is shown in Chapters 3 and 4 on Kits and Van Tech respectively where I discuss the various avenues for art learning, both formal and informal, at the two schools.

CHAPTER THREE—Art Learning at Kits

During the period 1920 to 1950 Kits was transformed from having a substandard art programme into being a school where visual arts flourished in a supportive arts culture. In 1920 the supervisor of drawing for Vancouver had reported that the drawing program of Kits was not meeting expected high school standards.159 This supervisor, Charles Scott, stated that an improvement would not likely occur until qualified drawing teachers were available.160 The 1924 provincial art textbook, of which Scott was an author, required high school art students to draw repetitive motifs, simple objects, and stylized forms from nature, to study traditional lettering and colour theory, and use flat watercolour tones.161 By mid-century, however, programmes of study allowed for much more, and students at Kits were producing proficient and diverse student artwork in a variety of media. The intent of this chapter is to suggest some of the forces at work and activities in the school that enabled this additional art learning to be accomplished.

Art Facilities and Equipment

Kits’ new building was earmarked to have the most up-to-date equipment and facilities.162 While Kits started out with the best of what was available in the new building in 1927, upgrades to the new school continued. Despite the financial hardships of the Depression years, Principal H. B. King was able to get approval to carry out renovations to the school in the mid-1930s. In 1927 the art rooms were regular classrooms having no sink and only standard, small, slanted-top desks on runners bolted to the floor (Howard). In the mid-thirties, however, sinks were installed in the art rooms and the desks were changed to flat individual tables with larger tops (Russell White, student from 1933 to 1937; John Wytenbroek, student from 1935 to 1941). Wytenbroek, who arrived at Kits in 1935 entering Grade 7, took art for two years. He recently did his own study of King and places the upgrades as being done in 1934/35 just before King left.163 He said, “These upgrades were seen as part of King’s legacy.” He also remembered that by the mid-1930s, the art teacher had access to projectors to show coloured lantern slides (Wytenbroek); these did not seem to be part of the teaching equipment in the art

159 Charles H. Scott. (1920). Annual report of the Vancouver board of school trustees. He was reporting for the period from September to December, 1919. Hereafter called School board report.
160 Soon after in an attempt to create a body of drawing specialists for the schools, Scott conducted teachers’ classes after school two days a week (School board report, December 20, 1920).
161 Scott et al. (pp. 141-167).
room during Kits' first year in the new building (Howard). These physical changes allowed for the expansion of traditional art courses which, to that point, had been restricted primarily to drawing and design.

The art rooms flanked the main entrance of the school [Figure 3.1], one at the northeast corner and one at the northwest corner. Joy Coghill (grad of mid-1940s), known for her contribution to Canadian theatre and television drama, pointed out the significance of this position of the art rooms. "The art rooms were right there, not hidden away at the back. You couldn’t overlook the fact that art was being taught in the school. Somehow the highly visible location suggested its importance too.” Another student said murals-in-progress outside the room made it even more apparent that art was taught in rooms at the front of the school (White).

The Art Teachers

In heading the new amalgamated Kits school, Principal King was able to hand pick the teachers on his staff (Wytenbroek; James U. Gray, student in early the 1940s). Soon after the opening of the new amalgamated school, three art teachers were on staff at any one time. From 1929 beyond the end of the period of this study, the long tenure of Margaret Lewis (1929-1963) gave remarkable stability to the art programme, along with Moira Macdonald (1938-1960), Vito Cianci (1934-1942), and Jack Shadbolt (part-time in 1927; full-time in 1931-1932 and 1935-1937). Art teachers who were at Kits prior to its becoming an amalgamated school or who taught art only briefly include S. P. Judge, Leon Manuel, Unina Hall, and Sybil Hardwicke. They are not described here, as my interviewees were not taught by these teachers and these teachers’ tenures were relatively short.

Jack Shadbolt

Principal K. B. King was daring enough to appoint to his newly-expanded staff, an art teacher who was very young with only high school manual art training and no experience in teaching. This young man (born 1909) was the later renowned B.C. artist Jack Shadbolt. He had taken manual arts at Victoria High School, recognized for its supportive arts culture under principal Ira Dilworth. Dilworth is known for his personal encouragement of B.C. artist Emily Carr (Carr, 1946). In the summer of 1927, before taking up his part-time teaching

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\(^{163}\) He completed this study in a graduate course with education historian Patrick Dunae at Malaspina University College in Nanaimo, B.C. Dunae is editor of “The Homeroom: British Columbia's History of Education” web site.

\(^{164}\) This is according to staff lists on database produced by Kits volunteers; in keeping of librarian. Teachers’ part-time work is not included in the listing.
position at Kits, Shadbolt attended summer school for teachers at the Provincial Normal School in Victoria studying under Harry Dunnell and William Weston. Margaret Morris reported Shadbolt as saying that while he was teaching at Kits he went to art school one morning a week and commented "Mr. Scott let him in, he knew a lot more than he could show, and could talk about art." Shadbolt is quoted as having said, "Teaching is 9/10ths about asking the right questions." As Shadbolt was young and inexperienced as a teacher and unproven as an artist, he wouldn't likely have felt the frustration that J. W. G. (Jock) Macdonald apparently did arriving at to teach at Van Tech as an experienced art collage teacher and a recognized artist. Rather Shadbolt was just setting out in establishing himself as an art teacher and artist. In fact, none of my former student interviewees were aware of Shadbolt's striving to be an artist when they had him at Kits. He apparently did not show any of his own artwork to his classes. S. P. Judge, as supervisor of art in Vancouver Schools over 15 years after he himself had been a part-time art teacher at Kits, wrote a letter of reference for Shadbolt when he was leaving his teaching position at Kits to travel. Judge refered to Shadbolt as a "progressive teacher" and mentioned that he had served on provincial art curriculum committees.

One student in Shadbolt's art class in his first year of teaching at Kits was reassured to find that Shadbolt's approach was not prescriptive. Instead he set out specific goals and then allowed students to determine how to accomplish the objectives on their own (Dorothy Howard, student from 1927 to 1931). As alluded to in the opening of Chapter 1, this student was relieved to find that Shadbolt didn't require students to master a stroke-free wash (as had been required by her former art teacher) before proceeding with other work, as specified in the official art text.

The concept of teacher-as-a-guide, rather than of teacher as an authoritarian figure, was generally considered one of the characteristics of a progressive approach. This progressive

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165 Waites et al. The first fifty years (p. 23).
166 Because part-time teachers were paid separately and not listed in the Department of Education's Public School Reports, official records do not confirm Shadbolt's presence as teaching at Kits this early. Only the accompanying photograph and one informant's memories place Shadbolt at Kits in the 1927/28 school year. Doris Shadbolt confirms that her husband started teaching at age 18 (which corresponds), but she did not know at what school. Shadbolts' Vancouver School Board employment record summarizes his teaching years prior to the 1930s as a total made from part-time work (File A, 4B, Shadbolt collection, Special Collections, University of British Columbia).
168 Charles H. Scott was principal of Vancouver's art school. He was former supervisor of art in Vancouver originally from the Glasgow School of Art.
169 Morris. The roots of art education (p. 72).
170 Jock Macdonald's teaching at Van Tech is described in Chapter 4.
171 Letter dated August 26, 1937, File A, 4B, Shadbolt collection, Special Collections, University of British Columbia.
stance is revealed in the photograph [Figure 3.2] of a 19-year-old “Mr.\textsuperscript{172} Shadbolt” posing with some Kits students from his 1927/28 art class and friends on a spring weekend expedition to Hollyburn Mountain (photograph by Dorothy Howard). Apparently on such expeditions, Shadbolt and the “more responsible members of the class” sketched on the ferry on the way over to the North Shore as well as on the mountain when the weather was good (Howard). Outdoor sketching was in keeping with the tradition of William Weston’s teaching at the Provincial Normal Schools in Vancouver and, in the summers, at Victoria where Shadbolt met him.\textsuperscript{173} In-service teachers in Weston’s classes drew and painted landscapes outdoors.\textsuperscript{174} In Weston’s 1933 B.C. art text for elementary and high school levels, he also encouraged outdoor work: “The summer and fall months are the best for Nature Drawing, especially out of doors. This is the time to provide material for the design lessons which can be carried on during the winter months” (p.15). One student described Shadbolt as an inspiring, gentle, and patient teacher even to those who perceived themselves as having no talent (Wytenbroek). He also identified Shadbolt as a sympathetic art teacher who never made students feel ashamed of their lack of ability in art class. “In the time that I had him, I never felt that I was wasting his time” (Wytenbroek). This student was in Shadbolt’s art class for Grades 7 and 8. He remembered working in those classes with square coloured pastels, pencil, and conté, and painting in watercolours and poster paint, as well as shaping papier-maché into three-dimensional forms. According to Wytenbroek, Shadbolt had a passion for his subject that was obvious to his students. He also said, “There was a respect there that bred mutual respect.” Far from dreading or wanting to avoid art class, Wytenbroek remembers the class for its “sense of peace.” He elucidated: “You paid attention. You did not play around. You got involved in your work, and that was because of the person Shadbolt was” (Wytenbroek).

Russell White found Shadbolt unflappable and objective in his approach to students. Russell let Shadbolt know that he was a nephew of Emily Carr, not something that impressed Shadbolt. During a drawing-from-observation exercise, White (who admitted he thought this was a “smart-Alec” thing to do) chose to draw the brewery across the park within sight of the art classroom window. Unperturbed by the subject matter, Shadbolt merely critiqued the drawing, saying, “White, make the verticals vertical.” This student realized that when he corrected the verticals, “the whole drawing fell into place.” White said this was the most

\textsuperscript{172} The terms Mr., Miss and, less often, Mrs. were generally used in the school setting at this time; students usually did not know a teacher’s first name. I have kept the courtesy title where they related to how a student referred to the teacher, usually in a direct quote, and where it has helped with clarification to keep the teachers easily recognizable from student interviewees or from individuals with the same name. Where feasible I have used last name only. This is not intended to suggest status or class relating to the person named.

\textsuperscript{173} Morris, \textit{The roots of art education} (p. 72).

important principle that he ever learned about drawing and he was able to use this principle also in improving his photography as a member of Kits’ camera club. White described group murals done, in Shadbolt’s class, on large paper by students working in the corridors outside the classroom. Asked whether all students or just the best artists in the class worked on these murals, White answered, “They were more likely just done by students who could be trusted, unsupervised, not to throw chalk in the hallways.”

Shadbolt’s early students (Howard, White, and Wytenbroek) admitted to not having had prior knowledge of what was being done in art outside of the school or appearing in city art galleries. Apparently to them, downtown involved a long ride on the streetcar. Wytenbroek, however, remembered receiving some knowledge of a wider art world through the art reference books in the classroom and Shadbolt’s lantern slides. Wytenbroek credited Shadbolt’s slide presentations with his appreciation of contemporary Vancouver architecture that featured the building of the new city hall, the Seaforth Armouries, and the Burrard Bridge. “Shadbolt’s whole thrust was to help you enjoy what you were doing or to enjoy art generally. He would show slides, explain why something was good, and that sort of thing” (Wytenbroek).

Shadbolt was one of the teachers who transmitted to Kits the interest in B.C. Native art among art school staff and students. In the spring of 1936 as part of the school’s Cavalcade, a social function and fundraiser, Shadbolt trained a troupe of female students to perform Native Indian dances in student-made costumes. The degree of authenticity of the dances and costumes was apparently not a concern.

The mural shown in a poor-quality photograph in the Kits yearbook (KH, 1937, p.43), labeled simply as Mural Club without any identifying names, looks as if it could have been done by Shadbolt or under his tutelage. It reveals a knowledge of social realism, specifically that of the mural artists working under publicly-supported arts programme (WPA) in the United States during the Depression. The mural depicts more than a dozen boys in a classroom at a cluster of tables (some of them with slanting tops). The boys seem to be actively engaged, presumably in planning some art project. Whether this image was done by students or Shadbolt himself, it is evidence of competent work representing student life at Kits and revealing a knowledge of a contemporary art style. Appearing as it does in the 1936/37 yearbook suggests it was completed during Shadbolt’s final year in the school.

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175 Kits chronicles and The Kits anniversary video.
176 Kits commissioned Shadbolt to do a mural for the school in 1935 (Scott Watson. 1990. Under heading Commissions, n. p.).
When Shadbolt left Kits in the summer of 1937 in order to travel and study,\textsuperscript{177} he was one of three full-time art teachers on staff at Kits.\textsuperscript{178} In 1939 he was on staff at the art school.\textsuperscript{179}

**Margaret Lewis**

After receiving her level one teaching certificate,\textsuperscript{180} Margaret Lewis began attending Vancouver's art school from the second year of its existence, the 1926/27 term.\textsuperscript{181} Another Kits art teacher, Vito Cianci, was at the art school the same time, one year ahead of Lewis. She proceeded directly to Kits after completing her training, which at that time was three years for a high school art teacher.\textsuperscript{182} Lewis was central to the Kits art program being on staff as an art teacher from 1929 to 1963 and became head of Kits' art department (James Macdonald). A former art supervisor remembers her as a "team player" (Gray). A warm person with a sense of humor, she was apparently well liked by all her students. Even Kits' art students who didn't have Lewis as a teacher remember her with respect. She was particularly supportive of students who showed a serious interest in art (Stephen Ursulescu, grad of 1950; Peter Snelgrove, student from 1939 to 1944). James Gray, who took art at Kits as a student from 1941 to 1943, and later became Lewis' supervisor, said of her, "She was the kind of person who made a difference in students' lives."

In the early 1930s, Lewis was active in forming an association of Vancouver art teachers that eventually became the B.C. Art Teachers Association (BCATA). In this capacity she created, with James Macdonald, a display of native masks for teachers revealing an early interest in First Nations art that she promoted in her students as well (Gray). She also created an exhibition of Norris cartoons, demonstrating that she took cartooning seriously as an art form (Gray).

Snelgrove kept in touch with Margaret Lewis until 2000 when she was approaching almost 100 years old. As an adult he became aware of the sketchbooks Lewis kept for visually recording her summer trips to Europe with her sister and her excursions with the Alpine Mountaineering Club on the local, North Shore mountains (Snelgrove). He was not aware of Lewis' ever showing her sketchbooks in class to Kits students when she was teaching, but he states she looked the role of an artist in the long smock she routinely wore in the classroom. Despite not sharing her sketchbooks, she was able to pass on the sketchbook habit to some students. Ursulescu, who took art with Lewis for several years, became a committed sketcher. In

\textsuperscript{177} Moira Macdonald was hired after Shadbolt left.
\textsuperscript{178} Kits 1936/37 yearbook lists staff in association with the school's four-house system noting Shadbolt as being on South House, Miss Lewis, North House, and Mr. Cianci, North House, confirming they were all on staff in 1936/37 year.
\textsuperscript{179} Watson. (1990).
\textsuperscript{180} Received in January, 1925, according to the 23rd School board report for the year ending Dec. 31, 1925.
\textsuperscript{181} List of students in The Paint Box. (1927).
\textsuperscript{182} 1926 Prospectus.
his final year he drew almost daily, often with other “field drawing buddies” (Ursulescu). They sketched in various locations throughout the west side of Vancouver [Figure 3.3]. The extensive portfolios of artwork that Ursulescu has maintained from this period of his life document this activity.

**Applied art**

Lewis also taught applied art to students majoring in textiles in home economics. She taught this in her regular art classroom at the northwest corner of the school. This was strategic in so far as the home economics rooms were in the west wing also (Eva Williamson, grad of 1935). Students unhesitatingly considered the applied art course as their art course (Lyla Brown, grad of 1949; Williamson). It covered many of the same basic elements and principles as the regular art courses (proportion, balance, unity, symmetry) even while these principles were being applied primarily to clothing and interior decoration. Williamson remembered designing and producing an embossed and painted, soft leather purse and a smocked dress for her younger cousin in this class in the mid-1930s.

From the 1940s this course was based on a teacher manual and a student workbook set entitled **Applied art**, Grace Melvin, craft teacher from the art school, and Lewis and two others planned and designed this learning resource for the B.C. Department of Education (1940/41). This manual enabled students to keep together all their applied design work done over their three years of home economics study. They drew and painted their designs and did their planning directly on the pages of the manual. One student from the late 1940s remembered walking to a cloth shop to obtain free samples of material to glue into her book next to her proposed dress designs (Brown). Lewis’ knowledge and stimulation was also available to students through the various art-related clubs that she supervised at Kits through the years.

**Moira Macdonald**

Beginning at Kits in the late 1930s, Moira Macdonald was on staff as an art teacher for more than 20 years. According to Hamish Cameron (grad of 1950), Miss Macdonald looked somewhat severe in her dark tailored suits and she wore a short smock only when she was demonstrating something potentially messy. Thus she seemed more of a teacher than an artist, but she was nevertheless an inspiring, effective art teacher (Cameron, Ursulescu). Also she “had a sense of humour if you knew how to get at it” (Ursulescu). Through the use of reproductions and with explanations accompanied by sweeping hand and arm gestures, she introduced her senior art students to the simplifications of abstraction and the vitality of modern art. Students also listened to music to come up with scenes that were suggestive of the music (Cameron, Ursulescu). Examples from Hamish’s portfolio of classroom art from
Macdonald's class suggest that students did this without falling into apparently meaningless, colourful pattern-making in response to music as seems to have been done elsewhere in Vancouver schools in the 1940s.

Macdonald started her beginning art students with a prescribed course that provided basic art rules. Ursulescu, a student of both Macdonald and Lewis explained, "Art was not do-your-own-thing. We studied the golden mean. We had a grounding. We learned that certain proportions looked better than other proportions so it was somewhat of a classical base" (Ursulescu). Hamish's class workbook from Grade 10 shows that Macdonald was expanding on an approach prescribed in the textbooks existing from 1924 in the Scott et al. text and in 1933 by Weston. Some of the features of Macdonald's course included a study of lettering in classical proportions for capital and small letters; basic colour theory; charcoal drawings of animals and birds, figures observed in action, and figures from memory; sketches of interiors, planes, ships, cars, and local scenes; drawings of cylindrical containers and boxes from varying eye levels, exercises in one- and two-point perspective of buildings, gardens, vistas, and tile flooring; charcoal portraits; cartoons and caricatures; and night scenes. The work in this sketchbook was done in pencil, pen and ink, paint, and charcoal.183

Macdonald, in marking Hamish's Grade 10 sketchbook that contained much of his daily class work, showed that in teaching the lower grades, up to and including Grade 10, she had a fairly prescriptive approach. She expected precision and the following of instructions. On one exercise showing a skeletal, door-less building illustrating the principles of two-point perspective, she questioned "doorway?" And in a drawing of a house in a similar exercise, she noted: "Not upright. Your verticals are not at right angles to floor." On another exercise showing a formal garden, she commented, "Hedge too large for garden."

Hamish's classroom art from a later grade, however, still under Macdonald, shows painted studies of trees and scenes in watercolour and tempera, some painted outdoors [Figure 3.4]. He also has paintings of atmospheric scenes inspired by music, a study in

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183 This approach to art learning was not dissimilar to that used in a 1926 applied arts course in Alberta as evident in an Applied art manual of distance education. Much of this is also apparent in the high school course work done by Alberta student Dermott McInnes as evident in his Grade 10 art workbook done in Edmonton's Victoria High School in 1923. The design work Dermott did seems to be also similar to what was being taught in B.C.'s summer school to teachers in 1924, judging by the photograph of the cover designs of 17 portfolios showing lettering and applied design produced there by B.C. teachers. The portfolio covers similarly reveal flat designs mainly based on conventionalized botanical drawings as border edges with lettering in all capitals saying "Drawings," or "Portfolio" and in one case only "Art" (p. T94c, report by J. W. Gibson in the 53rd Annual Report of the Director of the Summer School for Teachers, 1923/24, pp. T 92 to T 96). These also show a similarity to the type of design appearing in the 1920/33 text Applied art by Pedro de Lemos and in the popular American publication School Arts edited by de Lemos. B.C.'s officially-approved text by Scott, Weston, and Judge, published in 1924, shows a similar approach to design, perhaps suggesting common sources and shared intensions in approaching design work.
Chinese brush strokes illustrating bamboo shoots [Figure 3.5] and depicting vistas. This work confirms that her Grade 11 students had more freedom in their approach than did students in the lower grades where work was more prescribed.

Macdonald too was able to pass on the commitment to keeping a sketchbook. Hamish took up his sketchbook habit in the form of doing a cartoon summarizing the most ironic aspect of his day during his final year at Kits, and he continued documenting striking experiences of his life in this way for some years later as seen in extant artwork. One series of such cartoons, which he did while in Grade 10, features the Fraser Valley flood of 1948 [Figure 3.6]. Having been recruited as an able-bodied youth during these floods just outside Vancouver, Hamish worked there several days building dykes to divert or hold back the water. Accustomed to recording his daily experience, in this case his experience of helping with flood control, he did the series of humorous cartoons to capture this involvement.

Vito Cianci

Vito Cianci attended Vancouver art school from the first year it opened, but having a teaching certificate from the Normal School, he took a teaching job before graduating, so he is not recognized as being one of the art school’s pioneer graduates.\(^{184}\) He was the first editor of the art school’s student-publication, The Paint Box, and there he shows a basic sense of humour, which seems to have been repressed in his teaching at Kits. At least he seems to be remembered as being a rather serious teacher. Art student Peter Snelgrove explained that in Cianci’s class you “knew who was boss.” Yet this teacher took personal interest in students seriously interested in art. For instance, Cianci recognized Peter’s strength in art (the only subject, he says, that he got A’s in) while perhaps considering him as being somewhat disadvantaged in coming from a single parent home (not something Peter felt himself). Cianci and the librarian, Miss Creelman seemed to look out for him. Together they took Peter to plays and other cultural events in Vancouver, and Miss Creelman visited Peter and his mother at home. One day Peter was called down to the school nurse’s office where he was told that he and his mother were to receive a turkey hamper for Christmas. His reaction? “I was outraged. I said, ‘Why don’t you give it to someone poor?’ I never felt poor in my life.” But when he told his mother he had turned down the hamper, she responded, “You fool!” (Snelgrove). Help came in a more acceptable way to Peter in his final year at Kits. Cianci made contact with a commercial art firm to have Peter interviewed to serve an apprenticeship there. He said he “bundled up” artwork that he’d done in art class and cartoons that he had done for the

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\(^{184}\) The eleven students from the first graduating class at the art school referred to themselves as the PASO VAS, acronym for “pioneer art students of the Vancouver Art School” as explained in Richardson, First class (p. 14).
yearbook [Figure 3.7] and went off to the interview. That interview led directly to his life’s work as a graphic designer (Snelgrove).

Cianci was known as the photography enthusiast of the school always “carrying his camera everywhere” (KH, 1942). For several years he sponsored the photography club and looked after the photo needs of the yearbooks including at times when Lewis was art director of the annual. He was a frequent contributor of articles to B.C. Teacher magazine, some of which were about photography and audio-visual materials. Cianci was then also trying to establish a credit course in photography. In the early 1940s he was also sponsor of the poster club.

Contribution of Library Resources, Other Teachers, and Other Courses

Not only art teachers and classroom art experiences contributed to students’ art learning; there were various other factors contributing to creating students’ interest in art and to aiding in their skill development.

Library and librarian

Kits’ library from the mid-30s had a notable collection of art books, partially as a result of receiving a Carnegie art book collection award for winning a mural-making contest on a Native art subject. Apparently it was the only school in Western Canada to obtain this recognition. A participant described working with a group of other students on this potentially permanent mural that they made in situ on the walls just outside the gymnasium door. Later when a couple of these former students who had created the mural, by then teaching at Vancouver’s art school, heard that a Kits principal had ordered the mural to be obliterated, they were angry. Only the book collection remains in the school as evidence of the winning mural’s existence. Stephen Ursulescu remembered being impressed by folio-sized reproductions of Egyptian drawings that were part of the library’s art resources, not likely something other school libraries had. Kits librarian, Amelia Creelman influenced serious art students in recognizing their particular interests and encouraging them. She led students to special art books and allowed them to utilize resources that she kept in her library office off the main reading room. At least two students felt they were being given special privileges in having access to her office and the books and publications that she received or kept there.

Compulsive cartoonist Hamish Cameron dared to draw cartoons during mandatory study periods in the library that were supervised by Creelman. He explained, “She was tall and she could see a long way,” so he was “caught” doing this. But rather than being

185 Cianci. (1926). The old man speaks out. The Paint Box 2, 16.
186 Kits chronicles.
reprimanded for doing cartoons when he should have been studying, Creelman called Hamish into her library office and introduced him to the collection of New Yorker magazines featuring a variety of cartoons. He began collecting New Yorker magazines within a couple of years of leaving Kits and has every edition since then. Cartooning remains a major art interest for him today (Cameron). Student artist Rolph Blakstad (grad of 1947) also indicated how important the librarian and library resources were to him.

Miss Creelman was an enormous support. She was the librarian; she understood how much one could absorb just browsing in books about every subject imaginable. About Chichen Iza (which I filmed later for CBC), ... the old National Geographic bound volumes, the 1930's German photo annuals, and so on and so on. I did depend very much on library research in all my efforts to acquire insight into whatsoever..... I was thoroughly at home in using the reference library.... It was not necessary to ask Miss Creelman, but she was certainly helpful if material could not easily be found; we were 17 years old after all.... Miss Creelman I also remember as being very kind, one who transmitted her interest in one's welfare in a personal way. (Blakstad)

The above comments confirm the positive role of libraries and librarians in supporting art learning in the schools. The art of some students also reflects the influence of books and library sources in their art. Figure 3.8 by Blakstad is an example revealing, as it does, knowledge of book illustration. This image is described in more detail elsewhere.

Latin and Latin teacher

In the 1940s Kits art students felt the influence of the Latin teacher, Miss Beveridge, in several ways. Far from being preoccupied only with conjugating Latin verbs, students learned a great deal about Roman culture and history partly through the many illustrated books in the Latin classroom. Students created projects and did drawings and paintings that demonstrated their understanding of this culture. Stephen Ursulescu showed me drawings he did as scenes from Roman history. He also remembered making a siege tower, and he demonstrated to me the fully functional scale model of an early canon with mechanical trajectory that he made in Latin class. Ursulescu explained that he and other students who took both Latin and art (including Jim Genis who did the scratchboard drawing of the school in Figure 3.1 and later taught at the art school) painted a large frieze around the top of the Latin classroom. The three-foot high frieze, painted on building paper, ran the length of two walls above the moulding. It depicted the inside of a Roman bath incorporating faux marble, flame standards, trompe l'oeil doorways, statuary, and other Roman interior decoration (Ursulescu).

Also, one Kits yearbook (KH, 1946, n. p.) had a Roman theme revealing how the inspiration about Roman culture received in Latin class found expression in some students' artwork. Rolph Blakstad, who did not study Latin ("French was bad enough"), was a significant contributor to the Roman-theme yearbook. He said, "Of course there were sections
on Roman culture on the library shelves.” One of his images in that yearbook is a cartoon of a gladiator driving a chariot that was chased by a lion such that the attempt to elude the lion required greater speed than the chariot could safely manage and having unfortunate results [Figure 3.9].

Teachers’ Personal Aid to Students

Several Kits students spoke highly of teachers from whom they feel they received personal attention. In a written interview, Rolph Blakstad (grad of 1947) articulated what such attention meant to him:

The male teacher that I remember best was Mr. Burch our English literature teacher, again, because of his individual interest and kindness to me. He was interested in photography as I was and he used to lend me his camera. I remember I wrote a précis on the theme of “Childe Roland to the dark tower came.” He liked it so much he asked if he could keep it. It is after all a kind of love that touches us most deeply, that allows the transmission of teaching to pass beyond and to be cherished after all these years. (Blakstad)

Extra-Curricular Art-Related Activities

With similar deliberation Rolph Blakstad acknowledged the value of such group activities at Kits such as making posters and murals for dances, seeing the penny films, etc. He stated,

I do feel that it is extra-curricular activities related to the social life of the school which are of greatest help for pupils with artistic talent, pupils who are driven by inner energies. It is most important that they have opportunities to relate to the actual social life around them, both for their own healthy development and for the enrichment of the social scene itself. You LEARN BY DOING! [Emphasis is in original.] You will find the means if there is a social and personal need to find them. (Blakstad)

He concluded, “The atmosphere at Kits did have an impact on my artistic development.” The 1947/48 Kits yearbook alluding to memories of the school year stated, “The paper drives, the track meets, the mixers, our first date, the opera, the school picnic, and finally the graduation; all the things that school means are now memories.” It is interesting that to this writer the extra-curricular social activities of the school constituted the “meaning” of school, suggesting they were the important things in school life (there is no mention of courses or classes).

In the 1950 “Valedictory” by Joan Inkster she mentioned that graduating students had experienced six years of growing in learning, friendships, and personality, and she added, “The rehearsing for a play, the raising of the flag at a roll-call assembly, the singing on the boat coming home from the picnic, and making “pom-poms” for the indoor track meets—all are so
familiar—yet so significant. Again this suggests that, for Kits students, that which they learned through extra-curricular events was as important to them as their regular academic work.

**Production of the publications**

During the 1936/37 school year the publications club had begun producing the award-winning school newspaper called *K.H.S. Life*. Seventeen boys and two girls are depicted as being on staff (VT, 1937, p. 38). Mrs. Brown is listed as being the club sponsor for the 1938/39 school year. Production of Kits’ high school yearbook was a major way in which students had additional access to teachers’ expertise. The first one was produced in the 1930/31 school year; Depression conditions meant it was not published again until the 1936/37, and it missed publishing in 1943, possibly due to the paper shortage that also caused Van Tech’s yearbook to be shortened and referred to as their “War time economy issue” (VT, 1943). Margaret Lewis was most often the sponsor supervising the art aspect of Kits’ yearbook with Vito Cianci in charge of the photography. Miss Creelman and others were involved as well. Kits’ yearbooks were often called Haida (alternate titles and dates appear in the bibliography under Kitsilano Secondary School). The Kits yearbook was more representative of other high school yearbooks in the city than was Van Tech’s yearbook. Like other high school yearbooks, Kits’ annual focused on the school year’s athletic, social, literary, and arts events while highlighting the personalities of the students, especially those in their graduating year.

Art students did illustrations for the yearbooks that served several purposes: they provided a visually appealing cover; carried the theme of the yearbooks; created decorative dividers delineating the sections of the publication (sections featuring grads, sports, social activities, literary, etc.); provided amusement through cartoons; or just generally showcased the talents of some of the art students in the school. In some cases, as with yearbooks of other schools, individual pages were hand printed by Kits students and inserted when the yearbooks were professionally bound. Rolph Blakstad indicated, “Work on the yearbook was like homework; you did it at home, and fitted it in with other homework…. I don’t know whose decision it was to ask me to do the annuals.”

Editorial control was primarily with the students producing the Kits yearbook from the beginning with their student-focused approach. But this was increasingly so through the years. By 1948, the principal’s message to graduating students, for instance, no longer received full-page coverage as it had in the past. Instead the message “H. B. Smith bids farewell” and Smith’s photo share the page along with two other photos and articles about staff members. This greater democratization for Kits students in deciding what was to go into

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187 The Kits anniversary video.
the yearbook is noticeable compared to the apparently heavy control by staff evident in the production of the Van Tech yearbook to 1947. In 1948 the Kits annual acknowledged that the yearbook was produced by the Journalism 2 Class under A. F. Burch (KH, 1948, n. p.). Whether or not this is just the writing and production of the yearbook is not known. Photographs, except individual grad pictures, were done by the photography committee and photography class. The art department, typing service, bookkeeping department, and those who sold advertising are credited for their role. It is not possible to tell how much of the yearbook was done in classes, but the fact that some yearbook work was done in class time puts it on a more similar footing as the Van Tech yearbook, as much of the work on that annual was done in the printing class.

Yearbook show-casing student talent

The Kits yearbook at times also show-cased student talent beyond the functional requirements (dividers, covers) of the annual. A wonderful painting by Rolph Blakstad [Figure 3.10] is suggestive of European book-type illustration. It shows a couple starring across water to a castle on an island. Multiple images by Blakstad appear in Kits yearbooks beginning when he was in Grade 10 whereas most art images in yearbooks were done by students in their senior year. Blakstad’s images contained either his fish logo or his name logo (“Den Glade Sunnmœring,” acknowledging his Icelandic heritage), or both, on his art. Even his photograph appearing on the yearbook staff page of 1946, where he was listed as a yearbook artist (Grade 11), shows Blakstad holding his fish symbol logo. To me this suggests that Blakstad was taking himself seriously as an artist and the inclusion of his illustrations in the yearbook suggests he was being taken seriously by others as well.

Clubs

From the time that the amalgamated Kits Junior/Senior High opened in 1927 until at least the late-1940s, Kits had a time slot in the curriculum for required clubs, as did some other Vancouver secondary schools. Students had to choose an activity that was presented under the direction of a teacher having a particular interest and skill. A write up on clubs in the 1947 yearbook stated there were more than 70 clubs to appeal to a wide range interests (KH 1947, n. p.). At Kits these clubs included a wide choice of activities. These clubs were held every Thursday afternoon, replacing regular classes (KH, 1948, n. p.). Arts-related clubs noted there include the movie makers’ club for screen stars, directors, and script writers; the projectionist club; current events club; Mr. Parfit’s Barber Shop Quartet; cartoonists club; dressmaking club; knitting club; drama club; record club; Shakespearean club; and it alludes to others not related to the arts (i.e., science or sports). All of these clubs gave students additional contact with
knowledgeable teachers sponsoring various arts-related activities. They also validated the associated activities involved as worthwhile leisure time pursuits.

Other voluntary clubs were also available to interested students outside class time. At Kits, some of these voluntary art-related clubs included the art club, cartooning club, poster club, the decorating club, photography club, stagecraft and scenery club, and mural club. The additional exposure to art-teacher sponsors provided further training relevant to art.

Art club

Margaret Lewis was sponsor of the art club in the 1945-1946 year. The yearbook for that year stated, there was “a large membership of senior students who were interested in poster and pen and ink work” (n. p.). The 1946 yearbook notes the existence of a drafting club at Kits where students were doing house planning and mechanical drawing. Understandably there was no such club at Van Tech during the time of this study as so much of the course work was centred on drafting. At Kits there was also an agricultural drawing club (KH, 1947, n. p.).

Cartooning club

Margaret Lewis’ respect for cartooning as an art form and as a serious vehicle for art learning has been mentioned; it is not surprising that she was most often sponsor of the cartoon club. The 1938-1939 yearbook confirmed that under Lewis’ sponsorship, the cartoon club did the cartoons for yearbook and K.H.S. Life, the school newspaper. The 1939/40 yearbook indicated that the cartoon club was “one of the most popular institutions at Kitsilano, and it is sponsored by art teacher Miss M. L. Lewis, [with] Pete Snelgrove as vice-president.” Kits chronicles (1941) recorded Lewis as still being sponsor of the cartooning club at end of term 1941.

When art teacher Allistair Ross joined the staff at Kits after Lewis retired in 1963, Ross found a portfolio of Norris cartoons in her art classroom (Ross). Presumably she had used this collection of cartoons as a resource in her teaching. This may have had a significant impact professionally on at least one art student at Kits.188 Some of what one can learn through cartooning is apparent in the example of the chased gladiator driving a falling-apart chariot. This cartoon [Figure 3.9] in the 1945/46 yearbook revealed this student’s complete grasp of the effective use of emphasis, point of view, perspective, scale, space, exaggeration, the depiction of speed, and the simplified anatomy of the human body, lions, and horses. Considering the basics taught in art class, as seen through the content of

188 Roy Peterson, who graduated from Kits in the early 1950s succeeded Len Norris as cartoonist when Norris left The Vancouver Sun. Peterson for some time has been doing cartoons for Maclean’s Magazine illustrating the regular Allan Fotheringham feature.
Hamish Cameron’s sketchbook, some of these principles likely were addressed directly in art class.

Poster club

The poster club, at times sponsored by Vito Cianci, and other times by Margaret Lewis or Moira Macdonald, augmented what students were learning in class about lettering and design. In the 1936/37 yearbook a photograph showed five members of the poster club depicted in front of some examples of their posters [Figure 3.11] that incorporate images and lettering in various styles “to announce coming events” (KH, 1937, p. 42). Mentioned as being overworked, these intense and serious-looking, clean-cut boys look stylish in their shirts, ties and sweaters, and the write-up mentions the hazard of getting paint on their new trousers. This image suggests that these boys, despite “their artistic temperaments” (p. 42), intended to become designers in advertising and industry rather than aiming to become the proverbial starving artist in the garret.

While the poster club was under the direction of Ciansi in the 1938/39 school year, the “silk-screen process, a new duplicating method which the club members themselves inaugurated,” was used “making possible large scale advertising.” In the following years Kits students perfected the silk-screen process in the same way that Van Tech students excelled in linoprinting as their prime media. The next year Cianci was sponsor of the poster club and of the photography club (KH, 1940). As well as there being as a poster club in after school hours, there apparently was a poster arts class taught by Cianci as revealed in the 1941/42 school year. The yearbook states that in Cianci’s poster arts class “besides making posters for school activities and events, students follow a regular course of training in poster design and lettering” (KH, 1942, p. 40). In the late 1940s apparently there was such a class as well. Cameron talked about an all-boys commercial art class that he was in during regular school hours in one of his senior years wherein almost all learning was done in the context of the poster. He knows it was not extra-curricular as he says he was too involved in sports after hours to participate in art-related, extra-curricular clubs. In this class they were marked on their lettering as well as the image in a poster, Cameron said. And they studied some history of the poster, as Cameron remembers Toulouse Lautrec being held up as a model for integrating the lettering and the image, and he remembers learning about contemporary American poster art.

The 1947 yearbook confirms the existence of the poster club “whose artistry is forever advertising some school event” (n. p.). When the poster club met under Miss Macdonald in the
1947-48 year, paints and pasteboard were apparently the main media. The list of club members indicates there were more boys than girls in the club. In her graduating year Louise Williamson, who drew a totem pole for the cover of the 1948 yearbook, was a contributing artist [as seen in Figure 2.4] and was president of the poster club (L. Williamson). Raphael Engles was in Grade 7, suggesting that the club accepted students in all grades (KH, 1948). Members of the poster club in the 1940s learned to do commercially usable lettering styles as well as some calligraphy. Rapidly done one-stroke lettering was a respected capability and valued skill (Ursulescu and Cameron). Ursulescu remembered Engels as being particularly good at this and speculated that his father may have been in the sign-painting business.

Cameron retained the image of several members of the poster club lined up along the blackboard doing competent lettering. In the late-1940s Ursulescu as well as Jim Genis and Ian MacIntosh, who later taught at the art school, were recognized as being the “stars” of sign painting (Cameron). Students doing posters learned to integrate the image and lettering to be suitable to the message being conveyed. Hamish’s classroom sketchbook reveals that in the late-1940s basic capitals and lower case letters were taught up at least up to Grade 10. Basic lettering was one of the skills students were required to develop.

Traditional manuscript lettering, especially a 12th to 15th century European hand known as Textura (old English), appeared frequently in secondary school yearbooks throughout Vancouver. My first thought was that interest in such manuscript hands may have been passed down by art teachers who had studied at the art school with Grace Melvin in her applied art course. After all, lettering was a requirement at the art school for would-be art teacher specialists. According to James Macdonald, who studied with Melvin at the art school in the 1940s, said Melvin taught “bloody lettering that went on and on and on.”

Decorating club

Members of the decorating club often made large, group-produced banners and murals for mixers to be hung in the gym. Many of these incorporated cartoons revealing the life, personalities, and activities of the school. Peter Snelgrove remembers one particularly interesting one featuring cartoons that was made for a dance. The banner read: “School’s not so bad, it’s the principal of the thing.” Without humour, Principal James Gordon directed the artists to cut off the last six words.

In the 1946/47 school year, the aim of the decorations committee was to bring new colour into school’s social functions. For mixers held in the gym, the committee made large
murals to encircle the room. The sponsor of the decorating club for several years in the 1940s was Miss Pye. She is noted in the Kits yearbooks as teaching English, Latin, and French. While she did not formally teach art, Rolph Blakstad associates her with some of his art learning that came through his involvement with the decorating club. He stated:

The only teacher I remember is Miss Pye specifically. It is not for any special art techniques that [Miss Pye] taught, but for her kindness and interest. She invited me to her home, gave me tea and biscuits and an art magazine with a beautiful reproduction of the face of the angel in Leonardo’s Virgin of the Rocks. (Blakstad)

Blakstad, as chairman of the boy’s decorating committee, and “his man Friday,” Ian McIntosh, did the planning and preparation for the decorating. The group of committee workers who were all boys included Norm Davis (KH, 1947, n. p.), who also worked on visuals for the yearbook along with Blakstad. “I remember mostly the rough and tumble of paint, huge rolls of paper and climbing ladders and the like,” said Blakstad. “I worked with others on producing those decorations. I think we worked after school hours on such things.” For the Mardi Gras ball that school year, murals of French can-can girls adorned the walls (KH, 1947, n. p.). The next year McIntosh, who had been Blakstad’s main assistant, served as chairman of the boys’ decorations committee, suggesting the value of the informal apprenticeship system. The 1948 yearbook acknowledges that the boys’ decorations committee did the large artwork and did the heavy work in putting up the banners, etc. The girls’ decorating committee apparently did the decorating for the less physically demanding locations. For instance they kept flower displays in the counseling offices and decorated for the annual mother and daughter tea (KH, 1947, n. p.).

Photography club

Through the mid-1930s to early-1940s, Vito Cianci usually sponsored the photography club. It generally served the needs of the high school yearbook, photographing social and sports activities for use there. Russell White, remembered taking the photo of the front of the school, from its north-east corner, to use in the annual, and he remembered lining up students in groups to photograph them for mug shots to use in the yearbook. He recognized using principles in the photography club that he had learned in art class. During the 1939/40 school year, Vito Cianci was also trying to get a credit course in photography recognized. The yearbook stated that Cianci was attempting “to arrange the course to fit the requirements of

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192 In the 1938/39 yearbook, Mr. Limpus is noted as being in charge of the photography club. In 1941-42 Mr. Cianci was in charge of photos for the annual. In 1946 Camera club under Mr. D. Pritchard, and Mr. A. Burch took pictures for annual (KH, p. 46).
the school board," and stated that toward this end, "Mr. Cianci will attend school board meetings" in Victoria this year" (KH, 1940). In the 1940s he wrote about his efforts in this regard in B.C. Teacher Magazine. As well as there being a photography club at Kits, there was also the associated darkroom service. This club looked after the developing of the photos for the yearbooks and other uses (KH, 1947, n. p.).

Stagecraft and scenery club

Margaret Lewis was often in charge of the visual aspects of Kits' annual theatre productions and operettas produced mainly in out-of-school time. Because Kits students produced plays in competitions under their four-house system (north, south, east, west) for juniors, intermediates, and seniors, multiple plays were produced each year. This created many opportunities for designing sets and painting backdrops. The winning plays from the house competitions were the ones that were subsequently entered into the B.C. provincial drama festivals. In Kits chronicles, a list of dates of service of retiring teachers acknowledged Lewis as having designed the stage sets for many of Kits' stage performances.

Principal James Gordon's 1936/37 year-end message stated:

The outstanding event of the year was the final production of the House plays. This marked the culmination of a long and patient effort to establish drama in a prominent place in the school activities. As a result of this success I have no doubt that next years' classes in dramatics will be very popular. The winning at Victoria of the intermediate play by the West House players was a fitting climax. (p. 2)

From at least that time on, the performing arts seem to have been an extremely important part of Kits school life thanks partly to the commitment of long-time teachers including drama teacher Miss Nowlan, music department head Miss McManus, boys band leader Mr. Delmonte, and school orchestra leader Mr. Parfitt.

Using Art Learning from the Outside

The art teachers found outlets in school for art learning students acquired from the outside. Stephen Ursulescu's summer job after Grade 11, working for a sign painting company, enabled him to become competent at doing silkscreening. So Margaret Lewis allowed him to do extensive silkscreen printing for the 1950 yearbook enabling other students to be exposed to his expertise. Through that same summer job, he had learned to use line-making scaffolding while painting mammoth signs for the fronts of theatres. This practical knowledge he adapted for painting scenery for school plays and operettas.

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193 This should read Department of Education rather than school board.
Film at Kits

Kits chronicles noted that the first presentation of a talking picture in the school auditorium was in 1934. Later students had access to a great number of silent films as well. Rolph Blakstad, who has spent some of his life as a cinematographer, explained,

One of the great institutions at Kitsilano was something called the “penny shows.” An astute teacher had bought a huge collection of silent films when talkies [had] made them obsolete. These were put at the disposal of the school and were shown in the main auditorium at lunchtime every time it rained. This of course meant that nearly every day in winter we enjoyed classic Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and hosts of forgotten silent comedy geniuses. We took our sandwiches and apples in brown paper bags and munched away within a kaleidoscope of flashing lights. It was an extraordinary introduction to film making. I became close friends with a kid named Stan Fox, and another little fellow in short pants called Allen Winton. Allen’s mother remarried and his name was changed to Allen King [CBC documentary producer]. We became fascinated with film. (Blakstad)

Vancouver Art School Access—Direct and Indirect

From 1928 to 1955, pre-service teachers wanting to specialize in art teaching had to attend Vancouver’s art school in addition to attending Normal School. Besides taking the applied art course and foundation courses required of pre-service teachers, these students were exposed to ideas about modern art that were being propagated by both teachers and students interested in becoming full-time artists. Returned veterans from the Second World War attended the art school to become specialist art teachers rather than practising artists explained James U. Gray. Gray arrived at the art school in 1946. In discussing Grace Melvin’s teaching, he referred to her as “wee Gracie,” a name (spoken with a Scottish brogue) that came up often when former art school students talk about Melvin’s classes. Gray noted that as an older group of male students, they might have been more difficult to get through to so Melvin may have had to change her teaching approach with them.

As a practicum student of Margaret Lewis, then head of the art department at Kits, James (Jim) Macdonald, was asked in 1940s to teach a unit on abstraction to the students of Moira Macdonald (no relative). He taught his unit on abstraction based on the approaches that he’d been exposed to at the art school as practiced by both students and teachers there. Thus students of Moira Macdonald’s class learned to see the essentials of form while leaving out the details. Hamish Cameron, who was in Macdonald’s classes in the late 1940s, said his ability to see the salient features of a scene or situation, which was enhanced in Macdonald’s classes on abstraction, has stood him in good stead over the years in preparing to present cases to the Supreme Court of Canada. Examples of his watercolours from Grade 12
show this ability to simplify. One of his images, painted when Macdonald took her art class outdoors, shows the exterior of the northeast art classroom [Figure 3.12]. Another of Hamish Cameron's watercolours shows his use of simplified Chinese-style brush strokes in depicting bamboo [Figure 3.5]. Both done in Moira Macdonald's classes, these watercolour sketches may have been exercises she had her students do in learning the main principle of abstractionism—to capture the essence of a subject while dropping out unimportant details. Lewis also took her classes outdoors to paint and draw around the school and in adjacent Connaught Park (Cameron, Ursulescu, Snelgrove).

**Kits students' attendance at the art school**

While some students at Kits were likely influenced indirectly by ideas that were current at the art school when their art teachers attended, other students were influenced directly: they attended art school classes themselves. This was possible because art school admission required only that students be at least 16 years of age and have completed Grade 10 to be able to attend day classes. Some students in Kits' art club in the 1940s boarded a bus together one afternoon a week to receive instruction at the art school (Brown). That was the activity they had chosen as a required club. Other Kits students in the 1940s attended every afternoon while continuing with their regular program at Kits in the mornings. This is revealed in some of the descriptions about some grads in 1946, for example: "Dorothy Killip...future artist; spends afternoons at art school;" "Pauline Field...takes an art course in the afternoons." There is similar evidence in the 1947 yearbook: "Thelma J. Sibson... plans to be a commercial artist, another of the afternoon artists so numerous in 12B" (n. p.).

Afternoon attendance at the art school was an alternative to leaving Kits and going there after completing Grade 10 as Britannia's Irene Alexander did on the recommendation of her art teacher, Donald Flather, at Britannia. He may have thought Irene could learn more at the art school than what he could teach her at Britannia. The location of the art school may have made afternoon attendance there infeasible for Britannia students as it would have been for Van Tech students. Also, this being Depression years, Mr. Flather may have appreciated that Irene needed to become qualified for work as soon as possible in order to be able to earn income. I do not know of a Kits student leaving Kits before graduating in order attend the art school. Perhaps money issues were not perceived to be so pressing at Kits as they were at Britannia, or perhaps Kits art teachers could value the extra art learning Kits students received from the art

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194 Opening announcements, School of Decorative and Applied Arts, 1925.
school without assuming there was nothing more for them to gain from completing high school.

Other Kits students attended the art school’s Saturday morning art classes that were available to public school and secondary school students from 1925. Stephen Ursulescu, for instance, went to these classes for several years beginning when he was about 10 years old. Such previous or concurrent training at the art school creates difficulties in pinpointing exactly what a student was taught at Kits compared to what he or she learned at the art school.

Other Outside Art Classes Available to Kits Students

Rolph Blakstad remembers going to Saturday morning classes at the Marine building when he was still in elementary school. These classes were conducted by H. Faulkner Smith who, according to this school’s letterhead, was a silver medallist of from the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, having founded the school in 1931. Blakstad said Smith “hailed I think from Yorkshire. He gave the arts an air of respectability, because he drove a long and impressive Buick.” Apparently these classes were for students from seven to 18 years old and there were approximately 18 students in the class. Blakstad said, “Because the students were personally interested in drawing and painting, there existed a sense of concentration and enjoyment of the activities being practiced.” He explained that by being in a class with older students of more mature talents worthy of being emulate, he and others like him were able to learn new techniques that were not programmed by a planned curriculum aimed at preconceived notions of abilities of students of a specific age group. All students were there because they wanted to learn and be involved in artmaking (Blakstad).

Teachers’ Contact with the Larger Community for Benefit of Kits Students

Stephen Ursulescu’s 1950 silkscreened cover and section dividers were based on his study of authentic First Nations designs. Through Margaret Lewis’ personal contact beyond the school, she arranged for Stephen to study books on Native art by getting him a pass to the stacks in the library at the University of British Columbia (UBC) as well as in the

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196 If Smith was running this art school on Burrard Street in Vancouver beginning in 1931 then there were actually three art schools in existence in downtown Vancouver from 1933 to 1935, as the B.C. College of Art was operating then on Georgia Street under the direction of Fred Varley and J. W. G. Macdonald after their breaking away from the Vancouver School of Applied and Decorative Art.
Vancouver Public Library and Museum at the Carnegie Centre. She also introduced
Stephen to Frank Smith, a private collector of Native artifacts. Stephen was able to examine
Smith’s collection of cedar hats, boxes and other carved objects and prints. He did
drawings of the images incorporated on these objects, some of which he later converted
into sophisticated Native designs for the 1950 yearbook in pen and ink [Figure 3.13] and in
silkscreen [Figure 3.14]. Thus Lewis’ ability and willingness to reach out to the larger
community to create an opportunity for a student was a significant benefit to Stephen. He
explained “the drawings were not direct copies of existing Haida art but are composites
using typical motifs found in Haida decorative and spiritual art.” It is interesting to note
Stephen did this art based on Native images at Kits at a time of considerable interest in the
preservation and revival of the art of B.C.’s First Nations people. This was five years after
an exhibition of First Nations student art was shown at the Provincial Museum in Victoria;
a couple of years after Mungo Martin had been hired by UBC to restore poles for placement
in UCB’s totem pole park; the National Museum published anthropologist Marius
Barbeau’s book Totem Poles, and the Provincial Museum, with the cooperation of UBC,
began to “dominate the promotion of First Nations arts in the 1950s.” That was also at the
time that Haida artist Bill Reid, who became renowned for his carving and prints, was
investigating (1951) the art of his Haida ancestors.

Role of the Carnegie Museum

Asked if he attended the museum or any art galleries, Blakstad responded, “I was an
insatiable student. I looked at galleries... and the old museum on Main Street I was [first]
taken to when I was 5 years old. .... Yes, of course I went to the museums.” Another
student, Stephen Ursulescu, described to me how his mother in taking any one of his
siblings to the dentist, whose office was across from the museum, would first drop off the
rest of the kids, including Stephen, at the museum to entertain themselves by looking at the
displays. Generally the museum was more important to art students than the art gallery was
prior to the 1950. Most former students who I interviewed from various schools across the

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197 This activity is documented in Hawker’s book, Tales of ghosts. There he records that in 1944
the Provincial Museum published Alice Ravenhill’s A cornerstone of Canadian Culture: An outline of
the arts and crafts of the Indian tribes of British Columbia “to provide teachers and students with a
record of former tribal decorative arts and crafts which have possibilities of further development and
utilization in modern life,” p. 186.
199 Hawker. Tales of ghosts.

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city did not remember attending an art gallery but several remembered going to the museum.

Creation of Apprenticeships

Apparently Margaret Lewis recognized the value of an informal apprenticeship system as a way of offering Kits students additional outside-the-classroom art learning. According to Stephen Ursulescu, when a year's chosen operetta, *The Mikado*, was planned, Lewis made contact with Kits graduate Fred Hawkley, who had done an admirable job of painting the scenery for that same operetta a few years earlier (Ursulescu). When I questioned Ursulescu if this meant Lewis was more concerned with a professional end product at the exclusion of participation for more current students, Ursulescu responded, “No, she just wanted us to learn more about set design and scenery painting and from Fred we did.”

Art Commissions for Kits’ Students

Kits teachers were able to provide students with design commission opportunities. Moira Macdonald arranged for Stephen Ursulescu to submit a design proposal for the exterior of a theatre in the Cariboo. While a local person executed his design and no payment was made to Stephen, he said that doing this made him feel “like a real artist” as well as being taken seriously as an artist by his teacher. On another occasion Macdonald asked Stephen and another art student to paint scenes with peasants on her kitchen cupboards for which she supplied the materials. This was another case of feeling trusted by a teacher to be doing a professional job as an artist. Kits art students also painted pictures to be hung in Vancouver’s children’s hospitals (KH, 1950, n. p.)

Awarding of Status to Students Recognized as Being Capable Artists

The 1948 yearbook lists Myra L. Hawes as “an outstanding artist” and another location notes Raphael Engles as being a “commercial artist extraordinaire from Grade 7.” It is reassuring to think that a Grade 7 student, in a school that included senior students, could receive this kind of recognition so early in his life at Kits. By 1950, the golden flame award recognized the Kits student perceived as being most talented in the visual arts for the year. Stephen Ursulescu won the award in 1950.

Future Plans of Students Interested in Art

In just one page describing grads of 1946, a noticeable number of students are identified for their art involvement or ambitions. Here are some examples:

Gertrude Huwyler—“adores chalk drawing”
Patricia Madill—“hopes to be another Rembrandt”
[obscured name] “ambition—art field”
Joyce Hackett—hopes for a “future in art”
John Furby—“will attend art school”
Joan Price—“future commercial artist”
Arthur Lilly—“wants to design sharp ties”

The same is true in one miscellaneous page of the 1947 yearbook describing grads of that year according to their arts involvement or arts ambitions:

Harry D. McTaggart—president of the poster club.
Elizabeth A. Ryder—operetta, but does art in the afternoons
Thelma J. Sibson—plans to be a commercial artist, another of the afternoon artists
Rita Standell—fashion illustrator, spends much time on art
Harvey B. Summers—one of the school’s most talented Michael Angelos
Mary A. Bird — talented artist: does pastels, lettering and writes children’s stories

The 1949 yearbook similarly acknowledges the art talent of two grads of note

Alec J. Becker—A drama star of note who wields a wicked paint brush. ... future includes either an art course or UBC
Ian W. McIntosh—Ian throws a wicked forward pass almost as well as he paints. Chairman of decorations committee...follower of Francesco Goya and his murals.

An example of the art of this latter student, Ian McIntosh, is an ink drawing [Figure 3.15] showing a tugboat on which the undergrads, looking like elementary school children, are frolicking dangerously on deck while the students’ council meets below deck and the captain, preoccupied, is about to steer into the rocks on the shoreline of Belcarra Park.

Students’ Views on Art Learning

Visual sources have been acknowledged by many former Kits art students. Rolph Blakstad has verbalized the value of such sources in art learning for him:

One learns from those who know and can do. There is another way of learning.... I used to pour over the sepia photos of Architectural Digest of the twenties in the attic, absorbing the details of Spanish colonial revival and mock Tudor.... One learns by doing, by reflection, by study, by acting on one’s instincts, as well, of course, by being taught by a teacher.” (Blakstad)

Kits students were fortunate in having the Grades 7 to 12 (and at times to Grade 13) in the school in that they had other more capable students around them to learn from. Also they had the visual and library resources from which to receive insight into art learning, and they had the teachers willing to teach art skills and art judgment in a variety of settings.

Summary on the Culture of Kits and Opportunities for Art Learning

Kits was a community for learning and living. The friendships and social contacts made at the school were recognized as being important. Individual thinking was valued. Students’
council provided service to the student body to ensure the well being of the students; in this way students had some power to participate in decisions that affected them directly. Having individual timetables rather than staying within the same class group allowed for more opportunities for a wider base of potential friendships thus encouraging the meeting and friendships of students with shared interests. The many extra-curricular activities at Kits created opportunities for students to develop skills suitable for later use in the larger community. These included leadership skills that could be translated into their future role as active citizens. Having the advantage of including junior high school grades within the school, for whom art was a required course, there was a strong presence of art teachers in the school. Music and the performing arts were also strong within the school and brought many honours to the school through provincial competitions. With the performing arts being so prevalent, there was a more balanced culture within the school for students with a multitude of arts-related interests and a variety of talents. Such students inclined toward visual or performing arts were able to find a place wherein their abilities could be recognized, utilized, and appreciated. Sports activities created some star athletes that gained international recognition for Canada, but students did not have to aspire to being athletes and sports heroes if they did not have that kind of capability or interest. There seems to have been room for participation for all students wanting to become involved with the activities of the school. The aim of the school during this time period seemed to be to turn out well-rounded individuals.

Kits culture seemed to nurture students wanting to develop their capabilities in the visual arts. Extra-curricular activities at Kits created many opportunities for students to gain experience in art-related skills. There seems to have been an awareness of the importance of amateur artistic activities indicative of the middle-class nature of the school. Art was recognized for its potential to create some engaging and fulfilling activities that students could enjoy in their leisure time after leaving school. Art also aimed to enable the student to become an informed, discerning consumer and art viewer, and a productive, participating citizen who might, for instance, plan a park or have some input on the design of some public building, or in other ways have some range of influence beyond the family. Art training also encouraged talented art students to consider being become a commercial designer or a fine artist, the latter with the potential of working as a self-directed person creating one's own art available for sale. The girls were encouraged to develop their artmaking to the fullest without any assumption that they needed to use those skills in paid employment, but rather they would use their abilities more for their own enjoyment and that of their family. This seems to have been as true for girls in the regular art courses as for the applied art course. In short the art learning within the school was in keeping with the nature of the school as a middle-class, coed, neighbourhood school.
CHAPTER FOUR—Art Learning at Van Tech

This chapter examines various factors that together created the culture of Van Tech to 1950 and which to a certain extent determined the range of possibilities for art learning available in the school. Specifically I have been interested in the extent to which the vocational orientation of the school shaped the kind of art learning that was taking place there. While a stand-alone course entitled design was not established until 1936, and this course was not renamed art until 1946, I was struck early in my study by how much art learning took place in the school before these courses were instituted. The shops particularly were sites of art learning just as some extra curricular activities were contributing to students' art learning in an effective way. While only one teacher carried the title art teacher, I maintain that many of the teachers, especially the shop teachers, were in fact teachers of art, providing the term art is used in its most inclusive form.

Art and Related Facilities and Equipment

Vancouver Technical School’s building complex built in 1928 featured technical facilities reflecting the vocational purpose of the school: the printing shop, woodworking shop, metalwork shop, and machine shop were the best that could be provided in a high school at the time. They were large, well-lit, and well-equipped. The printing department, for instance [Figure 2.3], was as big as any commercial printing shop and just as well equipped. In Van Tech's early years most design and art learning was done in the shops. Once design and art courses were introduced starting 1936, they were conducted in art rooms that were most often in some area of a basement. But they were shifted around as other needs demanded attention. Judging by the facilities, art had a secondary importance compared to the technical courses. The various locations of the art room included the basement of the girls' wing, when it was otherwise off-limits to the boys. That was the location when Jim Rimmer (student in the late 1940s) took art. This apparent underrating of art, however, did not mean that art learning was not taking place; it was just situated within the technical courses, as I shall subsequently describe.

Teachers of Art

While the school had been in existence for 25 years before a staff member at Van Tech ever received the title art teacher, there were many teachers who did in fact teach art, or at least this can be stated providing the definition of art is inclusive enough to cover all the forms of art.
learning and design training happening at Van Tech that would be deemed art in another context and providing they are recognized when they are integrated within another subject.

James G. Sinclair

James G. Sinclair was born in the north of Scotland and at the age of 14 began his four-year program in teacher education. After completing his teacher training in Aberdeen, he held several positions in different types of schools in the area including running a country school. He came to Canada in the summer of 1910 and took up the position as art master in King Edward High School, a position he held until 1916 when “he threw in his lot with the technical work then being organized in the city” (VT, 1944, p. 12). Much of this effort to establish technical education in the province was led by J. George Lister; he was in charge of the technical department initiated in the basement of King Edward High School in 1916 and became principal when this department was officially recognized as a separate school when it moved to its own facility at the old Labor Temple on Dunsmuir Street in downtown Vancouver in the spring of 1921. Sinclair became vice-principal (VT, 1944, p. 12). Sinclair had a strong interest in art that was apparent during his long tenure at Van Tech. Having been art master of King Edward, Sinclair taught art at summer school for teachers in Victoria from the first year it opened (1915), as did several other Van Tech teachers. As John Kyle was long-time organizer of the summer school and occasional art teacher there, five teachers from Van Tech teaching at the summer school then would have had opportunities to share ideas with Kyle. Two years after Van Tech had been in its new facility, built specifically for technical education, Lister died unexpectedly so Sinclair was catapulted into the role of principal. Historian F. H. Johnstone is quoted as having said this of Sinclair:

[He was] a man of broad liberal education interests and gentlemanly. He ran a good school. Every year he had a Shakespearian play at Vancouver Technical, which he ran on a high level somewhat like the English Technical College. The early art was closely connected to drafting mechanics, with repetitive designs of a geometric character.

201 This has been confirmed by former Van Tech student Jim Rimmer, who is knowledgeable on this as he has built his career based on his own graphic arts/printing business.

202 For the sake of concision I am using this form to make references to Van Tech’s yearbook. The yearbook was called The VanTech from when it published in 1927; prior to that it was called Tech Annual and The Annual, but in referring to all yearbooks as VT, I will not be designating the actual name of the Van Tech yearbook at the time.

203 For instance, the staff list in the Report on the Summer School in 1925 Report of the public schools, lists Kyle as teaching applied design and art appreciation at the same time that Sinclair and Weston were also teaching art courses (p. M67). In Kyle’s report on this summer school, there is a description of students working out designs based on objects in the collection of First Nations objects at the provincial museum (p. M 69).

204 Morris. The roots of art education (p. 2).
This statement rings true based on the interviews I conducted with former students and on the information obtainable from the yearbooks. Sinclair wrote two drafting texts, entitled \textit{Progressive drafting} (Books I & II), published in 1934, the first of which was included on B.C.'s official textbook list for drafting arts from 1934 through the period of this study.\textsuperscript{205} In these texts Sinclair's interest in drawing, design, and lettering is evident, skills featured in the two official art education textbooks\textsuperscript{206} as well as other B.C. drafting texts.

Despite Sinclair's duties as principal and teacher of drafting\textsuperscript{207} at Van Tech, he instituted an art club for the school in 1935. This was because he was committed to having good design as an integral part of a technical education, which was part of his legacy to the school. In the art club, which convened in after-school hours (VT, 1935, p. 20), he taught primarily drawing to interested students. Students were apparently impressed with Sinclair's ability as an artist. Clarence Falk (student in the early-1930s) described how Sinclair was totally ambidextrous in drawing. Standing at a blackboard, Sinclair could start a drawing, for instance, with his right hand and finish it with his left hand. Falk and Bob Banks (grad of 1941) have also described how he could draw on the blackboard, two-handed, two perfect circles simultaneously.

While Sinclair had an obvious interest in keeping his hand in art, he helped to establish visual standards for the yearbook as well. On more than one occasion, he did the yearbook cover (1928 & 1930). He turned over the illustration of the cover, however, to students once there were some whom he considered sufficiently accomplished to create an illustrated cover to an acceptable standard. Milton Parsons did the covers in 1931 (ocean scene with First Nations man in dug-out canoe and ancient ship under full sail), 1932 (steel worker), and 1933 (Medieval print shop). The June 1934 yearbook cover featured an abstract design that was apparently hurriedly sketched out by Sinclair in a distracted moment. This design was given to student Ronald Cocker to cut (VT, 1934, p. 20) as a linoblock. As if needing to make excuses for the image Sinclair provided, the following comment suggests that the annual editor or staff felt that the annual must have an illustrated cover and not go back to just a typeset cover:

\begin{quote}
Mr. Sinclair is the most easy-going, good-natured person one could wish to meet; he never 'flies off the handle,' and can be relied upon to keep a level head; but even the best of men have their "tragic moments," thus the hurriedly done sketch.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{206} Scott et al. (1924); and Weston (1933).
\textsuperscript{207} A staff list appears at the front of each yearbook until 1947 providing evidence as to who was on staff and what they were teaching.
The editor suggests Sinclair did not expect the image to be used as a Van Tech cover revealing a kind of disapproval of the image but not having the power to reject something provided by the principal. It also suggests the writer’s (possibly printing teacher Lewis Elliott’s) disapproval of abstraction, a disapproval that was evident in other circumstances.\(^{208}\)

Sinclair and Lewis Elliott maintained control over what went into the yearbooks, controlling the kind of image (through text and visuals) that they wished to project about the school. This in turn affected the artwork that students created for the yearbook, one of the major art outlets for the school. Sinclair apparently also gave his “whole-hearted encouragement and advice”\(^{209}\) in the production of a manual on linoblock printing that print shop teacher Elliott wrote and guided through production. This was an ambitious, student-illustrated manual that is still impressive today (as described in detail below). Sinclair’s interest in producing visually appealing publications likely related to his personal appreciation of good design. As principal, Sinclair spent some time informally observing design and art classes. Perhaps he wished he were teaching them or just wanting to know what was going on in the art classroom. Perhaps as principal he spent some time observing classes of all subjects, much as managers in corporations have come to call this management-by-walking-around. Banks remembers Sinclair on occasion quietly coming into the art room; he was apparently not particularly intimidating but the students were aware of Sinclair’s presence. Sinclair’s love of art and his desire to be part of the teaching of it, despite his administrative duties, seems to be summed up in the photograph of the linoblock club appearing in the 1941 yearbook (VT, 1941, p. 65). Twenty-six students are shown there in the traditional group photo with linoblock instructor Elliott. But Sinclair is there too, sitting in the center of the group smiling proudly, assertively, almost elbowing Elliott out of his space. Sinclair remained principal of the school until his retirement in June 1944. But his influence on education did not end there; he became a member of the Vancouver School Board almost immediately and subsequently became chair of the Board (VT, 1944, p. 12).

**Alfred Wishart, design**

Alfred Wishart began at Van Tech as a shop teacher teaching metalwork, woodwork, and machine shop practice from 1930 and was on staff into the 1940s.\(^{210}\) In 1936 he wrote a text

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\(^{208}\) Students Falk and Zitko had yearbook illustrations returned to them by Elliott for revisions when their images were deemed to be too abstract.


\(^{210}\) To 1947, each Van Tech yearbook carried a list of staff at the front of the publication indicating what subjects teachers were teaching.
on woodworking entitled Woodwork practice and theory for secondary schools, but he taught only drafting and design after doing so. Wishart was the first teacher at Van Tech to ever teach design as a separate subject (1936), and he was the first teacher to have design as the only course for which he was responsible (1938/39 school year). He also subsequently taught drafting when J. W. G. (Jock) Macdonald took over as teacher of design in September of 1939 (VT, 1940). Many teachers on staff taught drafting off and on despite whatever else they were teaching. If any subject was central to Van Tech's curriculum, drafting was. Drafting included a precise, mechanical form of drawing as well as freehand drawing. Bob Banks, a student at that time remembers taking a course with Wishart:

[It] could have been art or design, but I never went too much for the design part. I liked art better than design.... Design was about forms and colour blocks and learning about colour balance, and so forth, and forming designs on the wall. This could have included interior design, or patterns or things like that, and I think most of the boys at the time were not interested in interior design. They were more like I was; they were more interested in drawing things. I was more interested in the illustration part, the drawing of objects.... I had gone into Van Tech thinking that I wanted to be an aeronautical engineer but I found I didn’t have the math for it. But while I was there I found I had some ability in doing illustration, so I decided I wanted to be an illustrator. (Banks)

Banks also explained, “In art class, when I had either Wishart or Macdonald as an art teacher, we made decorative panels for the hallways at Tech. I chose to do a panel on transportation.” It is interesting that while these panels were painted, the goal was to create the panels to enhance the hallways, it was not thought of as painting for its own sake. Banks explained that the art classroom was different than other classes at Tech, than the drafting classroom, for instance.

It was more free, undisciplined, but the teacher had no trouble keeping us in line because most of the people in art classes were there voluntarily, art being an elective. But drafting classes were more disciplined. You knew you had to do well to do well, but the art class was more of a hobby class. But you are looking at somebody that is so biased because I didn’t mind any kind of art class. (Banks)

When asked about the difference between Wishart and Macdonald as art teachers, Banks said he liked Macdonald better than Wishart as a teacher but couldn’t say why. “Macdonald was nice, another Scotsman, but so was Wishart another Scotsman.” Based on the

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212 It is also worth noting that transportation has remained a major interest for Banks in his painting to the present day.
comments by other interviewees and statements in the yearbooks, art at Van Tech, to a lot of people, seems to have been synonymous with drawing.

J. W. G. (Jock) Macdonald, design

A year after the stand-alone design course was introduced into the regular curriculum at Van Tech for the 1938-39 school year, artist Jock Macdonald (James Williamson Galloway Macdonald) was hired to be the design teacher. While Macdonald was only on staff at Van Tech for six school years, starting in September of 1939 and staying through the duration of the war to June 1946, he was an important teacher partially for the potential of bringing into Van Tech some of the ideas that had been propagated at the art school where he had been one of the near-original art school instructors. Information on his teaching at the art school was important to pre-service teacher training (as described in Chapter 2), but the information I am including here relates primarily to his teaching at Van Tech, what he was doing concurrently to maintain his life as an artist, and his potential influence on the kind of art done by the Van Tech students of design during his time there.

It is notable that Macdonald, son of an architect, served as a draftsman before he attended Edinburgh College of Art where he specialized in textiles, commercial advertising, and woodcarving. He graduated in 1922 with a diploma in design and a specialist art teacher’s certificate. He served as a staff designer for a fabrics company making designs for textiles, tapestries, rugs, and carpets before becoming head of design at the School of Art in Lincoln, England. After one year in this position, he immigrated to Canada to become head of design and instructor of commercial advertising at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Art. This was in the second year of the school’s existence, the 1926/27 term. Macdonald remained on staff of Vancouver’s art school, until the summer of 1933, when he was one of the originators of the break-away, short-lived art school, the B.C. College of Art.

Stimulated by the mountains and landscape of B.C. as subject matter for his own painting, Macdonald apparently attempted to help art school students realize what this country could mean to them as a source of inspiration for their art. He was also teaching art school students to integrate B.C. Native designs into their designs for fabric, wall-paper, carpets, pottery and other forms of applied art. The use of aboriginal designs as a starting place for design is interesting insofar as Macdonald in his own art, to my knowledge, rarely used Native symbols or stylistic approaches. Instead Macdonald’s work with Native art as

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213 Cianci. (1927). The Paint Box, 2, 6.
214 Ibid. (p. 5).
215 An exception is the cover design for the art school’s 1930/31 Prospectus, which Macdonald created depicting a strongly stylized bird image, a motif characteristic of First Nations art.
subject showed scenes of First Nations life based on personal observation through his travels and stay in the wilderness on the British Columbia coast.\textsuperscript{216} Macdonald’s interest in First Nations life rather than appropriation of Native symbols or stylistic approaches seems to have been true for Van Tech students as well. Student artists contributing to the yearbook did not seem to include Native designs\textsuperscript{217} but they did depict scenes of First Nations life to illustrate the myths featured in the yearbooks. I do not have evidence to confirm that he revealed, in his art teaching at Van Tech, a preference for scenes of First Nations life over Native art symbols or stylistic approaches, but this seems to be apparent in students’ art during his tenure at Van Tech.

In his teaching at the art school, Macdonald stressed the fact that nature and observation were the best source for original design.\textsuperscript{218} Such advice could easily have been carried over into his high school art teaching. Macdonald’s art school students were also encouraged to look to historical examples and apparently he referred students to books of design motifs from every part of the world\textsuperscript{219}. At the art school, Macdonald became close friends with fellow art teacher Frederick Varley, one of the founding members of the Group of Seven.\textsuperscript{220} As art school colleagues and painting companions, Macdonald and Varley spent their non-teaching time on painting trips in the local mountains. Major salary cut backs due to Depression conditions and for various other reasons, Varley and Macdonald decided to leave the art school\textsuperscript{221} to open their own art school named the B.C. College of Art. This breakaway school was well attended but short-lived.\textsuperscript{222} Macdonald was in charge of industrial design, commercial advertising, colour theory, wood-carving, and children’s classes.\textsuperscript{223}

During its two-year existence (1933-1935), this new school was recognized for its artistic activity, and it was there that “Macdonald’s roles as painter and teacher [helped with] the early formations of a Vancouver art scene.”\textsuperscript{224} This is relevant in this study in helping to understand the state in which Macdonald came to teach at Vancouver Tech, suffering from

\textsuperscript{216} Such as paintings Indian Salmon Rack, Fraser Canyon, B.C. 1931; Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, B.C., 1935; Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937; Drying Herring Roe, 1938; and mural Nootka Indian village, for dining room of Vancouver Hotel, 1939; and silkscreen poster on a B.C. Indian Village for National Defence Services, 1943.
\textsuperscript{217} Prior to Macdonald’s arrival a stylized thunderbird (1926) and totem pole (1928) did appear on yearbook covers.
\textsuperscript{218} Unidentified author. (1929). The Paint Box, 2, n. p.
\textsuperscript{219} Zemans. (1981). The inner landscape (p. 19).
\textsuperscript{221} Renamed the Vancouver School of Art in 1933.
\textsuperscript{222} It was in existence from September 1933 to June 1935; in its first year 278 students attended R. Ann Pollock. (1969). \textit{Jack Macdonald} [exhibition catalogue] (p. 9). Ottawa, ON: National Gallery of Canada.
\textsuperscript{223} Pollock. \textit{Macdonald} (p. 8).
exhaustion and ill health and financial difficulties as a result of the effort of setting up the school. After a stint as a painter living in a remote area on the west coast of Vancouver Island, Macdonald was back in Vancouver, looking for other employment to support his family, which was a difficult feat at the end of the 1930s. Hence his turning to high school art teaching. He had received his certification as a high school art specialist in British Columbia in the summer of 1937. Macdonald accepted a position at Templeton Junior High School, which he held for half a year (January to June). Apparently former Templeton students fondly remember his art class and the linocutting club he established, but Macdonald found the marking required for junior high classes overwhelming. He joined the staff of Van Tech in September of 1939 when there were more staff changes at Van Tech that year than any other year (VT, 1940, “Staff Changes”) hence the position opening that Macdonald took on, albeit somewhat reluctantly. At that time he was in the midst of doing what he perceived as being his most important painting. He had already made a name for himself as an artist and an art school instructor. Macdonald had also just completed (1939) a commission creating a mural on the theme of Native life for the dining room of the Hotel Vancouver.

The 1939/40 Van Tech yearbook includes a caricature of Macdonald in a cartoon depicting several teachers’ reactions to the activities at the construction site of the school’s new wing intended to house the girls [Figure 4.1]. In this cartoon Macdonald is stereotyped as an artist at an easel doing a painting, and his image is labeled with the words, “What a touching scene” (VT, 1940, p. 33). This cartoon image of Macdonald suggests that students saw Macdonald more as an artist than as a designer in his first year on staff at Van Tech. Macdonald was also apparently considered somewhat of an art expert and critic. In 1944, the yearbook reported that the school’s executive inspected Canadian posters at the art gallery and purchased two “scenes” for the girls’ school that were apparently made up primarily of dots and circles. “Mr. Macdonald offered to explain them (but we are still groping in the dark)” (VT, 1944, p. 38).

When asked about Macdonald as a teacher, Bob Banks acknowledged that he knew Macdonald was a member of the Canadian Group of Artists and said, “He was a good teacher. He was fine. There was nothing the matter with him—not that I know of. But he did smoke a lot.” Apparently in Banks’ class the emphasis was on drawing.

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226 Ibid. (p. 93).
227 Macdonald was a member of the Canadian Group of Painters, had exhibited with them and at the Vancouver Art Gallery, and had work represented in the National Gallery of Canada. (Dennis Reid. (1973). *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (p. 192). Toronto: Oxford University Press. Macdonald also had work exhibited at the New York World’s Fair, San Francisco Exposition, and the exhibition “A Century of Canadian Art” at the Tate Gallery, London, England (VT, 1940, p. 56).
228 Pollock. *Macdonald* (p. 11).
I remember it was mostly about pencils and paper.... I don’t remember any particular lessons in painting or in colour but we did have them because I was doing colour back in ’40. I was doing colour. And slowly I was thinking I might like to go into art. (Banks)

Margaret Strathern (grad of 1949) was in Van Tech’s first matriculation class that included female students. These girls graduated in 1949 with university entrance credentials and were the first group to have been integrated into classes with the boys. Tailoring, Margaret’s fashion design course offered by the girls’ department, was for girls only. Her regular art courses were co-ed. This included the ones she took with Macdonald and Ed Snetsinger. The art course she took with Macdonald, in Grade 9, her first year in the school, she remembers better than she does subsequent ones with Snetsinger. She said Macdonald’s teaching had more of an impact on her, and she laughed in acknowledging that she named her eldest son Jock and wonders if that was an unconscious association with this Grade 9 art teacher. Like Banks, she remembers doing mostly work in pencil, but she said they also worked in pen and ink and with poster paint and they did linoblock prints.

Strathern remembers the frustration in art class that she and others felt of wanting to “break loose” in her art assignments, but neither teacher encouraged this. Instead students learned about perspective, line, and some basic design principles. Macdonald included information about art history in his art teaching; she remembers particularly Macdonald’s enthusiasm for Van Gogh. She doesn’t think his classes ever painted to music, the way that some art classes in the 1940s in other schools did responding to music for subject matter (Kitsilano) or painting to music to come up with abstract, rhythmic patterns (Point Grey). Strathern said that, like the other girls, she generally liked Macdonald better than Snetsinger. Macdonald seemed to be more accepting of, comfortable with, female students even though he arrived the last year that Van Tech was an all-boys school, whereas Van Tech was already co-ed when Snetsinger joined the staff. One has a sense of Macdonald’s comfort in being around female students from the photograph on the cover of the exhibition catalogue entitled Jock Macdonald’s students. At a summer school session at the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1951, an art class of 11 students poses outdoors, some students with canvases and easels, grouped around Macdonald. It takes a moment to realize all the students in the photograph are women.

 Apparently Macdonald felt frustrated at Van Tech. He arrived there as an experienced art college teacher and an artist engaged with his painting and, outside of school time, he continued to be very active in his life as an artist. Macdonald was vice president of the B.C. Society of Fine Arts, and he was on the board of the Vancouver Art Gallery where he also served as a member of the exhibitions committee and as a teacher in the children’s Saturday

morning art classes. He painted after work, sharing a studio with sculptor Bea Lennie, who apparently had the financial resources to be able to work full time at her art. In May of 1941 Macdonald had his first one-man show at the Vancouver Art Gallery exhibiting 40 landscapes and other paintings, enabling the public to assess his artistic evolution. Apparently his work was well received.

During the time that Macdonald was teaching at Van Tech, he continued to spend his summers and some weekends on painting trips. After 1940 this was with Group of Seven artist Lawren Harris. In some of his painting he was attempting to suggest a spiritual unity between man and nature. On such painting expeditions, Macdonald was doing landscapes of the Garibaldi area, the Rockies, and the Okanagan. In his studio he was doing watercolour paintings that involved an unconscious approach to subject matter that he called modalities and automatic paintings, some of the first abstract paintings recognized in the history of Canadian art. Indeed he was a busy man. All this was happening against a backdrop of the war. Having been injured in the First World War, he was disturbed by what was happening in the war and by the increasing materialism around him during that time. I have no evidence of Macdonald showing or even talking about his own art to his Van Tech students. Apparently he did not integrate his artist self with his teacher self as is assumed of an instructor at an art school. Instead, in suit and tie and looking like any other male member of staff in the staff pictures, he stoically took on the role of high school art teacher in a way that seemed to have ignored his artist identity during school hours.

Macdonald expressed his early frustration in a letter to Varley, his former art school colleague and painting-trip companion:

I have been a week there [at Van Tech], and my feelings are that I could truthfully disappear.... I have got rid of the labourious checking I had to do at the last school [Templeton] but now I feel myself absolutely closed in opportunity to give the kids knowledge of my teaching. I will have to give the kids period furniture styles for their elementary carpentry classes, little designs for ashtrays for their metal work classes, a letter inside a two inch square for their lead cutting classes. I am fairly certain that I will burst wide open and give them just what I want....Damn money anyway!!! Why the devil has one to hang on to mentally stagnating jobs in order to exist? This existence is a peculiar business isn't it?

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230 Pollock. (p. 11).
232 Ibid. (p. 100).
233 Ibid. (pp. 101, 107).
234 Ibid. (p. 1,050).
This comment may reveal more about Macdonald's preconceptions, after only one week in the
school, of what it was going to be like to be teaching art at Van Tech than the reality of the
experience. Understandably Macdonald wouldn't introduce his students to his experimental
abstract, automatic modalities that were consuming him at the time, but there is no evidence
that he had to have his students do designs to be used directly for projects in the other classes
as he's described. Perhaps it would have been more truthful for him to say he was closed in
opportunity to give the students knowledge of his art rather than of his teaching. After all, he
had taken industrial design himself at Edinburgh College of Art. And what he describes as
fearing that he would have to do at Van Tech was in fact close to what he was reported to be
doing with his first year design students at Vancouver's art school as described by one student
there: "compose a design, starting from a square, in a reoccurring pattern; counterchanging
patterns, spot pattern, then a pattern in vertical stripes."236

As president of the B.C. Society of Fine Arts, Macdonald was a Western delegate to the
Kingston Conference in the summer of 1941, as was Jack Shadbolt. When Macdonald and
Shadbolt traveled to Ontario together on a train, they apparently debated the relationship
between socialism and art. Shadbolt, at that point, felt artists should be helping toward
socialist goals whereas Macdonald believed that the role of the artist was to lead by spiritually
uplifting society, not by graphically illustrating its ills237. Art was not to depict political events
or to espouse political causes, according to Macdonald, but to fulfill the demands of the artist's
inner conscience.238

With Macdonald's separation of his interests as an artist and his feelings about what
was feasible to do as a high school art teacher, it is doubtful that Macdonald ever generated
such discussions with his Van Tech students. My interviewees who had been in Macdonald's
classes (Banks and Strathern) had no memory of such discussions. In keeping his artist self out
of the classroom, Macdonald seems to have even superimposed some limitations that perhaps
were unnecessary. He had expressed the wish to have music in the classroom but thought that
was not feasible in a high school, whereas in 1943 when Macdonald was in charge of Saturday
morning art classes for children at the Vancouver Art Gallery, he used background music
thinking music enriched the atmosphere for art and might suggest a unity of the arts. In a
letter to H. O. Curry at the National Gallery of Canada, he commented, "If we could only
break through with a similar environment in our day school art classes."239 Yet a couple of
years later Van Tech the English teacher, R. B. Crummy, apparently had music in his classes

236 Farmer. (1927). The Paint Box, 2, 5.
238 Shadbolt in interview (1978, Feb.) with Zemans. The inner landscape (p. 100).
239 Quoted in Zemans. The inner landscape (p. 104).
Perhaps Macdonald had an overly restricted idea of what was reasonable for an art teacher at the time to do at Van Tech.

In the summers of 1937 and 1939 the Macdonald family made trips to California where he saw exhibitions of paintings by modern European artists Gauguin, and Van Gogh, whose work impressed him the most, a reason for subsequently showing Van Gogh to his students (Strathern). It was during his out-of-school hours while working at Van Tech that Macdonald confirmed his position as an important Canadian artist. Paintings done at that time comprised his second show at the Vancouver Art Gallery in November. On that occasion a Daily Province reviewer refers to Macdonald as “one of our leading artists.” With this kind of creative output fueled by his passion as a painter claiming Macdonald, it is easy to understand why he might have felt frustrated in spending his days teaching design at Van Tech as studio sharemate Bea Lennie suggested 20 years after the fact. She stated, “Bound by a restrictive curriculum and required to instruct many students who were uninterested in art, Macdonald found these teaching experiences extremely frustrating” (1968).

Blaming a restrictive curriculum or disinterested students at Van Tech as Lennie suggested, seems to be only a small part of Macdonald’s dissatisfaction. Only a few years later, Macdonald was teaching students at the art college in Toronto:

John Inglis, one of Macdonald’s students who graduated from Ontario College of Art in 1952, is reported to have described a first-year course that Macdonald taught him as emphasizing the drawing of simple objects in perspective. Inglis recalls, for instance, drawing a chair in angular perspective. He said Macdonald also had them do studies in a variety of media—pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and oils within a compositional context. This suggests that at the Ontario College of Art, approximately six years after Macdonald had left Van Tech, he was teaching what he could have been teaching at Van Tech (except for the oils). And as for student interest, most of his students at Van Tech were taking art as an elective (as there were no Grade 7 or 8 students in the school), and thus were likely to be at least somewhat interested in art, as were my two interviewees who Macdonald taught (Banks and Strathern). As mentioned, I conclude Macdonald’s preconceived notions of how he had to teach at Van Tech created some self-imposed restrictions. The fact that this was during the war created another source of anxiety and limitations as to what it seemed ethical and realistic to do as an artist at that time. With the school being pro-war in its support of Britain and pro-

240 Ibid.
242 Quoted in Pollock. Macdonald (p.10).
243 Murray, Jock Macdonald’s students, p. 28.
industrial development for the province for the benefit of the technically-trained graduates, Macdonald very well may have found himself at odds with some of the basic underlying beliefs in the school. Also Macdonald likely simply have preferred doing his own art than teaching at any high school during those years.

After the war, some opportunities in art school teaching opened up. Macdonald left Van Tech at the end of June 1946 to take a position for a year at the Alberta Polytechnic Institute in Calgary, before taking his final position at the Ontario College of Art. When he left Van Tech, there was no individual write up about him in the yearbook as there often was for teachers when they left or retired. But this was partly because by then the editorial control of the yearbook was increasingly shifting to the students and they were focusing on student-activities rather than on teachers. Nevertheless, staff and students didn’t seem to appreciate that Macdonald, who was to live only to 1960, was yet to be labeled as “one of the most important teachers in modern Canadian art history.”

Ed Snetsinger, art

The 1946-1947 VT yearbook lists E. D. (Ed) Snetsinger as teaching art. Snetsinger was the first Van Tech teacher designated as teaching art, as opposed to design. Like Macdonald, Snetsinger had taught art at Templeton Junior High. Van Tech’s yearbook of 1947 states that Snetsinger in recent years had specialized in art (VT, 1947, p. 56). In his second year at Van Tech he became a sponsor of the yearbook. At that time the illustrative matter of the annual included drawings, mainly in pen and ink, not just linoblock prints (VT, 1947, n. p.). He continued on the editorial board of the yearbook beyond the time period of this study (1950).

In the girls’ art class, which Snetsinger taught, the class was a combination of fine art and applied art according to Jim Rimmer who, for logistic purposes, was placed in the otherwise all-girl class while doing his independent art studies. He explained that the girls’ class was set up primarily for drawing, but the girls also did painting and some crafts. He remembers the girls doing leatherwork and fabric design, and applied design, some of which featured repeated patterns. He remembers Snetsinger as “a very nice guy, but he had no time to give me any individual coaching.” He added, “He was a quiet man, a gentle man, he would never give anyone a reading out. He would never blow up at anyone. He was a patient guy.” Rimmer also said, “I got a lot of practice in drawing at the school. That’s why it was such a good school for me.” Having his drawing accepted at Van Tech helped reinforce Rimmer’s desire to make art central to his life. This was diametrically opposed to the attitudes of teachers

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earlier in public school where he was rapped across the knuckles for drawing in the margins of his books or at best given well-intentioned advice: “You know, Jimmy, you can never make a living as an artist.” While Snetsinger didn’t have time to give Jim individual instruction, he apparently gave Jim good marks for his art, which Jim found encouraging.

Applied art

Miss I. Elliott joined the staff of the girls’ department from the time it opened in September of 1940. She was to teach clothing and applied art, as one of seven female staff members in the girls’ department. Of the total of 53 teachers and staff appearing in the official school picture for that (war) year, there was a whole row of women, after there being only one or two for so long. At the end of the girls’ first year in the school, the yearbook reported that the Grade 9 girls in applied art had been decorating belts, purses, radio covers, and luncheon sets in a cross-stitch pattern. The Grade 10 girls in the applied arts classes were “appliquing original designs in felt on linen and working on cross-stitch rugs, curtains, screens, and wall hangings” (VT, 1941, p. 17). These projects are in keeping with the Applied art manual by Grace Melvin et al. The manual, which had been published that year to provide an art course for female students in home economics, shows the use of cross-stitch and appliquing on a variety of textile surfaces.

Design All Encompassing: Contribution of Other Courses

At least by the mid-1930s, capability in visual art was considered part of the professionalism required of the design aspect of technical courses (Bill Wong, grad of late-1930s). This was despite the absence of design as a stand-alone course in the curriculum at that time. Wong, who later attended art school in the evenings, acknowledged that there was no art course at Van Tech. He said, “It’s true there was no one art course, but everything we did there related to art. I could see that very well.” He explained that design was taught in all the applied courses he took including metalwork, woodworking, and drafting. In these “you had to figure out your own design of what you were going to make,” Wong explained. This concern for design in technical projects is in keeping with the point of view of John Kyle, director of technical education. In his 1931-32 report in the Public Schools Report, he states, “the goal of technical education is the appreciation of beauty and fundamental principles which underlie all that is artistic in form and colour [which] is necessary in successful

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245 Rimmer has been freelancing more than 30 years as a graphic designer and is as busy as ever as a designer, illustrator, typographer, and printer of limited edition books and posters.
industrial training. The Van Tech yearbook of 1935 also stated that one of the goals of Van Tech was to teach "the art in craftsmanship."

**Drafting**

James Sinclair was the first drafting teacher beginning when the school began in the old Labour Temple in March 1921. The accompanying reproduction shows the drafting classroom [Figure 4.2] at that location sometime between then and June 1928. Both Mr. Charles W. Mitton and Mr. P. D. Taylor were teaching drafting, and only drafting, at the time of the opening of the new Van Tech facility (VT, 1929, "Staff List") and were long-term staff. However, it was Mitton who the Van Tech students I interviewed seemed to remember most clearly as the drafting teacher (although not knowing his first name, which was not uncommon at the time).

Clarence Falk said that he liked drafting but as his math was poor he was told not to go into it. Nevertheless the drafting he did at Van Tech helped him to learn to draw, he said, even though the work he did in Grades 9 and 10 was mostly mechanical. It was precision drawing, done with drafting setsquares and French curves, except some of the curves were done by hand. He explained the drafting projects were increasingly complex. They involved drawing plans, elevations, and side views of objects, starting with pyramids and blocks, and projection of lines to get elevations from different perspectives. They progressed to representing plans of objects such as a table or a bookstand and sections of buildings. Falk also remembers learning to do different kinds of lettering and learning to distinguish different types of lettering and typefaces in drafting. He was able to use his ability in hand lettering in other courses at Van Tech including in print shop. It was apparently the drawing that they learned in drafting that so many Van Tech students appreciated. Yet some of them also had to later learn to abandon the precision that they learned there. Bill Wong was one of these. He said that everything he did in high school had to be so precise, so he went to art school as an adult "to learn to be loose" and in order to become more expressive in his drawings.

A joke appearing in the 1932 yearbook reflects an attitude regarding the importance of mechanical drafting: "Now boys, drawing is spoken of as the universal language. A machine drawing may be called the language of mechanics. Now--what would you call a rough sketch?" Boy's answer: "The slang of mechanics, Sir" (VT, 1932).

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246 Miss Riddell taught history and other subjects from 1931 to beyond 1950. Miss Elliott remained at Van Tech until the 1948/49 school year when she left as a result of being promoted to supervisor of Home Economics for Vancouver Schools (VT, 1949).

247 61st Annual report of the public schools (pp. 31-32). Victoria, King's Printer.

248 Mr. Taylor stayed on beyond the period of this study (1950). As early as 1943 Mr. Hazelwood was teaching drafting as well.
Regarding drafting in the 1940s, Henry Zitko (student in the mid-1940s) said:

We did a lot of drafting. I had four years of it; I knew more about drafting than my university professors when I got there. It was a breeze. We did stuff at Van Tech that we didn’t even touch at university. For instance Mr. Mitten would give us shapes and we would have to figure out the shadows.... [It was] shadow work, where you take fancy shapes and then you decide where the sun is coming from and you do shadows of all these shapes hitting each other and the ground,” Zitko said. [“Without shining any light on them?” I asked him. “Yes, just in our mind.”].... That is artwork in that sense, but it is technical work too,” Zitko stated. “It was art because of the drawing involved.”

I told Zitko of a 1920’s provincial high school art exam showing a front-on view of a dresser and directing the student to draw it from a side angle. Relating immediately to this he responded, “Do it isometric and that kind of thing.”

Bob Banks acknowledged how helpful his training at Tech in drafting and mechanical drawing has been in his career as an illustrator. Banks stated, “We learned so much about drawing in those technical courses, drawing from isometric projections, learning to do different kinds of perspective. And it all came in industrial arts—that’s the heading that encompassed the whole thing.” He explained how his experience at Van Tech helped his career as an illustrator:

For the customer to come along with the blueprint of a tugboat wanting a painting of a tugboat at sea before it was built, that was something I could do. I’d do a painting of the tug from its blueprints. And this is how I discovered how I was much more fortunate than other artists who went to art school to learn how to draw. There was no way they were going to learn to read blueprints at art school. So it helped an awful lot, my technical training. I just love that part of it and I’m still interested in it—I’m still painting automobiles, ships, and aircraft. (Banks)

When I arranged to interview Banks, he admitted he would love to see some of the old texts. I took along some books and reproductions of some of the prescribed texts of the time. “Look at these books,” he responded with obvious affection as he flipped through pages indicating John Kyle’s prescribed texts.

This is on metalwork and that’s woodwork and that’s lettering. This lettering is usually for mechanical drawing. If you did blueprints you’d have to know lettering so the plans are decipherable for a layman looking at them. And from there you move from this kind of lettering to calligraphy, which is artistic lettering, which is wonderful too. In all, Tech gave me a wonderful grounding for illustration. And all this technical knowledge helped an awful lot in recognizing my interest in drawing.

249 Falk was among those who returned to the school for night school courses, hence the apparent ambiguity in listing his dates of attendance.
Later on, during the time I was in the service, I got to thinking about what I was going to do with the rest of my life.... (Banks)

The 1924 B.C. art textbook (Scott et al.) provides a section on perspective showing convergence of lines and foreshortening and how to draw shapes from varying eye levels, very much like the exercises reported to me by some Van Tech students (Falk; Malcolm Nelson, grad of mid-1930s; Zitko). Exercises in that text show simple shapes leading to drawings of increasingly complex objects. While starting with rectangular boxes they progress to two books with one on top of the other and a cylindrical and square form and a pyramid adjacent to a square prism. The Weston text (1933) even includes two pages of geometric problems (plates 52 and 53) showing how to bisect lines, angles, triangles, and semicircle, and how to draw hexagons. These diagrams are provided without much indication as to how these might be helpful in drawing. There is even a diagram as to how to use a setsquare in conjunction with a ruler, something that Van Tech students had much practice with in their drafting courses.

Printing

At the time the school was established in the Old Labour Temple building in 1921, Lewis A. Elliott, a practical printer, was placed in charge of the shop [when] the equipment was inadequate, the classes large, and the accommodation limited." He was said to have been a “born teacher” whose "life revolved around his shop" (VT, 1943, p. 8) the center of that being the production of the yearbook, which was sent “to all corners of the world” (VT, 1943, p. 8). With the move to the new school, the print shop and the printing programme expanded and an assistant instructor, A. Fraser Reid, joined the printing department to aid Mr. Elliott. But Elliott remained head of the print shop until his retirement in June of 1942 (VT, 1943, p. 8). Like so many other Van Tech teachers, Elliott was an ex-military man with strong ties to Britain. Having served in South Africa and World War I, Major Elliott was a qualified army drill instructor and was involved with cadet training in the school until 1933 when cadet training in Vancouver schools was discontinued. He took charge again in 1940 when cadet training was reorganized to prepare boys for service in World War II. Elliott’s loyalty to Britain makes understandable some of the decisions about what was included in and excluded from the yearbooks, and some of the visuals that were

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250 Weston. Manual of drawing (pp. 94-95).
251 As opposed to Van Tech art student Lorne Q. Elliott, who was an accomplished student linoblock artist.
252 In writing about Elliott's retirement in June 1942, the subsequent yearbook records that during WWI he "served as Adjutant of the Seaforth Highlanders and Staff Captain on Brigade headquarters. From 1915 to 1917 Elliott was Adjutant Instructor of UBC's C.O.T.C. (VT, 1943, p. 8).
produced. Every male Van Tech student I interviewed spoke highly of Elliott. During his career at Van Tech, Elliott taught typesetting and printing to thousands of boys. This included knowledge of type and printing and principles of effective page layout. In the printing course, students did the design, layout, and typesetting of the yearbook.

Clarence Falk remembers making use, in print shop, of what he had been learning about lettering and typefaces in his drafting classes. When Van Tech's type supply was missing a large (metal type) letter to complete an urgent print job, Clarence drew and cut a letter of the required typeface as a linoblock. It apparently printed to look like the other letters in that same style. This enabled the printing project to be finished without delay. Later in life Falk used this skill in lettering in cutting display-size letters in plastic.

Bob Banks explained that he learned about the printing trade from Elliott in the printing course. In Elliott's classes he set type by hand, learned about page layout, and "hundreds of other things necessary to know about for the process of creating a printed piece." He recognized later in his career how this all came together and how it all stemmed from his technical training. He explained that he loved the printing business despite its being dirty, smelling of oils and gasoline (used then for cleaning), and despite all the racket. Later as a cartoonist he wrote and illustrated stories based on a crew of printers similar to those he knew and worked with in the printing industry. This cartoon series ran for 10 years before he admitted that he'd run out of ideas for the series and would like to stop doing it.

In describing the typesetting of the yearbook, Henry Zitko stated, "We had to know the whole layout." Apparently students in the first year of printing spent much of their time disassembling the type from the previous year's annual, putting each letter in its proper case, to become familiar with where all the type was kept so they would gain speed quickly once they were actually setting type (Falk, Rimmer).

The 1942 issue of the yearbook, 84 pages in length, was the last issue produced under Elliott's supervision. The 1943 annual was considerably smaller. They referred to the thin, 28-page issue published in June of 1943, as "Our Wartime Economy Issue." But they also admitted that the smallness of the annual was partly due to the fact that Elliott had retired the previous year. Mr. Reid had undertaken the 1943 yearbook alone along with teaching all the print shop courses. The linoclub too had an inactive year the first year after Elliott's retirement, until Reid had a chance to get the club organized again for students "desirous of improving their skill in both drawing and block cutting" (VT, 1943, p. 15).

**Woodwork**

In woodworking students learned cabinetmaking with Mr. Parker, a long-time staff member. They also produced larger and smaller items made of wood from staircases to
wooden bowls. One undated photograph (likely 1930s) of an exhibition of Van Tech School woodwork [Figure 4.3] displays beautifully finished furniture that is enriched with adaptations of historic ornament from various periods, some based on floral motifs and some abstract designs suggestive of art nouveau. No two designs on the objects are alike. Projects include chairs, tables, a hallway bench, armoire, and buffet sideboard, as well as decoratively-treated doors and windows along with some more basic construction projects such as stairways and rafter joists. Henry Zitko explained:

You had to be able to read drawings in woodwork..., and of course we were good at that, because we did the drafting to know what we were drawing. Reading drawings was to be able to visualize what a thing's going to look like after you make it. It gives you the shapes, plan, elevation, end views, and then, from that, you would have to quickly see what you were going to get and then you could draw it in a fancy pictorial, isometric, perspective view, anything at all.... We did perspective views, isometric views...it's applied art. We did a lot of that.

Metalwork

Metalwork teacher Mr. J. Fraser had been among the original group of teachers at Van Tech when it formally began in the old Labour Temple in 1921. Upon Fraser's retirement in 1949, former principal James G. Sinclair wrote that Fraser, primarily a sheet metal and welding teacher, had had no teacher training but had come up through apprenticeship, journeyship, foremanship to being "recognized as one of the leading men in his trade" (VT, 1949, n. p.), a process that Sinclair valued.

Bill Wong said, "In metalwork, as in other technical work at the school, you had to figure out your own design. The teachers gave you an idea but then they left it up to you. A lot of what we did was our own design.... I feel like I gained an awful lot going there." Another student added to this saying,

The sheet metal work was applied art too because you learned to develop patterns to make shapes, in sheet metal. Again you would have to do the drawing first.... We'd have to draw it out and then we would have to make it, after developing the pattern properly. The fancy transition shapes—from circle to squares, offset (in line or cocked), that sort of thing, all those had to be developed. You'd have to develop the shapes that would take you from one shape to the other.... We would have to solder them together after we cut them out and put them together and make seam allowances and that kind of thing. (Zitko)

Photographs of such applied art from industrial arts courses during this period display items made of metal [Figure 4.4] by Van Tech students featuring decorated, hammered metal objects especially copper repoussé, some with raised or incised designs, some displaying geometric designs, some conventional floral motifs, some suggestive of art nouveau or historic ornament.
Most are domestic items including copper or brass bowls, lamps and vases, picture frames, gong set, trays, candle holder, decorative latches, lampshades, kettles, ashtrays, plaques with raised lettering including name plates, casing with clock, decorative relief plaques, paper knives, bookends, and chandeliers. Several of these are similar in approach to the hammered copper and brass objects depicted in de Lemos's popular American art text entitled *Applied Art.* As the de Lemos' text was the first reference in the two B.C. art textbooks, I accepted as art any projects that appear in those texts.

**Tailoring and Fashion Design**

In the second year of the existence of the girls' department, fashion design became available as a course adding to the clothing and applied art course. Training in design and construction of clothing was intended to prepare the girls to “work in the trades” (VT, 1943). E. A. Fisher was Margaret Strathern's tailoring teacher in the late 1940s. Strathern said she found the fashion design instruction aided her drawing skills considerably, despite being directed to draw the figure in an elongated ten to one ratio (the head being one). Strathern still has drawings from this class proving that she was designing coats and jackets as well as sports clothing, lounge outfits, and formal wear [Figure 4.5]. This course providing fashion design was available to girls only, yet in hindsight, the Van Tech student who could have used the information from this course most fully was Bill Wong. He took over the family tailoring business after graduating in civil engineering at the University of British Columbia. As partner in the tailoring shop, he has routinely done fashion renderings to have drawings of proposed garments before undertaking them for clients.

**Van Tech Library Resources**

Van Tech's library played its role in inspiring student artwork over the years. Originally the library was organized based on voluntary or extra-curricular efforts of staff. The founder of the library was S. L. Miller who was one of the pioneer teachers at Van Tech starting as math teacher in the basement of Kind Edward High School and transferring to the Dunsmuir street location when Van Tech was officially established there (VT, 1936, p. 79). Miller organized the library as extra-curricular work and gave some of his personal library to Van Tech, with each of those books identified by a bookplate saying “Miller Bequest.” (VT, 1936, p. 79). Due to additional donations, co-operation, and volunteer assistance, the library expanded. Walter

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253 De Lemos. *Applied art* (pp. 304-306).
254 Scott et al. (1924); Weston, (1933).
255 Clothing and applied art were originally taught by Miss C. E. Smith but she was replaced by Miss I. Elliott. In 1945 E. A. Fisher joined Miss Elliott in teaching tailoring.
Lanning catalogued book donations and began a file of pictures requesting donations of pictures. In the 1936-37 school year, V. W. Mulvin assumed charge as the library was recognized as taking its "rightful place as an educational auxiliary to the work of the classroom" (VT, 1937, p. 70). Lanning, an English teacher, started a library club where students could study books and give practical aid to the library (VT, 1938, p. 61). The next year, Lanning received his library degree and officially became Van Tech's librarian (VT, 1938, p. 61), proving that there were opportunities in the school for staff members who made the effort to increase their training and their credentials. Bob Banks remembers Lanning as helping him find source material for his drawings on aboriginal subjects. Banks said Lanning was very conscientious about having sources of First Nations art in the library; there were books about Mungo Martin and by John Innes, "an Englishman who was an artist and wrote about Indian lore."

Jim Rimmer remembered the library as being useful to him in his art too despite there being art books in the art classroom itself which he says he "did look through." Yet he remembers Lanning as helpful and the library being "where we hung out." He remembers the library as being close to the front entrance of the school, but perhaps on the second floor.

Other Sources of Art Images

One source mentioned by Clarence Falk for inspirational linoblock images was the Inland Printer. This was a professional printing industry publication available to students in the Van Tech print shop. Falk said he used to enjoy going through it. It apparently contained some excellent examples of linoblocks, which he found stimulating and spurred him on in designing and cutting his own linoblocks. The popular press, in such magazines as Life and The Star Weekly, also served as a major source of images for Van Tech students. In 1932, Clarence did a linoblock image of the Spirit of St. Louis, an airplane that Lindbergh flew on the first ever solo nonstop flight cross the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. Some of the images that Clarence did were copied from existing sources, but this seems to be true of more acknowledged drawing masters at the time. Even Weston in creating his drawing book has a 1931 plane acknowledged to be "from photographs."256 The ancient sailing vessels and personal sailboats Clarence drew may have been copied from existing sources but he drew these with the knowledge of someone who sailed. In showing me one of his prints of a sailboat, he was embarrassed about a rope shown as extending further than it should. Another source Falk mentioned was the Foster "How to" art books, but he was uncertain as to when exactly he had access to these books; it may have been after he was at Van Tech as a day or night student. He said he found such books especially useful in helping him to see how an

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256 Weston, Manual of drawing (plate 88).
image could be converted into different media, something that Van Tech students are acknowledged as having done in creating their linoblocks for Van Tech’s yearbooks and printers’ manual.

**Teachers’ Personal Aid to Students**

Clarence Falk spoke about the personal help Lewis Elliott gave to him during the worst time in the Depression. He said, “He knew we were hard up,” so Elliott paid Clarence’s fees enabling him to return to Van Tech as a night school student after leaving the school to begin a printing apprenticeship. Clarence had been accepted by a well-established printing firm on the recommendation of Principal Sinclair, who was otherwise reluctant to recommend boys who had not completed their training for fear that they would be a poor reflection on the school (VT, Sinclair, 1930s). Falk said he thought that Elliott and Sinclair trusted him to do a decent job primarily based on what they knew about him with regard to his achievement in linoblock work.

In the late 1940s a Van Tech biology teacher praised Margaret Strathern’s botanical drawings and encouraged her to consider becoming a medical artist. He went so far as to help set up some practical arrangements for her toward that end. The confidence and respect of teachers toward individual students had the capacity to inspire and encourage their artmaking pursuits.

**Art-Related Extra-Curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities provided students at Van Tech with the potential for some additional art-related learning and some additional contact with teachers who were able and willing to teach art skills in other contexts.

**Art club**

Principal Sinclair instituted the school’s art club in the 1934/1935 school year. This was because he was committed to having good design as an integral part of a technical education, and there was no art or design course in the school curriculum at that time. In the art club, which convened in after-school hours, he taught primarily drawing to interested students (VT, 1934, p. 20). A student in the yearbook explained Sinclair’s purpose in doing this as being “to teach us the rudiments of freehand drawing, a subject he is well qualified to teach.” This yearbook article explained that there was “no regular art course, that is, a course in commercial art where one may acquire an appreciation of art in illustration and advertising, or a purely aesthetic and cultural understanding of art generally.” The article acknowledged being proud of the school’s mechanical drafting course but it added, “we
need the enrichment that a commercial art course would impart" (VT, 1935, p. 20). It also expressed the hope “that art will eventually be included as a part of our regular curriculum” (VT, 1935, p. 20).

The art club began with drawing panels of mediaeval craftsmen at work, which were then mounted to “occupy an appropriate place in our main corridor for all to see.” The subjects of the panels depicted metalworkers, stonecutters, carpenters and joiners, bricklayers, sculptors, metal founders, wood turners, glassworkers, decorators, pottery workers, architects, and blacksmiths (VT, 1935, p. 20). In 1936 the art club’s main project was an 18-foot poster of a steamer loading at a wharf executed in crayon and then fixed with liquid cellophane. The woodworking department mounted it before it was put on one of the walls of the main corridors. Another large poster illustrated the loading of a steamer at an Eastern seaport done in “Oriental colours.” Two smaller posters, one illustrating “the march of Canadian progress” and the other showing “leisure time around a typical Canadian home,” were done by “L. Chan, of the Diesels.” The article noted that the art club worked along with other clubs such as the linoleum and home arts clubs (VT, 1936, p. 42). The home arts club is unknown to me; the girls had not yet arrived in the school so it was not something they instituted.

In the 1937/38 school year, the art club was still under the tuition of Sinclair, making coloured drawings for the school corridors referred to as being “a permanent record of achievement on the corridor walls” (VT, 1938, p. 22). Jock Macdonald took on the role of sponsor of the art club once he arrived in the 1939/40 school year (VT, 1940, p. 56). The yearbook states that the purpose of the club under Macdonald was “to study branches of art relating to the fine arts, not limited to practical arts,” and to do “decorative panels for places in the School where such decoration is required or desirable” (VT, 1940, p. 56). Club members chose to do symbolic designs representing the characteristics of various countries. In fact the article states that the members (rather ambitiously) “want to continue till all the countries of the world are included in the series.” They apparently hoped these pieces would be of “educational value—artistically, geographically, and historically” (VT, 1940, p. 56). Unfortunately none of the murals or wall panels seems to have survived.

The members of the art club in the 1939/40 school year, prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbour, are listed as being “Leslie Cardus, Ito Iwao, R. Banks, K. Nakagawa, Y. Tonagai, J. McSimming, K. Kitagawa, and Susumi Kozai” (VT, 1940, p. 56). Considering the war was in

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257 I have not seen any evidence of the art club’s murals and drawings in the school, or found anyone who knows of their existence, despite the fact that the club intended them to be permanent. A yearbook article talks about students being able to bring their sons back to the school to see them in the future (VT, 1938, p.22).
progress, this representation of Japanese students was high (apparently five out of eight),
again suggesting that the composition of the graphic arts clubs had a greater representation
of visual minorities than was true for the total population of the school. A photo of art club,
including Mr. Macdonald, appears in this yearbook (VT, 1940, p. 62). Bob Banks, who is in
that photo as a member of the art club then, stated,

I wasn’t very active in my first year at Van Tech because I was so scared
of the huge high school and I was just trying to succeed in my ordinary
studies; I wasn’t in a hobby mode. But in my second year, in Grade 10, I
started to loosen up and I joined the art club and the linocub. They kind
of overlapped. (Banks)

It is interesting that twice in the interview with me Banks referred to art learning as a hobby,
despite the fact that he has made an almost 60-year career using his art skills, specifically his
cartooning, historical and technical painting, and illustration abilities.

**Linocutting club**

The designing and cutting of linoblocks seemed to have been the most vital artistic
output for Van Tech students until 1947. The 1933 yearbook explains how the “linoleum
artists’ club” evolved over about three years as an addition to the printing course where boys
informally designed and cut linoblocks (VT, 1933, p. 38). Milton A. Parsons provided the
1931, 1932, and 1933 covers for the yearbook as a result of this activity. Lewis Elliott was
instructor with James G. Sinclair as honorary president (VT, 1933, p. 38) of the club. The 1933
yearbook explained, the impulse behind the growth of the lino club:

Since its inception, the Tech has been denied an art course, where those
with a leaning toward Commercial Art could receive instruction—so our
latent talent is finding an outlet in the drawing and cutting of linoleum
blocks....Although we have used linoleum blocks for the covers of “The
Vantech” since the Thunder Bird cover of 1926, it was not until about
three years ago that we began, in real earnest, to cut linoblocks as an
adjunct to the regular printing course. (VT, 1933, p. 38)

The write-up stated that membership in the lino artists’ club depends upon ability:

To become a full-fledged member, the aspirant must have cut a block of
sufficient merit to be printed and hung in the print shop gallery. The
following have qualified: M. A. Parsons, Clarence Falk, Orville Carnahan,
Jack Cummins, Reg. McLennan, Wm. Peacey, Ronald Cocker, Sing Lim,
George Obokata, Al Bushell, and J. Spowart. (VT, 1933, p. 38)

I include examples of the work of many of the lino club members in subsequent discussions.
The 1934 yearbook provided a photo of the linoblock club (VT, 1933, p. 22) showing 14
unnamed students with Elliott. The accompanying write-up stated:
[We are] still without an art course in the School, but our linoleum block cutters are putting the need of such a course very prominently before the general public.... Those of us majoring in printing, of course, are able to combine lino-block cutting as part of the practical work of our course. The lino-block art has many commercial advantages. (VT, 1934, p. 23)

At that time, there were no regular meetings of the club, but students could go to the print shop whenever the urge to cut a design occurred—and for some that was quite often. Sing Lim (grad of the mid-1930s) provided linoblock headings in four colours for the 1934 yearbook. The write-up comments,

'Slim' is our most energetic linoblock man. Although not majoring in printing, he is a regular visitor to the print shop after 3:21, looking to cut something for the school. [He is] a fine example of school spirit. (VT, 1934, p. 23)

Sing Lim also provided a five-colour demonstration piece [three parts of which are shown in Figure 4.6] in the printer's manual that the print shop produced in 1934. The list of active members for 1933/34 school year names 15 students including Clarence Falk who was no longer a day student but was attending Van Tech night classes (VT, 1934, p. 23). Two of the fourteen students in the club photo appear to be of visible minority. These are members Lim and George Obokata (grad of mid-1930s) both talented linoprint artists who have numerous prints in the yearbooks and Van Tech’s lino-block manual. The 1936 yearbook write-up on the linoleum block club seems intent upon getting rid of any stereotyping regarding who could be involved in designing and cutting linoprints, or even who can be artistic. It states, “Membership in this club is not confined to studious boys.” [Note it does not say artistic boys.] “All types of boys find the work interesting. A number of the best blocks have been cut by boys who took a very active part in school athletics” (VT, 1934, p. 41). The article mentions some members of the club attending the printing course at night; these students were former day students. Besides Falk, by 1937 Ken McLeish and Sing Lim were also still involved in the club while being night school students (VT, 1937, p. 66). By 1939 the lino club had 35 members (VT, 1939, p. 52).

Henry Zitko said he never did his linoblock prints as part of a working club. He bought his own cutters and battleship linoleum and did his cutting at home with his own tools and equipment. After cutting a block, he took it to the printing department to have students there print his images for him. He said he did a great many of these linoprints but only a few got into the yearbook. In fact he provided two yearbook covers (1943 and 1944) and four images that were printed on the inside pages of the yearbooks. The 1943 yearbook cover image of the medieval knight [Figure 4.7] on the rearing horse was the first of these
covers that Henry did, but in fact the cover integrated Henry's image with four elements done by student artist Marion Barber (grad of mid-1940s). This combined cover was not, however, done co-operatively. Mr. Reid gave Henry's block of the knight on horse to Marion and she added four surrounding cameos representing the armed services—army, airforce, navy, and marines. Zitko said Marion made the integrated cover without Henry knowing about the modification or that it was to appear on the cover of the yearbook. Marion was one of the first girls to join the lino club. She and Henry didn't work directly together. Perhaps this missed opportunity for cooperation was for the better considering that Zitko told me the arrival of the girls at the school was for him "a real stressor." While Henry did his lino work at home rather than in the presence of other members of the linoclub, other members (Falk, Banks) have explained how they went into the print shop and sat around a table and cut together and learned from each other.

The traditional group photo of the linoblock club that appears in the 1941 yearbook (VT, 1941, p. 65) shows Elliott seated with 26 students and Sinclair, who generally didn't appear in group photos other than the lino and art clubs. Six of the boys appear to be of Asian descent, a higher percentage than the general population of the school suggesting a particular interest in the graphic arts.

Lino club gallery

Membership in the lino club was contingent upon designing and cutting a lino print of sufficient worth to be hung on Van Tech's gallery wall in the print shop. Thus the linoprints on the gallery wall set standards and provided inspiration for students aspiring to become competent linoprint artists. It also enabled current students to know about others in the school who were involved or about past students who had been involved in linoprint design and cutting. Indeed they did seem to take note of each other's work according to Clarence Falk, Bob Banks, Henry Zitko, and Jim Rimmer.

Exemplary prints and other inspiration

Clarence Falk and Milton Parsons were two early members of the linocutting club. Falk credits Parsons as being the first one to really demonstrate the effectiveness of the linoblock print at Van Tech. As previously mentioned, Milton produced the linoprint covers for the yearbooks in 1931, 1932, and 1933 as well as contributing prints to the linoblock printer's manual (VTPM). Yet Falk, who also created a great number of prints that were published in the manual and yearbook, felt that he too helped to pioneer linoprinting in the school and "helped others to pick it up." In fact the combined efforts of Clarence and Milton together produced the two-colour linoprint for the 1933 yearbook cover that also served as
the cover for the linoblock printer's manual. Falk said that Parsons drew this image, depicting a medieval printing press [Figure 4.8], but Clarence cut it. This is not the only case I know of where two different people drew and cut an image.

Falks explained he had been buddies with Orville Carnahan, another lino club member, whose linoblock images show his special interest in the automobile and perhaps some wishful thinking. [Figure 4.9] shows an image of a man driving what may be a convertible that suggests striking differences in driving attitudes of today. The image shows someone in leather driving gloves glancing happily over his shoulder, his scarf blowing in the breeze, and an accompanying verse poetically mentions the "thrill on the great highway" but adds "watch the road... when you pass." Some of his images appear in the yearbook and in the Van Tech printer's manual. Lorne Q. Elliott was another student whose work was similarly featured and whose work Clarence admired in the 1930s as being by one of Van Tech's most competent linoblock artists. One image of Lorne Elliott's is of the newly built Burrard Bridge [Figure 4.10] suggesting some students were looking to reflect their own environment in their art. Almost ten years later, students were still inspiring fellow students to get into lino-block design. Henry Zitko said, "Michael (Kuznitzoff) got me started; he was a tremendous inspiration. Kuzzy encouraged me, and I saw some of his stuff and so I thought, I want to be doing that." One lino print previously mentioned, shows a portrait of Winston Churchill [Figure 2.2]; another shows conductor Arturo Toscanini [Figure 4.11].

Former Van Tech students who had been members of the Lino Artists' Club were encouraged to go back to the school to share their expertise, thus offering a form of apprenticeship for less experienced lino designers seeing them work. Zitko and Michael Kuznitzoff (grads of 1943) were invited to return to the school to do linoprints. Also others who left the school as day students and returned as night school students remained welcome members of the lino club.

Linoblock printing manual

Van Tech produced for their student printers a manual as a guide on how to draw, cut, and print linoblock prints. Entitled Lino-blocks: A handbook for student printers, this manual was written by printing teacher Lewis Elliott. This 39-page text also included some information on the history of this print form. Dated 1934, it would have been produced early in 1934 as Van Tech's 1934 yearbook, published in the spring, states "a small textbook on lino-block cutting has also been issued by the printing department for the use of the members of the club" (VT, 1934, p. 23). This 250-print edition of the linoblock printer's manual features prints by Van Tech students that have been printed from their original linoblocks. While most of the prints are made from one block, several are of two and three colours, and the demonstration piece by
Sing Lim featured five colours [Figure 4.6]. The manual was typeset and printed by Van Tech students and contained exemplary linoblock prints produced to that date by Van Tech students. Some of the prints had previously appeared in the yearbooks. Considering that Van Tech students had only been in their new school facility for six years, the collection of professional-quality linoblock prints that they had already amassed in the manual is impressive. The text begins with a somewhat apologetic tone for linoblock cutting not being woodblock cutting; Elliott considers lino as being the precursor to woodblock cutting. "Linoleum, in the hands of the senior student...[permits] rather intricate and elaborate designs being cut, thus providing excellent preliminary training for the more advanced work of wood engraving" (VTPM, p. v). The same apologetic attitude regarding linocutting not being woodcutting appears almost a decade later in the yearbook in a write up on the linoblock club:

During the last few years there has been a revival of wood engraving. Since the more flexible medium, battleship linoleum, has been available, lino-block cutting has become a fascinating pastime. (VT, 1941, p. 62)

There is no clarification as to whether any wood engraving was being done at the school at the time. Some linoblock designs are acknowledged in the manual as having been used previously to produce up to 1,000 prints. These appeared in the Van Tech yearbook (VTPM, p. vi). One image of a machinist by Milton Parsons (shown as the image in the upper-right hand corner of Figure 6.9 the exemplar of lettering styles by Van Tech students) acknowledges having a previous print run of 3,000. Dated 1930-31 it was likely used in some self-advertising by Van Tech as well as in the yearbook. Author Elliott explained that the linoprint manual was meant primarily as an aid for teaching student printers in Van Tech, but he added,

It should also prove useful to those who have taken up the cutting of the lino-block as an aid to artistic expression and better craftsmanship, either in school or shop" (VTPM, p. v). "The idea in view is to establish a standard of quality in the cutting of lino-blocks in the school, a standard which the author hopes will be raised as time passes. (VTPM, p. v)

Unlike the yearbooks, the manual was not meant for an outside audience although the level of professionalism of the manual, in both text and the multitude of linoprints, suggests it would have been a welcome addition to the library or reference shelf of anyone interested in linoblock design and printing. Considering that Clarence Falk attended Van Tech only for Grades 9 and 10 as a day student, it is impressive that he produced so many images for the linoprinting manual and the yearbooks. Having typeset and printed 250 copies of this manual in the

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258 The manual contains Falk's images of a snake charmer (p. vii), Mohammed reciting his "Revelations" to his assistants (p. 14), Omar Khayyam (p. 18), an airplane (p. 8), a sailboat (p. 24), and an ancient sailing ship (p. 10). There are no such images in the 1924 Scott et al. text, but the Weston
1933/34 school year, in the depth of the Depression, is it not surprising that the printing department considered not producing a yearbook that year (VT, 1934), but they did in fact publish the yearbook thus keeping the annual tradition unbroken from 1922, their first year in existence in the Old Labour Temple.

**The Van Tech yearbook**

Production of the Van Tech yearbook was one of the main sources of art learning for students and the main outlet for displaying their art images. The existence of the first Van Tech yearbook in the spring of 1922 was admirable in that the school opened the previous September and the type, presses, and other needed printing materials did not arrive until the first week of January of 1922 (VT, 1937, “Fifteen Years Ago,” p. 74). Lewis Elliott then had to train the boys, all of them in their first year of printing, to turn out the first annual. While it is seen by comparison with later editions as a “modest publication” of 42 pages, it was all hand typeset in letterpress by the boys who also did the presswork, including printing and binding (VT, 1937, p. 74). It included several photographs of the shops and four illustrations, three of which were cartoons about school life. The yearbook continued to be produced in handset type to 1950 despite a change to offset printing in 1947.259

Beginning with the 1927 edition, the yearbook was called the The Vantech. Ten years after the first issue, it was increasingly more elaborate, with more illustrative material, including graphic editorial headings as well as cartoons. Despite Depression conditions and a 1943 paper shortage, Van Tech managed to produce a yearbook every year at least during the period of this study (to 1950). This consistent publishing activity makes the yearbook a valuable historical record of the school as well as providing insight into student artwork. The 1937 yearbook acknowledged that A. Fraser Reid did the group photographs and mentioned that not having to pay a professional photographer for this worked helped keep the price of the yearbook low. This indicates there was a fee for the publication, an amount never stated in the yearbook. Because the typesetting, printing, and binding were done in the Van Tech print shop, any outside costs were minimal (cost of the paper, ink, etc.). Van Tech was thus able to produce the yearbooks without advertisements providing more room for student artwork. This was the case until 1946 when they decided that carrying advertising would allow them to produce an even “bigger and better annual” (VT, 1947, n. p.).

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259 To beyond the time of this study (1950), the yearbook continued to be handset with the page proofs serving as the reproduction art to be photographed (Rimmer). In this way the students continued to have the experience of hand-setting type despite the change in printing process.
A more major change affecting artwork carried in the yearbook was change in printing process. In the 1946/47 school year, the Van Tech yearbook was converted from a traditional letterpress printing process involving raised, inked type to an offset printing process involving a planographic (flat surface) transfer system. This new printing process altered the whole look of the publication and had a dramatic effect on the kind of artwork produced by students to appear in the yearbooks. Art changed from professional-looking, clean-line linoblock prints within the letterpress page to primarily pen and ink drawings creating at first glance a cluttered-looking but lively page layout. The illustrations stand out, making them obvious rather than a subtle part of the page layout. Also, in content, Van Tech’s annuals became more like other Vancouver school yearbooks focusing on the personalities of the students. Individual pictures of grads, for instance, are included for the first time. The three issues of The VanTech within the time frame of the study, after the change to offset printing, featured many black and white pen drawings and some pencil drawings. No colour appeared in these editions.

The 1946 issue commemorates the 25th anniversary of the school. It has a hand-lettered cover rather than one set in the less flexible metal type. All subsequent offset printed yearbooks created an outlet for hand lettering that had not been feasible with the letterpress process as a relatively expensive engraving had to be made in order to print any hand lettering. Lettering in the yearbooks beginning in 1947 was one area where student artists seem to have experimented (see composite of lettering styles in Figure 6.9), creating their own lettering styles having been freed from the restrictions of traditional metal type.

Editorial control of yearbook

One has a sense that there was very tight editorial control over the Van Tech yearbook for the first twenty years of its existence, and this affected the kind of artwork that made it into the yearbook. The actual editor was for a long time unnamed. The 1933 edition stated, “This is the last occasion that the present Editor will have the pleasure of writing what he thinks year in year out.” Yet no identity of the editor is revealed. This could have been Principal Sinclair or printing supervisor Lewis Elliott, but due to other various comments within the yearbook, this is not certain.

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260 The change in the printing process was confirmed for me by Jim Rimmer, who was a Van Tech printing student at the time and knowledgeable on the subject.
261 The following statement is one of these: “The School has also to thank the printing Department for the encouragement given to boys anxious to learn linoleum cutting. The technical work along this line is on a plane by itself, and we feel proud of it and of its promulgator” (VT, 1933, Editorial). Similar instances reveal that at this time it was also not a student who was editor. In 1937, an editorial board of nine teachers is listed (VT, 1937, across from Table of Contents), including the printing department's Mr. Elliott and Mr. Reid, six others who taught English, and one who is listed as social.
While I have heard only of one image being specifically asked for to be included in the yearbook, I was told of several instances of images having been rejected or revisions to them requested. Henry Zitko was asked by A. Fraser Reid to do an image of a Union Jack flag to accompany the page carrying the war honour roll of Van Tech grads and staff on active duty in World War II. This was at a time that the Union Jack was Canada’s flag as well as that of Great Britain. For this request, Henry traced the image of the flag provided by the teacher, cut it, and then submitted it to be printed in the yearbook (VT, 1946, n. p.). Zitko said that besides this one request, he does not believe any students were asked to produce specific illustrative matter for the yearbook. However, at least in the 1930s, Elliott called for people good at drawing to submit images for the yearbook. Clarence Falk submitted an india ink drawing of Mickey Mouse. But Elliott did not deem this a suitable subject for the Van Tech yearbook. It was thus rejected.\textsuperscript{262} Van Tech’s yearbook was concerned about an outside audience. Some features, such as the Publicity Bureau photographs of the city, description of First Nations myths, scenic photos of nature in British Columbia, etc., made Van Tech’s yearbook seem almost like an ambassador promoting Vancouver and B.C. as a good place to live and work. As well, it promoted technical education. Explaining itself to an outside audience seems to be one of the reasons for repeating aspects of Van Tech’s history whenever a reason could be found, such as the retirement of a long-term staff member or an anniversary of the school. There was a whiggish approach in the presentation of the school history and there is some sense of aggrandizement of some of the people responsible for the establishment and development of the school, indeed of technical education in general. For instance the school’s recognition of George Lister as father of technical education for the province doesn’t acknowledge the existence of John Kyle.

Clarence suffered another rejection of a proposed image to be included in the yearbook for unwanted subject matter. Besides rejecting submissions, Elliott, Reid, and Sinclair would ask for revisions to initial submissions. Zitko had submitted an image of an airplane, but Sinclair apparently thought it was “too abstract.” Henry located several pictures of airplanes and created a generalized image of a warplane. This image, which appeared on the cover of the 1944 edition of the yearbook, shows a mechanic doing repairs on the airplane [Figure 4.12]. This reflects the war-time presence at Van Tech of servicemen learning how to repair various studies and library. In the later 1940s, student editors and teacher sponsors on the editorial board were named and their photographs also appeared.\textsuperscript{262} Mickey mouse was featured in Templeton Junior High School’s student publications, but Templeton, another east-side school (that both Macdonald and Snetsinger taught at before joining Van Tech), was a junior high, and editions of their publication (The Teelay) came out every few months and were aimed exclusively at the school’s own students.
kinds of military equipment. These servicemen-in-training had taken over the basement rooms at Van Tech, thus giving the students a realistic idea of what was involved in some war work, something that the staff highlighted. They stressed that a good mechanic was as important to the war effort as a good pilot (VT, 1941). The editor finds it necessary to explain that Henry’s linoprint image is “a composite of several present-day aircraft rather than an attempt to portray any particular model” (VT, 1944, p. 34). One can’t help but feel that a particular plane depicted absolutely realistically might have been preferred. “I did dozens of different images of airplanes and I had hundreds of copies of them,” Zitko said, “but they [the printing class] did the printing for us.... Only a few of them got in the annual.”

Staff in charge of the yearbook tended to rely on their best artists in the school rather than a more democratic approach of letting a wider number of students have a chance to be involved. The 1940 yearbook, in the write up about the linoblock club, says that lack of space prohibits some of the submitted linoblocks from being included but states the ones that have been included “give an idea of the general standard of work of the Club. The new members are developing that dexterity of hand necessary to produce good work, and future numbers of The Vantech will, we hope, demonstrate their abilities.” To me this seems to be saying diplomatically that the featured ones provide an indication of the expected standard rather than the general standard. And they maintained their standard even if only the prints of a few student artists could be included. There was in fact never any space for substandard linoprints in the yearbook. Perhaps the editorial control ensured that graduates could proudly include the yearbooks in their portfolios to take to potential printing industry employers as samples of something they had helped to produce.

Professionalism was certainly deemed more important than participation. The 1941 yearbook’s article on the linoblock club notes the work of Bob Banks, president of the club that year, who provided the “Graduates” heading in four colours, as well as the cover image, the illustration for the legend, and other features. The article adds that Banks “will graduate this year and we shall have difficulty in filling his place as Tech cartoonist and lino-block artist” (VT, 1941, p. 62). The same standards seem to have excluded students from submitting photographs for the yearbook. Often featured photographs were scenes of Vancouver or B.C. or from around the school. The scenic and nature photos from around the school were usually taken by the printing department’s Reid or Elliott. This is despite the fact that there was a camera club that had student competitions and one of the categories of photographs sought was of images around the school. None got in the yearbook. The editor(s) never seemed to forget that, through the yearbook exchange, the yearbook was going to other technical schools around the world, especially in Commonwealth countries. An article from the “Exchange Desk” states:
Surprisingly, under the strain of wartime conditions and consequent strict regulations, our exchanges with other schools have maintained friendly relations to a remarkable degree.... To all, old friends and new, we extend our warmest fraternal greetings and our sincere hope for a peaceful world before the present year passes into history. (VT, 1945, p. 38)

These international friends included technical schools in England, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, India, British Malaya, South Africa, and other areas of Canada (VT, 1941, pp. 70-71).

Editorial commentary throughout the yearbooks seems to suggest that staff saw B.C. as a site of almost unlimited potential for industrial development. Certainly continued industrial expansion was what was needed to provide jobs for Van Tech graduates. The yearbook was thus promoting the city and province as a good place to establish a business or industry. Early linoblock prints of scenes from nature on the covers of the yearbook tended to suggest B.C.'s beauty when a technical subject was not the theme of the cover illustration. Banks pointed out that images appearing on the cover, tended to be about technical subjects rather than just being pretty pictures. For instance the cover he did for the yearbook that appeared in June 1940 featured a prospector panning for gold [Figure 4.13]. He explained this is the first stage of mining, a subject offered at Van Tech. The previous cover, also by Banks, depicted the newly-completed Lion's Gate Bridge to acknowledge the engineering feat embodied in this bridge that was, at that time, the longest span in the British Empire.

The Depression years had been hard on Van Tech when graduating students had no jobs to go to, especially since the goal of their education had been job preparation. There was a feeling of hopeless in the farewell messages to senior students. Aside from the overwhelming destruction and threat to individuals' lives, the war was an advantage to Van Tech’s graduating students as it provided valuable employment and experience. Van Tech graduates were in demand directly in the armed forces or in the technical industries supporting the war. Hence the comment that appeared stating well-trained ground crew keeping warplanes flying were as important as well-trained pilots (VT, 1944). Perhaps this is why war images figure so prominently in the illustrations in Van Tech's yearbooks. Undoubtedly employment opportunities were one of the reasons for promotion of the war and of the expectation that graduating students would immediately enlist in the armed services. There was no mention of the Japanese internment in the Van Tech yearbooks. Presumably Japanese students left Van Tech under the same circumstances that they left Britannia High School, as documented in the interviews by former students of that school that were collected and edited by Clive Cocking263 and also as by Gosbee, who shows a haunting photo of temporary bunk beds row on row in the

263 That text states that only three of their entire junior rugby team remained after the Japanese were moved away from the coast. The remaining three weren’t Japanese as the others were.
barns at the Pacific National Exhibition where “Japanese families were rounded up and housed...before being sent to towns in the Interior of B.C.” (p. 55).

The 1940 Van Tech yearbook finally identified a teacher as the editor of the yearbook. This was E. B. Broome, an English teacher (VT, Editorial, p. 7). Presumably this was a new appointment rather than a continuing one. It was not until a couple of years after the girls joined the school, however, that an editorial board set up for the yearbook that was made up primarily of students with a teacher sponsor. This was more in keeping with the approach of other Vancouver high school yearbooks. The student-directed yearbooks in the city tended to feature the personalities of the students and their activities during the year rather than aspiring to be a historical record of the school, a promotional tool for technical education, or advertising for the city and province, the other purposes that the Van Tech yearbooks seemed to serve.

Yearbook as a source of exemplary artwork

Because the images that appear in both the Van Tech yearbooks and the Van Tech linoprinting manual were printed from the original linoblocks, drawn and cut by the students, they are in fact original student artwork rather than reproductions. The linoprints and other illustrations in the yearbooks served to create standards of expectations for upcoming students seeing the exemplary work that was chosen for inclusion in these publications. In the official B.C. textbook for art classes up to Grade 10, Scott et al. (1924) acknowledge the usefulness of providing good examples of student artwork to students as an aid in their learning. “Selections of the best work produced by students of previous years may also be mounted and used as suggestive data when similar problems are being tackled. In this way students are given a start in the thoughtful working out of their problems.”

As the linoprints were multiples, as well as being printed in the yearbook, any potential detrimental effect to the individual artists giving up their artwork did not happen. In fact, according to some of my interviewees (Falk, Zitko, Banks), the printing department printed many copies of the chosen prints for the individual student artists, whether or not they were to be included in the yearbook or displayed on the gallery wall in the print shop. Aware of Bob Banks' linoprints and cartoons, younger student Henry Zitko said of Banks’ 1940 yearbook cover of prospector: “I thought he was tremendous being able to turn out something like that.” This was a linoprint cut in several colours; it is shown here [Figure 4.13] in black and white only.
Clubs

While Van Tech did not have as many clubs as Kits and they weren't in scheduled class time, they did have some clubs and some offered art learning or related skills.

Camera club

In the 1935/1936 school year, A. Fraser Reid of the printing department started a camera club (VT, 1936, p. 55). The yearbook of the following year notes that some students had bought cameras during the year (VT, 1937, p. 69), and the following year a photograph of the camera club shows thirty boys in it, still under the sponsorship of Reid (VT, 1938, p. 23). By the next year the club had 40 photography enthusiasts. They heard Reid's presentations focusing on how photography develops a love for the beautiful in nature and how it cultivates artistic expression (VT, 1938, p. 62). Reid often had nature pictures in the yearbook from around the school and from other parts of B.C. He also took group pictures for the yearbook and provided club members with information on the technical side of photography (VT, 1938, p. 62). On more than one occasion Lewis Elliott gave a presentation to the club on composition as a major factor in creating good photographs (VT, 1938, p. 62; VT, 1941). There was a photo competition with prizes offered for the best photographs taken by club members in the 1938/39 school year. The club also organized photography hikes in the spring (VT, 1939). Only 15 boys appear in the photograph of camera club members in the year ending 1939; three of the members seem to be of Asian descent, again revealing a higher percentage of students of Asian descent than in the general population at the school. Reid continued to be the sponsor in 1941, where it is reported that as many as 30 members attended meetings (VT, 1941). When Reid added a movie camera to his equipment, he showed some of his moving pictures at those meetings (VT, 1941).

Acknowledging the existence of the camera club, when he was there in the early 1940s, Henry Zitko said, “I wasn’t in it. I couldn’t afford a camera in those days. Kuzzy (friend Michael Kuznikoff) had a good camera. In fact he took a lot of pictures around the school.” This comment makes me wonder if indeed owning a camera was a prerequisite to being a member of the club; such a requirement would seem to make the club surprisingly exclusive. It is interesting, however, that the club was named a camera club as opposed to a photography club as it was at Kits.

Stagecraft and scenery

Van Tech’s yearbook for 1937 notes the existence of a stagecraft club for the first time mentioning that members were looking after lighting, fly handling, and scenery construction, and working in the shops to make the necessary properties for the stage (VT, 1937, p. 69). Yet

such stage activities were going on in the school earlier than that. There was a dramatic club by the second year (1929/30) in the new building (VT, 1930, p. 41). A photograph shows an all-boys cast of 27 players posing in front of painted stage scenery for a production of Shakespeare's "Henry V." Falk said, "The staff did seem to like their Shakespearean plays." Wong thought he remembered there being one each year during his time in the mid-30s.

A write-up in the 1938 yearbook about the stagecraft club named Mr. Baird and Walter Lanning as sponsors (VT, p. 60). Perhaps being an all-boys school was a disadvantage in terms of the dramatic arts. The next write-up in the yearbook about the stage club mentioned the managing of properties again, but there was no mention of painting scenery for the girl's operetta "Cinderella" or for the dancing show that was mounted that year (VT, 1941, p. 18). Nor was scene painting mentioned by anyone I interviewed. Failing to mention or show the painting of stage scenery (which were included in Kits yearbooks) seemed to suggest that this art outlet was minimized or not particularly valued at Van Tech during this time period. Thus it is somewhat surprising that the theme of the 1950 yearbook is theatre and drama. Not something that likely would have happened in the all-boys school under James Sinclair. Even at this time, principal E. M. White, who allowed for much more democratic input into the conduct of the school, opens the Principal's Message with the words, "The theme of this annual, I understand, is to be the theatre and drama." This clearly suggests that this was not his idea, not that it suggests he was necessarily opposed to it (VT, 1950, p. 5).

Accessibility of Vancouver's Art School and Art Gallery Classes

Saturday morning art classes for school children were established almost from the start of Vancouver's art school,265 and were also available at the art gallery after it opened in 1931. In fact Jock Macdonald was in charge of the children's program during the time that he was teaching at Van Tech (Zemans). Several of the students that I have interviewed from both Van Tech and Kits attended such classes, often making it difficult to determine what they learned in their high school program and what they learned from these other sources. The drawing ability of Clarence Falk was recognized in grade school by a school supervisor who recommended to Clarence's parents that he attend classes at the art school. But this was during the Depression. He explained, "we didn't have two nickels to rub together." Finding the bus fare wouldn't even have been possible. So while other Van Tech students ten years later were able to attend Saturday morning art classes at the art school or at the art gallery, Clarence missed out on those opportunities. Nevertheless he has continued to draw on his own throughout most of his life.

Bob Banks went to Vancouver Art Gallery’s Saturday morning children’s classes while he was still in elementary school in the mid-thirties; he had Frederick Varley there as a teacher. Jim Rimmer went to Saturday morning art classes in the basement of the Vancouver Art Galley in the 1946/47 school year prior to attending Van Tech. He remembered there being lots of materials available there with a teacher from the art school and an assistant to help out, enabling students to do “anything we wanted.”

Visitors to the Carnegie Museum

In being asked about any knowledge of the museum or art gallery when he was at Van Tech, Clarence Falk said he never went to the art gallery but “as a kid we used to go... to the museum, you know.” He said he was not aware, however, of any direct knowledge of what he saw at the museum influencing his artwork. Henry Zitko said,

I don’t think I went to any art-type display, but I spent quite a bit of time looking through the museum; that was always open every time I went by there. I use to walk around to see what was in there.... There was some interesting sculpture and stuff like the Greek Thinker.

He said he remembers looking at the sculptures there on pedestals and he admits that this may have encouraged him to do his discus thrower image for the yearbook. Banks also explained that he used to go to the museum to do research commenting that Major (J. S.) Matthews, Vancouver’s original archivist, was an avid First Nations art collector.

Knowledge of Local Art Concerns

Jim Rimmer said an additional advantage of attending Vancouver Art Gallery classes in the mid-1940s was that after the sessions the students could go upstairs to the gallery rooms and look at paintings on display. He remembers viewing the Emily Carr collection. Rimmer says he knew Carr’s paintings of trees looked “kind of strange,” didn’t look very real, but he still felt “they were kind of neat.” Jim couldn’t figure out what he liked about them, especially since his father, who did his own art, didn’t appreciate modern art and advised Jim, “don’t go near that abstract stuff.” Jim had this awareness of Emily Carr’s work, and other paintings that he saw in the art gallery, before he attended Van Tech, but there did not seem to be any immediate impact on his school art from this source.

Staff’s Contact with Larger Community for Students’ Benefit

James G. Sinclair apparently attempted to stay in touch with areas of the community into which Van Tech students would be working. He was guest speaker at an annual Printers’ Association dinner for printing craftsmen and apprentices. Clarence Falk explained
that this was at the time that he was apprenticing in the well-respected Roeddi's printing company and thus was at the dinner also. In his address to the group, Sinclair said that the Roeddi Company would do well because they had Clarence there. In remembering this special acknowledgement coming from Sinclair, Falk said, "It made me feel pretty good, you know." Sinclair also helped Bob Banks with his placement in a printing company.

**Creation of Apprenticeships**

As explained elsewhere, Van Tech's printing department routinely welcomed back Van Tech graduates and in doing so created situations where current students could see the former students demonstrate their skills. In this way the less experienced student had access to the more experienced person who was informally teaching useable techniques. Students thus learned from each other and from former students.

**Art Commission Opportunities**

Clarence Falk designed a lino-print Christmas card that James G. Sinclair arranged with Clarence to use as his own personal Christmas card. Clarence considered this flattering that the principal would find his work good enough to use in this way. Van Tech teachers wrote the prescribed technical textbooks for B.C. technical/industrial courses, and in doing so they used some Van Tech student work to illustrate them. Al Bushell (student in the mid-1930s) provided an illustration [Figure 5.8] showing a caricature of a clownish man from three different points of view, to demonstrate "A Lesson on projection" (VT, 1933, p. 68). Other students provided hand lettering as examples of well-designed alphabets for texts by Van Tech authors.

**Recognition of Capable Student Artists**

Public recognition of the artwork of talented student artists was also passed on to students via the yearbook: "It will be remembered that Milt [Parsons] also cut last year's cover, 'The Steelworker,' which elicited many favorable comments from both art critics and press" (VT, 1933). Apparently as a result of the international yearbook exchanges that Van Tech participated in, some schools requested exhibits of Van Tech student prints. The 1935 yearbook states,

Samples of our lino-block work have been exhibited in England and in the USA. We have been informed that they attracted a great deal of attention, and were very favorably commented upon. These exhibits were sent out to the schools which had requested them. (VT, 1935, p. 59)
The 1937 yearbook acknowledged the credit that had been conferred upon members of the lino club explaining that several Van Tech linoblocks were reproduced in the *Canadian Printer and Publisher* to much acclaim and that some samples of Van Tech lino-block prints had been requested for reproduction in a future issue of the *Pacific Printer*, an American technical journal with an international reputation.

**Peer Stimulation/Peer Approval**

Bob Banks explained that because the students stayed with their original class for most of their time at Van Tech, they tended not to know a lot of students from other grades and classes. Yet the artists seemed to know of each other and their work, and this may have been primarily through reproductions in the yearbooks, and perhaps through the gallery wall in the printing department. This knowledge of one’s work seemed to have served as a kind of acknowledgement of the students with a particular flair for art. Banks spoke highly of Sing Lim, who had been at the school who was there several years before him. “I taught him everything he knew,” joked Banks, recognizing the impossibility of this. Banks also knew of Al Bushel, another early Van Tech student artist, and Henry Zitko, a student at Van Tech overlapping Bob’s time, even though he did not know these student artists personally. Apparently this admiration was mutual as Zitko stated:

> The best artist I knew at Tech was Bob Banks. He did a lot of artwork and linocutting which were just gorgeous…. Banks was a couple of years older than me, so I never met him as we didn’t mix with the older kids, but I would see his work…. The same is true of McKitch. I knew of him because of his linoprints, even though he was a year younger…. [and] Jim Rimmer came a few years after me. He came in the later 40s…. He makes limited editions, you know, with his artwork…. He was a real good artist, no question, and he stuck with it…. He was sort of professionally involved in the artwork, where we just did it for kicks.

Jim Rimmer also admired the work of Bob even though Bob graduated a few years prior to Jim’s arrival, but Jim was aware of images that Bob had done for Van Tech’s yearbook. This seems to suggest that, at least between like-minded students, some recognition was possible.

**Parental Influence on Students’ Art**

Bob Banks spoke of how his parents didn’t try to deter his apparently compulsive drawing. They accepted it as something he did. Similarly Jim Rimmer would take back to his father the drawings he did in art at Van Tech and they would discuss them and his father would give him advice. Rimmer remembers particularly the time he showed his father a cartoon he had done that his father didn’t approve of. It was of a hillbilly drinking out of a
jug that had bubbles coming out of it and the bubbles had images in them. He remembers his father saying, "That's abstract, don't do that. That doesn't make any sense at all." Yet it was Jim's father who reassured Jim that there were people who made their living at being commercial artists, people who were employed, paid, to draw a bowl of peas with an airbrush, for instance. Knowing this kept Jim going in trying to develop his skills.

Special Arrangement for Artistic Student

Van Tech made special provisions for Jim Rimmer to have an independent program focusing on printing and art, the art portion of which was largely self-directed. This took place, perhaps as an effort to keep Jim in the school after the war when the numbers of Van Tech students were still not back to what they had been pre-war. It also may have resulted in the difficulty of fitting art into boys' school schedules. Rimmer says of art in his Grade 10 year, he “wrangled his way into it,” after not being able to get into art at all in Grade 9. He stated that in fact, in Grade 10, he had 16 or 18 hours a week of art along with printing which together made up the majority of his program. Sitting in on the all-girls art class at Van Tech taught by Ed Snetsinger, Jim had access to only about two hours of instruction per week. In this girls' class he received his introduction to projects. The rest of the time Jim worked alone, at drawing mostly, in an empty room. Apparently motivation and staying on task while alone were not issues for Jim. He admitted, "I worked like a maniac... I kept my nose down and drew all the time. I just loved it." Rimmer considered his experience of being left on his own to draw at Van Tech, and having the motivation to use that time constructively, as proving his belief that a person can learn anything on their own if they want to, and drawing is what he wanted to learn.

Drawing seemed to have been central to what many students did at Van Tech even though much of the drawing was related to the school's vocational goals. Many of those same activities in other contexts were considered art. Those who would define art in a less inclusive way so as to exclude some forms of drawing and other forms of art done at Van Tech during that time are making judgments that are grossly unfair.

Summary on the Culture of Van Tech and the Opportunities for Art Learning

Van Tech students were groomed to fit into a work environment and taught to "play the game." Staff at the school believed in the potential of the productive capacity of industry in the city and province and had faith in the promise of technology. Students were being trained to help technology make well-designed goods so that these goods would be sought after domestically and internationally and in this way aid in the transformation of B.C. through industrial development. Within the school the power of doing was more valued
than the power of knowing in the abstract. There was a strong sense of staff control and hierarchical structure in the school such that one student during Principal Sinclair's time labeled the control a dictatorship. But because Sinclair was seen as fair and the school was well run, there seemed to be no objection to this strict control beyond disappointed efforts in trying to get a students' council started in the school. With class groups to that time staying together their entire four years, there seems to have been a sense of isolation between class groups, although sports stressed participation for all. In not being a neighbourhood school, social contacts made there were not as likely to have been reinforced within the surrounding community as would be possible in a neighbourhood school. There were fewer opportunities for non-sport extra-curricular activities and thus more limited opportunities for using art-related skills in a variety of settings. The opportunities that were there for students to develop their artmaking capabilities were shaped by the school's vocational aims.
CHAPTER FIVE—Art Media and Skills at the Two Schools

This chapter explores the specific media and skills involved in artmaking as undertaken by students at Kits and Van Tech from 1920 to 1950. This was a time that traditional art in the schools, such as that offered at Kits, was interested primarily in skill development, design for living, and a liberal appreciation of the arts (James Gray). My approach was to look at the skills and media featured in Kits’ arts programs and to be aware of those same skills and media at Van Tech where they appear in different contexts and are used for different purposes.

The information provided here is based on descriptions by my Kits and Van Tech interviewees as to the kinds of art activities in which they participated, and any information that I can glean from observing art projects they and their fellow students produced. These activities (skills) involved various aspects of drawing, drafting, design, painting, handprinting, three-dimensional projects, applied art, craft, lettering, industrial arts, and photography. Most, but not all, activities involved formal art learning in the classroom, at least eventually, even in cases where the activities began as informal art learning through clubs or after-school activities. In this way I was dealing primarily with projects involving skills and media recommended in the texts and programmes of study. I considered these art activities undertaken in the two schools in light of the diverse cultures of the schools.

Specifically I have tried to answer the following questions with regard to the practice of the most common skills/media evident in Kits and Van Tech:

1. How did the practice of this activity involve the same skills in both schools?
2. How was the practice different for Kits and Van Tech students on the basis of gender, class, and race?
3. How did any differences in practice relate to the nature of the two schools?

Some reproductions of former Kits and Van Tech students’ artwork, from the yearbooks, other school publications, and students’ existing collections are included to exemplify the kind of art learning the students were involved in at these two high schools at the time. There were many overlaps in the categories I designated as skills and media and I acknowledge that many of them are arbitrary. This is because I chose a particular category based on one source as opposed to choosing another source that would place the same skill or media in another category. This was particularly true of specific skills and media within applied arts, crafts, and industrial arts, but it was true also of some kinds of drawing and drafting.

Tony Rogers (1983) seemed to dismiss from his discussions the art learning in technical courses. He stated, “although some relationship must exist between art education
and the industrial arts, the two subjects give different emphases to the relationship between skills and creative endeavor." I maintain that in the secondary schools to 1950, except in a few instances in the senior grades, art was more concerned with skills development than creative expression. Thus many of the activities undertaken in the drafting courses and technical/industrial arts courses at Van Tech were similar to those undertaken as drawing exercises in the art courses at Kits. Much of the general unwillingness to recognize or give equal value to similar activities in schools with different purposes stems from what I am referring to as academic privileging. This has to do with how decisions are made as to what is valued. The hegemonic curriculum values some subjects while devaluing others. This constitutes the politics of knowledge.

Traditionally academic knowledge has been valued over manual knowledge, bodily knowledge, and applied knowledge. Work with the hands has been devalued. A case can be made that, as a school subject, art has had balanced involvement of the hands, the head, and the heart, more so than other school subjects. Yet it is not true that art- and design-related training within Van Tech’s technical subjects involved only work with the hands, as some might assume. Being more familiar with a Westside high school orientation, I originally did not fully take in information about some Van Tech activities, disregarding them as irrelevant to high school art learning. I also disregarded art learning in the programmes of studies for home economics and industrial/technical courses and had to go back into the curriculum documents when I realized ignoring art learning in these subjects constituted a distorted approach. I believe my original biases are not unique to me. Such blinders prevented my recognition of art learning in the contexts of drafting, woodworking, and metalworking courses within industrial arts and applied arts within home economics. The result was to obscure the reality of how

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266 Another version of this dichotomy relates to the valuing of an aesthetic orientation over skills, especially trade-related skills.
270 Working with ideas and knowledge dependent primarily on the mind have been considered to be from the cognitive domain, while emotions relate to the affective domain, and work with the hands, the physical domain.
271 Mary Leah de Zwarts (2003) has recently made the same case for home economics as having this same balance of hand, head, and heart involvement.
272 The first time I collected information from the provincial courses/programmes of study to 1950, I disregarded the curriculum outlines for technical courses and domestic science/home economics courses despite many of the activities being identical as set out in those documents. This was also true in conducting the interviews where I passed over information about art related skills in technical courses.
273 Early on, however, I did this also in interviewing a former Kits student who wished to credit his high school art learning for some of his insight into interior decoration relating to his knowledge of the effective use of colour, proportion, balance, etc., and the ability to sketch out floor plans in planning carpet installations, etc.
similar some art and design activities were in different contexts within Kits and Van Tech, despite different intentions. Gidney and Millar have written,

> Generally people who have had the intelligence to decide, write, or speak of what should be valued theorize in their own favour. Those who can take the power tend to do so and to make laws to protect their positions. The content of the curriculum is never fashioned by educational theorizing alone but also reflects the knowledge esteemed by those groups and institutions that have the power to influence what gets taught in schools.\(^{274}\)

Also I assumed that most power, control, and influence came from the west side of the city. And yet Van Tech’s principal, James G. Sinclair, became chair of the Vancouver School Board upon his retirement from Van Tech in 1944 and, of the few teachers leaving Van Tech other than to retire, a significant number did so to take up positions of leadership at the provincial education level. Van Tech Principals Lister and Sinclair both had recognizable credentials for teaching school in Britain but, taking their training at the turn of the century, they lacked qualifications that translated directly into a Canadian university degree. So while the list of Van Tech staff in the opening pages of the yearbook included the degrees of teachers’ having them, Lister and Sinclair, at the top of the list, were without such qualifications. For this reason it seems to have been in their best interest, and perhaps that of the students, to hire as teachers men who had been master tradesmen with practical training and practical qualifications to teach the technical subjects in the school. By the time of the establishment of the girl’s department in 1940, substantial academic training had come to be accessible and expected in a way that had not been assumed earlier. In the girls’ unit almost all the women teaching the technical subjects had at least one university degree as well as practical experience in their subject area. Overall, the balance of staff with and without degrees within the school meant that those holding academic degrees didn’t outstrip those coming from practical backgrounds in their field. This meant that those teaching art-related skills within the technical subjects did so without having been exposed to attitudes and assumptions at the art school and Normal School. Their knowledge of design, lettering, drawing, and applied arts came from technical sources, sources that did not devalue these skills despite being associated with practical goals. Also they may have had contact with John Kyle, organizer of technical education, at summer school sessions in Victoria or in individual courses he taught. He championed art knowledge within an industrial art context.\(^{275}\) Thus in presenting these skills to students the teachers did not pass on any hierarchical attitudes that these skills were not art skills, or were minor art skills. Sinclair

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championed the role of art/design in technical work and within the school his influence seems to have taken the lead in this regard.

Within the school the status of a technically-trained teacher was not a problem. Status was gained in ways other than having a university degree. For instance several had the prestige of having written the provincially-recognized texts for the technical subjects they taught.\textsuperscript{276} I mention this aspect of status to suggest that, within Van Tech itself, the vocational orientation to art learning was not looked down upon. So while some of the activities undertaken at Van Tech may not have been considered art at Kits due to their vocational orientation, these activities were valued as art at Van Tech. Subject status and assumptions about art are also suggested in the province’s 1939 change of name for technical subjects which included woodworking, metalworking, drafting, printing, etc. In the provincial textbook listing, the reference to technical subjects was changed to industrial arts. Apparently at that time the name industrial arts was conceived as having more status than technical subjects, art presumably at that time having more status in society than technical concerns. This is an interesting reversal of what is happening today where technology in the educational setting has the status and courses are changing their names to align with the concept of technology.

Students in positions of leadership at Kits also seemed to think that art had more status than technical subjects. At least students working on the yearbooks generally overlooked what was happening in industrial arts, whereas they highlighted other forms of visual and performing arts activity. With students, rather than staff, having had control over the content of the annuals at Kits, students were able to decide what was worthy of featuring in their publication. Apparently these students considered the learning in technical subjects as being insignificant insofar as industrial arts hardly received any attention in the yearbook. I have only seen two references to industrial arts in a Kits yearbook.\textsuperscript{277} Similarly no one I interviewed from Kits recognized someone as being artistic, for instance, for any of their drawing, lettering, design, or applied art done in industrial arts courses. Those in power at whatever level chose not to acknowledge industrial arts as having the capacity to be the site of any art learning. Possibly this was because it was associated with manual work, which over the years has been

\textsuperscript{276} For details of these texts see reference list for Jones; Jones & T. J. Longhurst; Miller; and Sinclair. The books that were not written by Van Tech teachers were by Kyle. His texts were on lettering, metalwork, and woodwork.

\textsuperscript{277} This was on the retirement of industrial arts teacher A. C. Campbell who had been at Kits 24 years teaching primarily woodwork and as chair of the industrial arts department organized the manual training program of metalwork and drafting as well and was sponsor of the woodwork club (KH, 1948, n. p.). Another item in 1931 outlined the industrial arts activities available to girls through club activities. These included “woodwork, decorative projects in copper and brass” and mechanical drawing.
associated with people in the lower classes. This was in contrast to the activities in an art class where the forms of artmaking are assumed to be a combination of activities involving the cognitive domain, affective domain, and physical domain, in short somewhat above "mere" manual work, as if there ever is manual work done without some engagement of the mind.

Judging from the absence of any recognition of art learning in industrial arts courses at Kits, it seems that Kits students looked down on skills orientation but this was not so at Van Tech. Van Tech students preferred beauty added to a utilitarian object; they were pleased that they weren't dealing with objects made for no other purpose than for aesthetic ends alone. The attitude seemed to be summed up in the question "Why settle for one (aesthetic value or practical purpose) when you can have both?" A Van Tech yearbook stated, "No material, or object made by man, loses utilitarian value when beautified by the hand of the artist or craftsman" (VT, 1934, p. 41).

The inclination to overlook art learning within a technical context relates to the long-term conflict between the idealists with the fine art orientation and the utilitarianists with the practical approach as relating to the British Kensington school system. This conflict was even apparent in the re-alignment within the Vancouver of Applied and Decorative Arts as it tried to position itself as offering more than just applied arts skills as suggested by its name. This is indicated in the 1933-34 Annual report of the public schools in a statement by John Kyle, director of technical education for the province, where he was emphasizing the fine art aspect of the art school, mentioning that the work was "modern, without being bizarre," yet reasserting the teaching of good draftsmanship.

Clearly the art school needed to be recognized for both skills development and an aesthetic orientation. It is perhaps not surprising that it was in the 1933/34 school year when the art school changed its name to simply the Vancouver School of Art in an attempt to compete with its new but short-lived rival, the B.C. College of Art, which began operations that year. The original art school could not afford to be left with the lesser status, hence the need to have a name associated with high culture's connotations of fine art rather than the applied art skills needed for industry, the original impetus for establishing the art school. In the yearbook, Sinclair also wrote that the intent of training at Van Tech was to learn the theory of one's trade. There was no intention at Van Tech to have students become "fine" artists. Yet this did not prevent many of the art learning activities within Van Tech's technical courses from being the same as those offered in art courses at Kits. At Kits there was an assumption that a fine art orientation would make individuals more cultured and thus raise the public's taste making the community more refined.

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In looking at each of the art activities following, I consider primarily the curriculum documents from the early 1920s, as these were the guides that were in effect when Kits' B.C.-trained art teachers (Lewis, Cianci, Shadbolt) were in high school themselves. Similarly I include information on the early pre-service training provided at the art school, from the mid to late 1920s, as that was the time that these future teachers were at the art school receiving art training. This time period was also when Van Tech's Jock Macdonald was teaching at the art school. I believe that how one learns about art is passed on in how one teaches art. To define art in the most inclusive way, I have considered as art anything that was taught at the art school during its early years when applied art had as valid a place at the school as fine art.

Art

Art was generally assumed to refer to any form of visual language or graphic representation to be appreciated for its own sake, for purely aesthetic value, rather than to serve some useful function, or for the enhancement of some utilitarian object to make it more special. Van Tech used the term in a broader sense often using the word synonymously with various forms of drawing and other forms of making that required detailed planning. Art as a studio-oriented school subject (as opposed to art appreciation) was associated with fine art, as differentiated from commercial art, industrial arts, or applied art, by existing for its own sake rather than for some external purpose such as carrying a message, answering some functional need, or enhancing an object with a practical purpose. Fine art in the adult world generally included painting, sculpture, architecture, hand printmaking, and drawing when they had purely aesthetic value and were not trying to serve some other overt purpose. While Kits and Van Tech did not undertake all those activities (skills) within the time of this study, they did engage in some forms of these activities. At Kits students generally assumed that art at their school primarily related to fine art. Inasmuch as Van Tech students considered the concept of art, they didn’t aspire to fine art but these students nevertheless considered many of their activities as art, despite many of these activities having a utilitarian purpose. Authors of the 1924 art textbook (Scott, Weston, and Judge) distance themselves from the idea of art as a subject in B.C. elementary and high schools:

Much has been written on “What is Art?” and the matter is not yet concluded, since Art is something more than science or any one can yet agree upon or define. Art has been defined as “emotion expressed through a personality”....

280 Kits’ vice-principal H. S. Johns suggested that Kits students learn much from the arts as a main source of knowledge about living and ideals and beliefs about democratic life to guide their futures (KH, 1948, n. p.)
281 This conception of drawing being considered art was indicated in most of the interviews I undertook with former Van Tech students.
Art would appear to involve that expression of personal quality, which is beyond all teaching.\(^{282}\)

This Scott text did also acknowledge the fact that the artist could be expressing an emotional intention in representing objects through drawing.\(^{283}\) Despite subject labels during this time period,\(^{284}\) that which was generally assumed to be art as a school subject included drawing, design, lettering, and colour studies and, after 1933, forms of water-based painting and some approaches to applied art.

VanTech student Jim Rimmer (1948/49) found that some of his teachers didn’t know the difference between being a fine artist and commercial artist. He said they had heard the myth of starving artists; there were movies about them. Rimmer said, “I always had the desire to be a commercial artist firmly fixed in my mind.... I never aspired to being a fine artist” so such attitudes didn’t deter him. At an early age his father had told him about the functions of a commercial artist, and about how it was possible to sit and draw or paint a bowl of peas for a client, for instance, and make it look real, perhaps with an airbrush. Knowing this helped Jim to counteract any negativity of teachers who didn’t know the difference between being a fine artist and a commercial art and advised him that he wouldn’t be able to make a living at his art.

VanTech’s yearbook in 1936 stated: “Every phase of art—drawing, painting, engraving, or other form of handicraft, is of vital benefit to the human family” (VT, 1936, p. 41). In stating this, the authors confirmed the recognized conception of activities considered to be art. Yet, through the period covered by this study, art was an inclusive term.\(^{285}\) In the words of one former student from the 1930s: “To be a tailor you have to be an artist.” Bill Wong explained that, throughout his lifetime work in tailoring, he has done drawings to visualize his clients’ needs. VanTech was responsible for his initial training in drawing and drawing there was considered art. But the making of the garments too constituted art to him, not just the drawing aspect of designing. Observable differences in the aspects of the art activities between the two schools are discussed under relevant headings below as they related to the nature of the schools and, where notable, to gender, class, and race.

\(^{282}\) Scott, et al. Drawing and design (p. 33).

\(^{283}\) Ibid. (p. 36).

\(^{284}\) All art activities tended to come under the major heading of drawing in the provincial programmes of study for high schools.

\(^{285}\) This was indicated in interviews with Van Tech students who used the words art and drawing interchangeably.
Drawing

Drawing referred to making a picture or plan on a flat surface using pencil, pen, charcoal, conté, pastels, or other implement, but not including a brush. Drawing could have a utilitarian purpose or could be for an aesthetic end only. Given that the time of this study includes the Depression era and Second World War years, the prevalence of drawing is perhaps not surprising. Drawing paper and pencils have traditionally been the least expensive artmaking materials in a classroom relative to other art media. Drawing also allowed for use of a variety of other materials, not including paint. From the 1907 onward drawing media recommended for use in B.C. classrooms included charcoal, pastels, conté, crayons, and pen and ink. During the 1930s and 1940s, the school board could not afford to provide many materials until they recovered from the restricted, war-time economies; thus the prevalence of pencil drawing. Some students supplied some of their own art materials. Another reason for the enduring popularity of drawing in the classroom was that it required minimum set-up time and storage, and drawing could be done on regular desks, which is all they had in the art rooms at Kits to the mid-1930s. Prior to 1936, all the drawing that Van Tech students did was incorporated into their drafting classes or technical or applied arts courses. After that time drawing was also featured in the design course and, as of 1946, in the course designated art.

Drawing included drawing from observation, source material, and imagination; timed (rapid) sketches; cartooning; scratchboard and pen and ink; sketchbook work; and fashion design drawing. All of these drawing activities were undertaken by Kits students and some of these were undertaken by Van Tech students. Where pertinent, I have indicated where the type of drawing being described was also involved in drafting or appears in some other context thus revealing similarities or differences. Originally in Vancouver secondary schools art was drawing, and the official text was comprised of a 1905 series of manuals on drawing by Blair, the art master at the Vancouver Normal School. Books 4, 5, and 5A were intended for use by the senior grades and high schools. This involved drawing on the pages of the manual simple

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286 As advocated in the drawing exercises in Blair’s book V and VA, which were designated for art in the junior and senior high grades.
287 Russell White, a student at Kits in the mid-1930s remembers providing his own linocutting tools, watercolour paints, and square pastels.
288 The first stand-alone design course at Van Tech was introduced in 1936 and taught first by Al Wishart and subsequently by Jock Macdonald. The first course entitled art was included in 1946 and taught by E. D. Snetsinger.
289 Blair’s Drawing Book was on the official provincial textbook list until the beginning of the 1924/25 school year, at which time it was replaced by the Scott, Weston, and Judge text (1924). This is indicated in the (1923-24 ) 53rd Report of the public schools in J. A. Anderson’s report on the Free Text-Book Branch, which lists Blair’s Canadian drawing series (p. T97; the next year’s Report of the public schools lists Scott et al. Drawing and design (p. M73).
objects, natural and manufactured. Most of these objects were indigenous to B.C. and easily available in the student’s home or neighbourhood. Blair’s intention was for students to locate similar objects that they could draw from observation in various media, primarily pencil, crayons, chalks, and including some watercolour (with the brush or tinting pencil drawings). The favourable aspect of the Blair manuals was that they were based on flora native to B.C. rather than requiring students to draw Mediterranean acanthus leaves or other nature forms from other art traditions. The weakness surrounding the Blair manuals was the inclination of students to simply copy the objects that Blair had drawn on the opposite page, rather than finding their own specimen or objects to observe as he recommended. That meant early on an aspect of copying was prevalent in the history of drawing in B.C. schools, some of which continued at Van Tech and Kits throughout the period covered by this study. Blair expected the natural objects to be drawn from observation after careful consideration through nature study.

The Scott, Weston, and Judge art textbook (1924) supplanted the Blair manuals in the school year after it was published. The text favoured drawing, rather than art, seeing it as something scientific and thus teachable. Drawing was “the expression of form upon a plane surface” and “a type of reasoned observation obtainable in no other way, as a handmaid to crafts and industrialism...[and] as an aid in the appreciation...of beauty seen in nature and art.” These authors added, “To be able to draw is but to have this ability to judge length and direction of one line in relation to another, one shape in relation to another, and one tone in relation to another.” Despite inconsistencies in terminology, art courses in B.C. junior and senior high schools, even while entitled drawing also offered the study of design, lettering, colour with the use of water-based painting, and they suggested some steps toward applied art. Weston’s 1933 art education text, the last B.C. art text on the required-textbook list for the province to 1950, also focused on drawing and design. This text included simple watercolour work as well. In the following he validated his promotion of drawing, rather than...
art, in the classroom: "Art ...is something personal and elusive. Drawing, on the other hand, is definite.... It is a reasoned process, and so comes under the heading of science rather than art."295 At the art school students did life drawing and drawing from casts, at first a part of a body such as a foot, or hand, or leg, and then working up to a full torso. In Jock Macdonald’s commercial art classes, all the figure drawings from life and the cast that the students undertook were done with a view to being applied to posters and advertisements.296

The Scott et al. text advised against the earlier, traditional practice of drawing from basic geometrical geometric models because “all the principles of perspective can be taught from common objects based either on the cylinder or the cube.”297 At Van Tech, students were still drawing simple shapes of models in drafting in the 1940s (Zitko). While the Scott et al. and Weston texts do not address drawing from memory and imagination, the curriculum documents as of 1937 include these forms of drawing as an addition to representational drawing.298 The 1941 Programme of studies for the senior high schools for commercial art in Grade 11 listed decorative pen rendering from photograph or picture thus validating copying from one source into another medium. This same curriculum guide under drawing for costume design listed figure poses, action poses, sketching from a model and specifies studies of heads, hands, feet, and drapery. While drawing from life and from casts were both a major part of the curriculum at the art school, in the late 1930s and early 1940s drawing from a book on historic ornament was also accepted and each student in Grace Melvin’s course299 was supposed to own a copy of the text.

**General aspects of drawing at Kits and Van Tech**

All interviewees from Kits mentioned drawing as one of skills that they undertook in their art classes and this involved a variety of media. Louise Williamson said she was taught to draw at Kits, not just exposed to drawing. She mentioned the art classes as having given her a grounding, a term used by another student referring to Kits’ art training in general (Ursulescu). At Van Tech drawing was considered a universal language, as something that was understood by everyone and applicable to all purposes. Van Tech recognized as drawing both freehand drawing and mechanical drafting. The yearbook stated:

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friendship of Scott and Weston when Weston decided to publish the later text on his own, as explained by Tony Rogers (1987).


296 (1927). *The Paint Box*, 2, 10; Scott et al. *Drawing and design* (p. 48).

296 (1937). *Programme of studies for the senior high schools of B.C.* (p. 345).

296 Melvin’s course was a requirement for pre-service art teachers. Irene Alexander spoke of the need to have this source book of historical styles as a reference.
A boy need not be a finished artist to cut a passable lino block. Naturally one who excels in freehand drawing has an advantage. On the other hand, many of our first-rate blocks have been cut by boys who showed a keen aptitude for mechanical drafting, but were rather weak in freehand. (VT, 1938, p. 38)

Also, both freehand drawing and mechanical drafting (drawing with instruments and drawing machine parts) were at Van Tech apparently testable subjects as revealed in the following statement:

Lino-block cutting does not call for exceptional artistic ability; the average student who can pass the ordinary tests in drafting or freehand drawing should be able to cut a good lino-block. (VTPM, p. 1)

I do not have any knowledge of drawing being a tested subject at Kits, but projects needed to be completed to be graded (Cameron, Snelgrove, Urulescu). At Van Tech aspects of drawing were central to drafting courses and were part of technical and workshop courses as a way to document and plan a design; some drawing was also included in science courses. In the art club set up and taught by Principal Sinclair beginning in the mid-1930s, drawing was the central activity suggesting that at Van Tech freehand drawing was synonymous with art. Once a full-time design teacher (Jock Macdonald) or art teacher (Snetsinger) joined the staff, he directed the art club.

**Drawing from observation, source material, memory, and imagination at Kits**

I noted that in the early 1930s Kits students did adapted life studies in Shadbolt’s class in the form of drawing the arm muscles of fellow students who served as volunteer models for the class. Rolph Blakstad confirmed doing life drawing at Kits in the late 1940s saying, “We all served as models.” Also for drawing from observation, on occasions most of Kits’ art teachers at the school in the 1930s and 1940s took their art classes outside to draw or paint; this included views showing aspects of the school buildings, schoolyard, and the adjacent park. The trend to draw from one’s environment was respected at the art school, partially because of the attitude of Grace Melvin and Jock Macdonald, and recommended to art classes at Kits. Hamish Cameron’s (1948) sketchbook shows views of his neighbourhood in Kitsilano [Figure 5.1].

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300 According to Clarence Falk, Jim Rimmer and Margaret Strathern, they did drawings of science experiments and botanical subjects that their teachers admired and kept as teaching samples.

301 The initiation of the art club was described in the 1935 yearbook (p. 20).

302 Hamish Cameron’s extant class workbook from Grade 10 (dated 1948) shows that Moira Macdonald was expanding on an approach prescribed in the textbooks existing from 1924 (Scott, Weston, and Judge) and 1933 (Weston). Some of the features of Macdonald’s course included a study of lettering in classical proportions for capital and small letters; basic colour theory; charcoal drawings of animals and birds, figures observed in action, and figures from memory; sketches of interiors, planes, ships, cars, and local scenes; drawings of cylindrical containers and boxes from varying eye levels.
These were seemingly rapidly-done sketches that Hamish did looking out of the windows of his parents’ home. One of these sketches done in a dark pencil shows the house across the street including the depiction of a figure walking. Another image shows a lane with garages, a car, telephone poles and lines, and trees and foliage. Also a large sheet of paper containing about a dozen of Hamish’s sketches in pen and ink shows classmates in art class that were probably drawn rapidly as timed sketches [Figure 5.2].

Hamish’s sketchbook/notebook specified a list of subjects to be undertaken in charcoal including “figures at work—action.” Some charcoal drawings of men working at night doing flood control may have been done to satisfy that requirement. Other sources were validated as well. Blakstad indicated for instance that he learned more from looking at illustrations in books and magazines than he did from life drawing even though generally he was not copying from books. Apparently some students in Shadbolt’s classes took illustrations from magazines and the newspaper into the art class to use as source material; in some cases they combined images to create their own picture. Shadbolt also pinned up on the walls and boards photographs or reproductions of subjects such as flowers for the students to draw. He also set up still lifes with bowls of fruit, vases, etc., for students to draw or paint. Peter Snelgrove mentioned that in the 1940s they also drew from still lives: “They’d set up a little display and everyone would draw it.” (Snelgrove)

At least by the mid-1930s, there were art books in the art room for students to look at (Wytenbroek) as source material and inspiration. Snelgrove remembered School Arts Magazine and Studio Magazine, without being certain whether these were available in the classroom or just in the library. “I was in amongst all these books and I don’t remember what was in the classroom. But I know there were a lot of references in the library…. The world of art…. I would always look through the art books.” Louise Williamson credited books with a lot of her art learning too. In the absence of readily accessible art galleries to visit, books on different types of art from different cultures, such as Asian art, and by those considered mainstream artists, often served as her starting point in choosing a subject. She explained that, due to absence from

exercises in one- and two-point perspective of buildings, gardens, vistas, and tile flooring; charcoal portraits; cartoons and caricatures; and night scenes. The work in this sketchbook was done in pencil, pen and ink, paint, and charcoal.

303 Drawings of figure poses and action sketches of figures for Grades 10 and 11 are recommended for those studying costume design as one of the main areas of concentration under general art in the 1930 Programme of studies for the senior high and technical schools (p. 169). Also William Weston (1933) recommended timed sketches in his text suggesting a time limit of three to 10 minutes saying that a “time limit makes for better observation of the whole, with consequent relationship of parts. Look for general mass shape, omit detail” (p. 83). His accompanying illustrations show full-length figures as well as a simplified hand, foot, and heads from different angles. When Fred Varley arrived at the art school beginning in the 1926/27 school year, he employed the nude female model and draped male model in his painting and drawing classes. Life drawing was central to those classes; it seems likely that some of the exercises utilizing these models were timed sketches.

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school one year before she arrived at Kits, she had taken art by correspondence so she had art books from that course that she was able to refer to later. Also Louise was one of the students who went to art school in the afternoons of her Grade 12 year. This made her aware of some of what was going on at the art school at that time. Louise was one of the few female students to produce a cover for the Kits yearbook (1948) and to contribute more than one image for the interior pages of an edition. As previously noted the pen and ink drawing labelled Night and Day appearing in Figure 2.4 is one of her images. Hamish has in his sketchbook a charcoal drawing of a female head in profile [Figure 5.3] that could have been a fellow student but the fact that it is a fairly finished drawing, rather than a quick sketch, suggests it could have been done from a photograph or printed source.

Pen and ink and scratchboard at Kits

Pen and ink drawings appeared in Kits yearbooks from the first edition (1931) as seen in the image of the school by Helen Reeve [Figure 5.4] that appeared as the title page to that issue of the yearbook whereas scratchboard seems not to have been in the classroom until the late 1940s. Louise Williamson reported having used scratchboard once in art class, but disliked it as she felt it did not allow for any freedom. While scratchboard and pen and ink are sometimes difficult to tell apart, the latter was readily accessible to all whereas scratchboard was apparently fairly expensive. Scratchboard could, however, be made in class by using a certain kind of black or white paint over a base in the opposite colour value (Cameron, Snelgrove). It could also be purchased commercially in the city (Blakstad).

Blakstad mentioned that scratchboard and ink with pen were “used a lot for black and white cuts for the newspaper. Woodcut-like effects could be achieved by scratching a white line into a black inked surface.” This he did superbly in an image of an old man in a (saddle) shoe [Figure 3. 8]. It illustrated a non-sense poem (In a saddle by the sea) apparently written by the librarian, Miss Creelman. Blakstad used the popular school fashion item, the saddle shoe, as the basis of this rather European-flavoured image. Blakstad’s old man who lives in the shoe

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304 Whereas Hamish Cameron’s cartoons of the floods were done in ink.
305 This image by Louise Williamson appears on the left-hand side of the page; the image on the right-hand side is by E. P. Wilson from the 1938 Van Tech yearbook cover.
306 The Blair manual (1906) features pen and ink drawing and shading both as exercises and in the drawing of simple natural and manufactured objects and design elements. Many of the examples in Scott et al. (1924) text are in pen and ink, but this medium is not addressed separately the way that pencil and pastel are. While almost all Weston’s illustrations in his text (1933) are done in pen and ink, there is almost no acknowledgment of that whereas drawings in watercolour, pencil crayons, and pastels are labeled as such. Scratchboard, a card stock material generally painted white and then over-painted in black, so when the artist scratches line in the surface the lower colour of paint (generally white) appears. Examples of scratchboard, used in commercial design in the 1930s and 1940s, do not appear in these texts but is noted here because it was used in Kits classes and appears in the yearbooks.
reveals a gender attitude in depicting children who are out of control: this father's nonchalance suggests that he feels their behaviour is in no way a reflection on himself. The image in this way depicts a form of role reversal. The father shows no anxiety regarding the children getting hurt, being a disruption, or being destructive. Again, as I notice in Chapter 6 in looking at subject matter for the yearbook, significantly more males are featured in student art in Kits yearbooks. In this image most of the figures are male; at most four out of 24 children appear to be a female. Also, not surprisingly for a Kits image, the figures all seem to be while and able-bodied. The image is unusual amongst Kits images for depicting an older person. Most figures in Kits yearbooks are the age of Kits students rather than young children, except when the senior students are making a statement about the "undergrads" at the school being immature.

Another example of scratchboard is the image depicting the exterior of Kits school [Figure 3.1] by Jim Genis. Typically it features strong contrasts of white and dark. Matched but reversed versions of postage-size symbols of stylized animals, suggesting First Nations design, appear at both sides of the word Haïda. The expense factor of scratchboard may have kept scratchboard from being a medium with widespread use at Kits on the assumption that it would not likely have a place in students' lives after high school, unless they were to become commercial artists. I have no evidence of scratchboard being taught at Van Tech. There may have been an assumption that there were other forms of illustration more likely to been of use to a printer/illustrator in times prior to the introduction of the wide-spread use of offset printing. I am unaware of any actual exercises in memory training being undertaken at Kits beyond students incorporating images from memory into their work based on imagination. This is despite the controversy about memory drawing advocated in the visits of Britain's Marion Richardson and Ontario's Arthur Lismer in the mid-1930s and as indicated by the description of the process provided in the 1937 Programme of studies. There instructions indicated how students were to draw something from observation, put it away and draw it from memory, then check the drawing against the source, and then draw it again from memory until that image became part of one's graphic vocabulary.

Cartooning

The early curriculum documents do not recognize the potential for art learning that is available through the medium of cartooning nor did the art school during this time period. Possibly cartooning was not considered serious enough to be seen as fine art or was not seen as related to the applied arts orientation of the art school at that time. However, the 1941 curriculum outline for the Grade 11 art course in commercial art under the heading of design

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307 Genis later taught at the art school. This image served as a title page of the 1948 Kits yearbook.
308 Programme of studies (p. 347).
and composition includes cartooning of figures, faces, actions, and ideas, and suggests using cartoons to illustrate current events.

Margaret Lewis recognized the value of cartoons. James Gray said she created a display of them for the Vancouver Art Teachers Association when she was a member of the board along with James (Jim) Macdonald. Many aspects of art learning were utilized in cartooning, as evident in Rolph Blakstad’s cartoon of a falling-apart chariot chased by a lion. It reveals the depiction of motion, anatomy, perspective, emphasis, point of view, stress, communication of sound, etc. Blakstad commented on his cartoon saying, “Judging from the action of the charioteer in the annual, I would say it derives from the silent comedies we saw at [Kits’] penny shows.” About his depiction of movement and action, Blakstad said:

One has to have the sensibility of an actor, a dancer, one has to feel the energy of movement, its nature, its intensity. This has to be felt and expressed in the nature of the line which conveys human gesture in movement. One puts oneself in the gesture by empathy with the observed character, like an actor. Does one learn this in a school from a teacher who may not have the sensitivity of an observant mimic? It is more likely to be learned by watching a Tom and Jerry cartoon. Animation artists must of course be masters of this ability. Good cartoonists have this ability; one learns it from their work, by feeling it in one’s muscles. I don’t recall any art teacher in Kits that had that ability, I don’t say they didn’t exist..... One learns by empathetic emulation of the qualities of the artists who have embodied those energies in that work. (Blakstad)

Drawing from Observation, Source Material, and Imagination at Van Tech

At Van Tech drawing from source material was more wide-spread than drawing from observation. Translating one image from one source into another medium was considered acceptable. Depictions of faces of notable people were usually based on printed sources and were done competently. Where Van Tech students seemed to fall down, however, was where they had to depict a full figure for which they apparently had no source material.

At Van Tech throughout this period there seems to have been a concern for realism and a disapproval of anything approaching abstraction. Clarence Falk (early 1930s) explained that in one drawing his main interest had been in getting the highlights and shadows right in drawing a woman in a satin blouse. He was not pleased with another portrait he did because he felt he didn’t depict the epaulettes on the soldier’s uniform exactly right. His approach to realism was based on what he knew as well as what he could see. He was disturbed, for instance, that one of his linoprints depicted Mount Shasta [Figure 5.5], which was based on a photograph, when it appeared with an identifying cutline stating it was Mount Shuskan. Falk knew this would immediately be seen as an error by anyone with any knowledge of these
mountains. Jim Rimmer was also discouraged from treating any subject in an abstract way, but this was as much due to his father's influence as a teacher's direction.

Library resources, in the school and at the public library, provided source material for art images (Banks). Presumably this was the case for the various medieval figures that featured so prominently in the 1949 yearbook. The medieval "graduation" scene by Margaret Strathern [Figure 5.6] is an example. There must have been some pictorial source for these images showing detailed observation of the clothing and setting of the time. Lavern Anctil's 1949 pencil drawing of a tugboat [Figure 5.7] also suggests that this was done from source material, likely a photograph, but it could very well have been informed by Anctil's knowledge of tugs and the local waterfront. Perhaps, as with Banks in reading blueprints and drawing boats from the drafting plans, it could be informed by a knowledge of boats acquired from drafting exercises involving such subjects.

At Van Tech drawing from memory and imagination does not seem to have been encouraged. With precision valued over freedom, the phrases "let loose" or "break loose" (Wong, Strathern) suggest some Van Tech students would have welcomed an art course based on creative self expression as a respite from the art for industry orientation of Van Tech's art-related courses. Even with the introduction of Van Tech's free-standing design/art course, the approach remained tightly prescribed. Nevertheless, the yearbook shows that a few Van Tech students were imaginative in their art, particularly in their cartoons, perhaps using them as an outlet as a result of being restricted in so many other ways. Van Tech's cartoonists also showed themselves as having had a sense of humour. Part of this humour relied on being able to see things from a point of view other than that held by the majority but as having some truth in it. Sing Lim, Al Bushell, George Obokata, and Bob Banks were imaginative Van Tech artists whose art appeared in the yearbooks.

In a 1933 projection drawing of a male figure [Figure 5.8], Bushell humourously proved you could treat the human form in the same manner as you could depict any other solid object, although one would not likely ever need to do this. He has depicted a short man in loose-fitting clothing from different view, from above, below, and to the side, with the accompanying ruled, projection lines and lettered labels, all features of drafting. James Sinclair, in writing his text on drafting, included this projection drawing as an illustration and indicated it was an unusual subject for a student. Bushell's image confirmed that any

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309 Bushell's drawing is used as an example in Sinclair's 1934 drafting text and this image also appears in the 1933 Van Tech yearbook, p. 68.
training in drawing received in a Van Tech drafting course also aided in general drawing ability and could be applied to creating other images.\textsuperscript{310}

Another Van Tech artist producing unique images based on his imagination\textsuperscript{311} was Sing Lim. In a book entitled \textit{West Coast Chinese Boy} (1979), Lim wrote about and illustrated his experiences of growing up as a Canadian of Chinese descent in Vancouver needing to bridge two cultures. In this book he described his experience of routinely attending the local Chinese opera with his uncle and this is reflected in an image of the Chinese opera that he did while at Van Tech [Figure 5.9]. Lim explained how the audience would go in and out and sometimes sharing a ticket since the performance was three or four hours long. He described the elaborate costumes but lack of scenery and emphasized the noise and distractions, which he shows here so well. Presumably when he produced this linoprint showing a scene from the opera, Sing was relying on his memory of such a scene.\textsuperscript{312} The stage scene shows performers acting and playing musical instruments while carpenters make repairs to the stage and the audience seems oblivious of the performance. In his book he explained that mothers nursed their babies, the audience munched on snacks, and orange peels and peanut shells littered the floor. Nevertheless one assumes Lim was using the principle of exaggeration in conveying the fact that the audience and all others in the theatre, including the stagehand/workers, are more preoccupied by their own activities than observing what the performers are presenting on stage. In doing this image Sing provided Van Tech readers with an image that was likely outside their own experience providing some insight into activities of the Chinese community in Vancouver.

Banks’ cartoons also revealed that he had an inventive mind and could see a situation from a skewed point of view, at least different from that of most people. In one cartoon he showed Van Tech’s students enthusiastically involved in a competitive school newspaper drive. After depicting students struggling under great physical stress to collect the papers, he shows the winning team eating pies to the point of being sick, suggesting all the winners’ efforts weren’t really worth it. Another cartoon shows Bob’s imaginative response to the game of cricket. Where most at Van Tech probably thought this British game of the upper classes was highly civilized, he showed it as downright dangerous. This subject matter suggested that cricket was still being played at Van Tech in the early 1940s and that a fascination with things

\textsuperscript{310} As shown in geometric drawing and mechanical drawing texts such as Crawshaw \& Phillips; Ermeling, Fischer, \& Greene; Jones \& Longhurst; and Sinclair.

\textsuperscript{311} The Van Tech yearbook and Van Tech’s printer’s manual, which usually acknowledged source material, referred to Sing as being imaginative.

\textsuperscript{312} Sing Lim. \textit{West Coast Chinese boy}, (1979). Montreal: Tundra Books. Lim noted here that once he started attending art school after graduating from Van Tech, he went to the opera with drawing materials in order to make quick sketches of scenes from the opera.
British outweighed class issues in this case, in so far as cricket was not associated with working class life.\footnote{313}

In looking at some of Al Bushell's cartoons one wonders if he is at work for the school's administration in presenting some overt lessons in humorous and visually appealing ways. One lesson shows two boys performing an unauthorized experiment resulting in an explosion that sends them off in an ambulance (VT, 1933, p. 56). The warning is obvious. Another shows student Tom playing baseball and attending matinees with his girlfriend through the year; with a resulting decline in his studies [Figure 5.10]. At the time Al drew these cartoons, he was confined to bed and is noted as having done many cartoons to help pass the monotonous hours (VT, 1933, p. 56). The yearbook states, "Financial limitations prevent us printing all of Al's splendid cartoons, but we print as many as we can afford this year" (VT, 1933, p. 56). The choice of the specific cartoons that Van Tech printed is not surprising. I have not seen any evidence of a student from Kits serving as a mouthpiece for the school staff whether intentionally or not. The unnamed Van Tech yearbook editor attempts to compliment Al saying, "we anticipate a successful future for him as a printer-cartoonist."

George Obokata was another Van Tech student producing a noticeable number of images, some of which were cartoons. One cartoon [Figure 5.11] accompanies a student-written yearbook article entitled "Techno(c)rats: What are they?"\footnote{314} The article is in the form a report on a talk on technocracy presented at a school assembly in 1933. The speaker apparently labeled students at Van Tech as being "Tech-nocrats" in being concerned about the application of various forms of technology affecting living conditions. Obokata's cartoon shows two rats as students dressed in their Van Tech sweaters standing beside their lockers laughing at the news that "Mr. Sinclair calls us techn(o)rats." The assembly's unnamed speaker apparently challenged students to put technology into practice saying it "would help life very materially" (VT, 1933, p. 26). At a time of so much unemployment, the student writer doubted the wisdom of utilizing the help of machines. He astutely notices the irony that "while the tone of the address was thoughtful.... Not one word was said about curtailing the production of automatic machines, or controlling the output of the same, while it was definitely stated that a reversion to man-power was absolutely out of the question" (VT, 1933, p. 26). One feels this students' sense of powerlessness within a system that students had no ability to direct. In keeping with Van Tech's apparent discouragement of social leadership by the students, the student's report on the talk did not promote technocracy as a social system advocating a bureaucracy of highly trained

\footnote{313} Clive Cocking's book on Britannia High School stated that Britannia continued to play cricket until there were no other schools in Vancouver to play against.

\footnote{314} Signed as being by Jack Son, Class 27 (1933 yearbook, p. 26a).
scientists, engineers, and technicians to run the government and society. Instead it reveals the belief in work for its own sake and the assumption of the necessity to keep people occupied, whether or not the activity as necessary or useful.\textsuperscript{315}

A cartoon by Bob Banks [Figure 5.12] commented on the effect of the girls arriving at Van Tech in September of 1940. This shows that even at 17 years old Bob had the cartoonist's ability to sum up situations via simple scenes. Here he revealed gender issues in the social situation wherein the girls were kept separate from the boys. It also documented the military training Van Tech boys received in lieu of regular sports as physical education and the presence of government-sponsored servicemen in the school learning war-related skills. I am also struck by the incidence of smoking that seemed a privilege at the time rather than a health hazard. As expected of Van Tech students who showed talent as artists, Bob Banks (grad of 1941) worked many years as a printer before becoming a self-employed illustrator and cartoonist. In retrospect, he sees the training he received at Van Tech, rather than the training he subsequently had at the art school, as pivotal in establishing himself as an illustrator and cartoonist. Banks stated, "As far as cartooning goes, you pretty much teach yourself, but it comes with learning to draw....Your draftsmanship stems back to Tech when you are doing this kind of thing.... This requires perspective,... the composition and the layout, and the action, you had to study it and that all comes from beginnings at Tech."

Jim Rimmer remembered the drawings he did at Van Tech in his individualized program, when he was fifteen years old, with some being personal images yet others as "nothing special." Many of his images were cartoons, based on cowboy movies and comic strips. Adventure figures such as superman, cowboys, and Robin Hood figured prominently. But he was interested in animals, especially horses, and nature as well. Some of Jim's cartoons he did in pen and ink and then coloured them in with watercolour paint to make them look like comic strips. Snetsinger encouraged he remembered to take cartooning seriously. At that time Jim considered being a comic strip artist but later changed his mind. When I acknowledged what a wonderful way of learning cartoons are, he agreed: "Of course, they are." And in hearing of the help the Kits' librarian gave in recommending the cartoons in the New Yorker magazine, Rimmer's comment was: "She was ahead of her time." At Van Tech a few years after the war was over, Rimmer (VT 1948, 1949) did images of spitfire planes charging down that had originated with sources from popular culture. He

\textsuperscript{315} It is interesting to note that at Kits in that same time, March of 1933, the Parent Teacher Association heard a speaker, Mr. T. E. Carver, on the subject of technocracy. The student newspaper Kitsilano High School Life reported a talk on this topic without any comment on the substance of the talk (front page, Vol. 5, No. 3).
explained that other students also created images related to the war as the war was just over and students at Van Tech “continued to fall back on images they could do well, images that they knew previously.”

Rapid sketching

Van Tech students in technical courses studying design-related issues apparently did not study the human figure (Banks) or do rapid sketching. From the late 1940s, with the establishment of a stand-alone art course there, Margaret Strathern remembers drawing fellow students but thinks they were not likely timed sketches. When individual design or art courses were instituted, rapid drawing of the figure may have seemed too much like an art school activity at odds with Van Tech’s aim of teaching design and drawing for industrial/vocational goals and working class use. Study of the figure generally seems to have been neglected and the results are apparent. Even the depiction of the figure in the few images I have seen by Van Tech males of Asian descent seem weak. The otherwise notable student artist Lim did an awkward depiction of a short-legged, seated figure looking east toward the school on the 1935 Van Tech yearbook cover [Figure 5.13]. When asked about the fact that the hair colour on the mature-looking male figure is green in this linoprint, Sing replied, “First year boy”, a humourous response but hardly convincing given the middle-age physique of the figure.

Pen and ink at Van Tech

In the 1925 Van Tech Yearbook there appeared an accomplished image entitled the “Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots,” [Figure 5.14] identified as drawn by Perry Hall. It seems most likely to have been done in pen and ink although it could be scratchboard. This image of Queen Mary at her execution is dense, detailed, and dramatic. It shows her kneeling, as a man puts a scarf over her eyes while the executioner, with convincingly evil eyes, stands by with his curved axe raised. This image is one of the few examples revealing excellence in figuring drawing in Van Tech-produced publications prior to 1936.

After almost 20 years featuring mainly linoprints as visuals, the sudden change of visual style featuring pen and ink drawings appears beginning in the 1947 yearbooks due to the change in printing process. Pen and ink images of Jim Rimmer appeared there when he

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316 With the level of accomplishment of this drawing makes it surprising and unfortunate that Perry Hall, identified as being from class 3, has no other examples of his artwork in the yearbooks, but this was included at a time that Van Tech was not yet in the new school and when visuals were limited in the yearbooks.

317 This image could be an example of scratchboard, although scratchboard seems not to have been taught at Van Tech. If it is scratchboard, it is the only example in this media that I am aware of at Van Tech.
was in just Grade 10 when other student artist contributors were generally in their senior year. Jim’s Bouncing Baldwins, 1950, [Figure 5.15] is an example of one of his pen and ink drawings at the time. Looking back at several such renderings more than 50 years later he said with some self-consciousness, “Pretty blobby.” His many pen and ink drawings were done in India ink with a Speedball pen that had a flat ball on the end of the nib, not allowing for any subtlety of line. Being kinder on himself, he said, “You have to start somewhere.”

Keeping a sketchbook

Kits’ art teacher Margaret Lewis’s kept sketchbooks documenting aspects of her life and travels. Without necessarily showing these sketchbooks to her art classes at Kits, she was able to pass the sketchbook habit to some of her students there. For Kits student Hamish Cameron drawing in his sketchbook served as a visual diary with a cartoon commenting on the most important event of his day or on ironic aspects of life around him. A page containing two cartoons [Figure 3.6], previously introduced, represents his experience as a high school student recruited to help with flood control in the Fraser Valley during a major flood there in 1948. One is done with pen and black ink and the other, with pen and brush in black ink. Done in Grade 10, Hamish’s drawings of figures in the flood are somewhat less accomplished than they might have been if he had done them in his senior year. Nevertheless the images are effective in documenting the flood situation as Hamish experienced it and the cartoons are successful in revealing humour even in such a serious situation. Stephen Ursulescu’s visual record of his life at Kits high school took the form of sketchbook in which he daily documented what he saw around him, often drawing with a few “sketching buddies” around the beaches in the West Side of the city. There they drew buildings, the beaches, and scenes from nature. An example of this is the Robie House, Jericho Beach [Figure 3.3], which was at drawn during his senior year.

I am not aware of any Van Tech student keeping a sketchbook or daily visual journal while at the school, but that does not mean there were no Van Tech students documenting

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318 Peter Snelgrove reported having seen Miss Lewis’ sketchbooks that she had in her possession in 2000 (when she was nearing 100 years old). The sketchbooks recorded trips on Vancouver’s local mountains with the Alpine club and summer trips to Europe with her sister during the years that she was teaching.

319 None of my interviewees remembered ever having been shown Miss Lewis’ sketchbooks in the art classroom.

320 The early curriculum documents do not specify keeping sketchbooks, despite the fact that this has been something artists have done for centuries. The 1945 Programme of studies for the junior high school, however, suggests student make collections of visual source material, make sketches, and do research to a plan a project. It says “The record of such research may take the form of compiling a scrap-book....” (p. 481).
their life on a daily basis. Certainly Van Tech had its compulsive drawers such as Clarence Falk (early 1930s), Bob Banks (grad of early 1940s), and Jim Rimmer (late 1940s).

Fashion design/drawing

In Margaret Strathern’s tailoring course, drawing was central to the activity of fashion design. There she learned to draw the elongated, fashionable figure using a ratio of head to body of one to ten [as seen in Figure 4.5]. In this course she designed a variety of outfits, from sports wear, lounge wear, business suits, and formal wear, including her graduation dress. The some of the outfits she designed are depicted in a setting. At Van Tech Margaret received some technical training that introduced her to how a car engine worked, exposing her to what fellow male students were familiar with but which girls traditionally missed out on. Not surprisingly, Figure 4.5 includes an automobile in the background. Fashion design does not seem to have been a skill available to males during the time of this study.

Drafting

Drafting referred to making detailed plans or drawings of an object or construction before it is to be made in physical form. A comparison of the Scott et al. text against some of the drafting texts used in BC high schools revealed that many of the aspects of drawing, design, and lettering taught in the general arts courses according to the Scott text were indeed similar to the approaches in the texts used in teaching drafting, mechanical drawing, and industrial arts. Without using the term drafting, the Scott et al. art text (1924) gave directions as to how to draw geometrical constructions including the construction of the ellipse and the construction of a pentagon in a given circle (Scott, plate 66). These two are activities that were required in the drafting and mechanical drawing courses given at Van Tech during the time featured in this study. In the Scott text there was little information provided to suggest how these skills were to be applied to artmaking. The Scott text also outlined approaches to represent elevations and plans and projections, which were familiar activities for someone taking drafting at Van Tech. In the Scott text these come in the section that proposed activities for students in regular schools up to and including Grade 10. In keeping with this approach to art, the 54th Report of the public schools for the 1924 school year designates a major part of the Grade 9 drawing exam to have students to draw a dresser from a particular angle in the same way that drafting students might have been required to draw such an object. The exam stated:

Below is a picture of a wardrobe viewed from a position in front of the object. In this position the sides are not seen. The greatest depth of the object is half its width. You are required to make a shaded pencil drawing of this
In asking students to reveal their knowledge of two-point perspective, this question reveals a similarity between what is expected of an art student and a student in a technical course. Similarly the Scott et al. (1924) and Weston (1933) art textbooks touched on topics that at Van Tech students studied in drafting. Weston had some of these activities under the heading of three-dimensional drawing to demonstrate the perspective drawing of various solid forms such as cylinders, squares, circles, etc. The Weston text (1933) similarly gave instruction on working with set-square, ruler, and compasses in order to do construct geometrical figures (circle, semicircle, radius, arc, rhombus, equilateral triangle, hexagon). The text did not include information as to the purpose of knowing how to create these forms. The same was true of other exercises done with set-square or compasses instructing students to bisect a line or an angle, erect a perpendicular, or draw parallel lines. Weston’s only comment was “These operations will enter into the construction of the framework of many designs.” He did not provide further insight into how these skills could be used.

In another context the 1940 Melvin Applied art text directed female home economic students to draw an elevation of a wall of a room, another typical drafting activity. Aspects of drawing in perspective appeared in most of the curriculum materials of this time period, not just in drafting courses. This was true for the 1941 Programme of studies under interior decoration that asked for drawings of doors and windows and furniture plans, perspective views of an interior, wall elevations to scale, and a floor plan of a room showing furniture groupings. It too expected the formation of a clear simple style of lettering suitable for architectural drawing, again resembling art learning in a technical course.

Drafting at Kits

Unlike those at Van Tech who equated art with any kind of drawing including that done in drafting, Kits students did not seem to consider drafting as relating to art. Several sketches of the inside of the corridors at Kits appeared in Hamish Cameron’s Grade 10 sketchbook. One sketch in Hamish’s sketchbook showed a corner of the hallway with radiator, and windows. This sketch was presumably done from observation, whether in art class time or on his own time. Perhaps students were given time in art class to sketch within the school as an alternative to going outside to sketch. This drawing could be seen as an exercise in perspective, a common topic for drafting courses. In another sketch he

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showed two images of a stairway in a corner of the school hallway from slightly different angles [Figure 5.16]. Construction of stairways, some more elaborate than others, was common in the woodworking shop at Van Tech and drawings preceded construction. If Hamish’s drawings had been done at Van Tech, they would have been followed by mechanically precise renditions including dimensions and lettering of instructions necessary to make stairs such as those on the right-hand side of this figure. The precise rendering would be design in that it was a form of drawing used to figure out on paper what was intended, what something was to look like after it was made. With the actual construction of the stairs, the making process, the margins of art are confronted. Van Tech’s Bill Wong had referred to the making of a garment as art. If this is accepted, then the making of the stairs too seems no less art in this context.

Other exercises in perspective shown in Hamish Cameron’s Grade 10 sketchbook indicate that the his art teacher, in this case Moira Macdonald, provided the same approach to drawing simple objects that was presented in the 1924 Scott textbook. Hamish drew a cup and pail showing the handles from several different angles and at different eye levels—from above, below, and directly at eye level while indicating the appearance of the circle on “different planes at different levels” as indicated by the simple cylindrical objects in the Scott text. There were similar instructive diagrams in the Weston text. Hamish’s sketchbook also contains the traditional exercise of a street receding into the distance. He depicted a line of trees on one side of the road with a railway with boxcars on the other side of the street, exercises commonly appearing in drafting texts. Other perspective exercises show a simple building, a simple house, a box-like form labeled “garage,” and a floor of tiles depicted using two-point perspective and mimicking the diagrams shown in the Scott text that shows “Perspective with the convergence of lines and foreshortening of objects, again demonstrating three views according to varying eye levels.” Another such exercise depicts six boxes from different eye levels. A large book is also shown similar to the exercise in Scott text (p. 65), where receding lines suggest consideration of perspective. All of this demonstrates that drawing at a Grade 10 level at Kits was in keeping with the prescriptive art textbooks and aligned to some of what was being done in drafting courses at Van Tech.

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322 In the 1937 Programme of studies for general arts, one of the suggested activities is to sketch views in schools.
323 Note another constructed stairway made in Van Tech’s woodworking shop, as depicted at the back left of the photo of the woodworking exhibition display in Figure 4.3.
324 Scott et al. Drawing and design (pp. 60 and 62).
325 Ibid. (p. 600).
326 Weston. Manual of drawing (pp. 66-68).
327 Scott et al. (p. 63).
Drafting at Van Tech

At Van Tech drafting referred to making detailed plans to provide specifications as well as drawings made according to specifications of buildings, ships, aircraft, or machines before they are built. It involves mechanical drawing done to scale using specialized instruments, for example, showing machinery or an architectural plan. Another aspect of drafting is technical drawing, which is a precise scale drawing of something showing dimensions or quantities usually prepared for architectural, engineering, or industrial purposes. Some of the exercises described in the Scott et al. art text (1924), which are done with set squares and compasses and rulers, are similar to work laid out in the drafting courses and mechanical drawing classes at Van Tech at that time. For instance, the Scott text directs the student as follows:

Having chosen a geometric area or space to be decorated, proceed to divide into regular subdivisions by bisectors, diagonals, or any other regular divisors. On or within these skeleton lines place your principal decorative unit or parts of such unit, seeking at the same time for balance and pleasing variety of form.328

The drawing and lettering taught in drafting courses aimed to have the future workman do his work more accurately and neatly in translating the sketches and ideas of an architect or engineer so that the information would be more readily understandable to others who are going to do the actual construction work. This could include drawings to be used in architecture and building trades. Lettering was important in all the drafting texts and is a reason for John Kyle, director of technical education in B.C., devoted one of his three official industrial art texts to lettering alone.329 While the term drafting generally suggests something very precise, it has involved more. For instance freehand drawing was incorporated into the curriculum as in the 1924 Freehand drafting text dealing with freehand sketching, methods of representation, and shaded sketches and drawings.

Drawing was central to the curriculum at Van Tech as most technical projects needed some form of drafting in creating plans prior to undertaking projects. This was in keeping with the vocational focus of the school. This was not the case at Kits where drafting was merely one more course among the broad offering of course options. Most students at Kits generally did not do drafting in their senior years hence the more limited skill level in drafting courses at Kits where it would have been done mainly in the lower grades.

328 Scott et al. Drawing and design (p. 144).
Girls at Kits did not take a drafting course, although female students took mechanical drawing as a club in the 1940s. I suspect that, even after Van Tech opened its classrooms to girls, drafting remained male dominated. Only classroom records, which I did not have access to, could show the approximate proportion of males to females for the years after the girls were integrated into boys' classes.

**Summary of Drawing and Drafting**

Kits students, in the general arts courses, were exposed to most forms of drawing recommended for the subject of art by official sources and that were practiced at the art school. I say most as I have no evidence that Kits students actually did specific exercises in memory drawing. This may be because it did not appear in a curriculum guide until 1937, and it seems not to have been done at the art school while Kits teachers were in attendance there, thus contributing to my belief that teachers taught primarily what they learned through their own art training. Any of the drafting-type exercises Kits students undertook aimed to contribute to their ability in general art. Much of the drawing that Van Tech students did was embedded in their technical courses and had a drafting orientation or the drawing was a way of figuring out the design of something they were about to undertake in one of their industrial arts projects. As a result of Kits' fine art orientation to drawing, it can be perceived as middle class, something primarily suitable as a leisure-time activity for students' future lives. In the general art courses drawing did not seem to be gendered. At Van Tech, on the other hand, their drawing and drafting served a vocational purpose and thus can be viewed primarily as a working-class approach. The observable differences in the concept of drawing between the Kits and Van Tech relate to the nature of the schools and some of these related to gender and class. Drawing at Kits was assumed to be an art activity that would be a constructive, pleasurable hobby in a leisure-class life, and it would help students in their future personal lives, as well as make them more appreciative art consumers. Drawing in Kits' art classes also helped find capable art students, particularly male students, who had ability and an interest in becoming a professional designer. For Van Tech students, drawing was a working tool for their futures in technical jobs, probably working class jobs, although this could be in drafting as well which would be white collar and therefore middle class. During the time of the study, girls who were drawing in the fashion design course, and specializing in that subject, were expected to go into the "clothing trade," the word trade to me suggests a working class project.

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331 Programmes of study, 1937.

332 By leisure-class life I mean that within the broad definition of middleclass life, there would be sufficient time and money to be able to participate in some leisure-time activities.
position, rather than a career using those skills in drawing and designing outfits for a high-class fashion house or designing or sewing primarily for their own families.

**Design**

Design during this time referred to the process of planning, as noted above "figuring out," by drawing how something was to be made. Design also referred to patterns, shapes, motifs, often repetitive that were used to fill a space with embellishment. It also referred to the form or structure of something. The 1919 to 1923 *Courses of study* were the guides that were in effect when Kits' central three art teachers were in high school, described design as emerging from drawings, primarily images from nature, that were conventionalized to be used for various purposes such as applied design, poster-work, and advertisements. The 54th *Report of the public schools* (1924-25) showed the Grade 9 drawing exam featuring drawings of blackberries, which students were instructed to depict in geometrical and conventionalized ways in order to fill a given space decoratively (p. T140-142). The section of the Scott et al. text dealing with design for Grades 7 and 8 stated that design was teachable, as long as that didn't assume pure invention, which they stated could not be taught. Thus they limited design to mean the laws that could be explained and demonstrated governing a simple arrangement or composition. These exercises in design, according to these authors, needed only to be "amplified and broadened in scope" to be suitable for Grades 9 and higher. The Weston text (1933) explained that design primarily involved the conventionalization of an image on paper to translate it into a motif suitable for the particular medium for which it was intended. He explained that for a linoblock this involved simplification, but of necessity, the image would be different again if it were to be worked in stitchery. Weston believed that because of the requirements of such adaptations, design was not arbitrary but a necessity. At the art school careful observation of nature was seen as the main source of learning about design according to both Jock Macdonald and Grace Melvin, two teachers teaching pre-service teachers.

Nevertheless, Melvin's applied art course students studied historic ornament and students were all expected to have their own copy of the text (Alexander). Both the Weston

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333 The main form of design represented in the 1906 Blair drawing manual (Book 4) was linear border designs and rectangles filled with overall patterns. One example gave the instruction to finish the provided partial design with a ruler and to then tint it with different colours. Subsequently one was to make one's own design using a ruler and then tint it in colour.

334 The 1919 to 1923 *Courses of study* were the guides that were in effect when Kits' central three art teachers were in high school. Jock Macdonald had his students undertake such designs in order to apply them in specific projects.

335 Scott et al. *Drawing and design* (p. 73).

336 Ibid. (p. 141).
and Scott texts included, in their less than one-page bibliography, Richard Glazier’s 1906 text entitled *Historic Ornament: A Manual*.

The pattern-filling approach to design continued at the art school in the late 1930 to early 1940s, but I have not seen evidence of it at Kits in the general arts course, although there seems to have been some applications of it in the girls’ applied arts course. Also, one student in the commercial art course (Cameron) said of design that “everything” was done in the context of the hand-made poster. The simplification of the image, choice and design of suitable lettering, effective use of colour, the arrangement of elements on the page, and integration of illustrative matter and lettering were all considered in designing a poster. These were single posters; there were no multiples until the late 1940s (Cameron).

**Design at Van Tech**

At Van Tech there were many opportunities for the application of design principles in the industrial arts courses (primarily woodworking, metalworking, and printing), in fact knowledge of good design was the end goal of many activities.

Although block cutting and printing are used for the stimulation of the love of the artistic in illustration and graphic craftsmanship, they also teach control of hand and eye, judgment, taste, accuracy, and a knowledge of the principles of design. (VTPM, 1934, p. v)

Posters at Van Tech were produced in the print shop rather than freehand; this was in keeping with the kind of work students were preparing for after leaving the school. Students there learned relevant design principles in planning and producing a printed publication. Apparently the print shop took on some advertising aimed at external audiences (Rimmer). In the 1934 linoprinter’s manual, one image is labelled as having previously printed 3,000 copies of a particular image prior to its appearance in the manual.

**Design and gender issues**

The 1937 *Programme of studies* for the senior high schools of B.C. outlines a course on lettering and advertising art including design and layout. This would seem to be without gender bias, but it was relevant to male students at both Kits and Van Tech. While boys only were taking such a course at Van Tech, as an aspect of the printing programme, there was at least one course that I know of at Kits in the late 1940s where boys only were involved in taking a commercial art course that focused on advertising art. Given the nature of the schools, not

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337 The brief instructions provided in the 1919, 1921, & 1923 Courses of study (almost identical) state “apply design work to poster-work and advertisements” (p. 17).
338 *Programme of studies* (p. 345).
making vocational training a priority, these senior Kits boys, not considering industrial arts as useful to their future, may well have been taking this course in advertising art in the same time slot that the girls were taking applied art.

Similarly one might think that design considerations could be gender free. But in wanting senior students to be aware of how much design would become part of their daily life in the future, Scott et al. explained that either as a “professional man, needing to express himself graphically,” or a “housewife, needing to resolve problems of decoration of house or person,” all would need some capacity for designing. This assumed separation along gender lines in the application of knowledge of design was also evident in the kinds of design activities undertaken by males in woodwork and metal work and females in applied art as described below. Variations due to ethnicity were more likely to be a matter of style rather than kind of activity. In this case gender was more of a determinant than ethnicity in influencing what a student would undertake, and was second only to the nature of the school.

**Painting**

Painting refers to making an image in paint, generally in colours, with a brush. In the Blair drawing manuals (1906) water paints were noted as media to be used yet paints were not used in a painterly fashion, instead they were used in very conservative and exacting way such as to tint pencil drawings to indicate local colour. Watercolour paint was also used for doing colour exercises to learning about the properties of mixing colours (inside back covers). Courses of study in 1919, 1921 outlined exercises in the study of colour harmonies in primary, secondary, and tertiary colour combinations, saying a “scheme of colour [is] to be made from every flower and insect drawn” (p. 16). One of the recommendations that the Putman Weir report (1925) recommended about art was the increased use of colour in the schools. From this time, colour was to remain one of the main four categories of art training in the high schools (besides appreciation). The 1937 Programme of studies recommended teaching colour in terms of experiments with harmony and as colour functions in design and crafts and advertising. Training in colour was central to the teaching of painting at the art school as well as being featured in Grace Melvin’s craft course. An article in the student publication, reporting on what the students had learned through the year, also mentions Jock Macdonald teaching colour theory.

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339 Courses of study in 1919, 1921. (pp. 16 & 17).
340 They are design, drawing, colour, and lettering.
341 (1937). Programme of studies (p. 345).
342 (1927). The Paint Box, 2, 10.
**Painting at Kits**

This was the time of the ubiquitous colour wheel in art courses. Peter Snelgrove remembers doing colour wheels in the mid-1940s. Hamish Cameron's Grade 10 sketchbook of 1948 shows an exercise creating analogous colour samples in variations of red, blue, purple, and green. These students in Moira Macdonald's Grade 10 class also learned about warm and cool colours and how to use them. Despite continuing such exercises as preparatory to painting, students were encouraged to paint from memory, imagination, or observation, and at times with a view to abstraction. Louise Williamson said Miss Macdonald taught abstraction by instructing them to leave out unessential details in order to maintain the most important features. As seen in the extant paintings of Cameron, Macdonald's art classes studied the minimalist approach to Chinese brush strokes to come up with paintings featuring scenes with bamboo in the foreground and atmospheric rolling hills in the background, the background done in wet paper technique. Chinese brush strokes [Figure 3.5] were studied apparently without acknowledging anything about Chinese culture or the long-time presence of the Chinese in Vancouver. In this set of paintings by Hamish, a few brush strokes suggest a clump of bamboo standing in an expansive, hilly space (not B.C. mountains). The paintings of bamboo suggest one's ability to look at and appreciate the art of other cultures and the willingness to learn from it. The images are at least as much about art as they are about landscapes in nature or Kits students' surroundings. The images are examples of art for art's sake. Another of Hamish's paintings aiming for abstraction through simplification is his image of the exterior of Kits School [Figure 3.12]. Done with simple brush strokes, this image confirms that Kits students did landscapes by observing nature as well as from memory. It also confirms that they went outside to paint. Apparently with expansive arm gestures, Moira Macdonald showed students a modern painting and encouraged them to study how it was done.

Other forms of art, specifically book illustration, stimulated student artists at Kits. Figure 3.10 provides an example by Rolph Blakstad. He said the following about the source material for this image:

> There were lots of European illustrated books in the Kits library. The images were done at home; they were derivative of work seen elsewhere but not copies. If one has a strong imagination, one adapts but need not copy. The image of the young couple was based on a profound wish projection into the future. (Blakstad)

Louise Williamson said Miss Macdonald taught the difference in painting illustrations for advertising jobs, and other professional use, as compared with painting for your own use.
Painting at Van Tech

According to Bill Wong at Van Tech through the late 1930s, students didn’t learn any colour theory at Van Tech. He had to learn that later at art school. Bob Banks too, otherwise having a good memory of art class, doesn’t remember learning anything specific about colour at Van Tech. At any rate colour studies were minimal compared to drawing there for instance. Without complex colour work to judge by, it is difficult to determine if this minimal training in colour translated into a noticeable deficiency in students’ ability to use colour. Colour was a major part of the study of art structure for the girls in applied art using the Grace Melvin text, which was the prescribed text for applied art in B.C. within a year or two of the girls’ arrival.

Painting from art history

At the art school Jock Macdonald in an article in the student publication recommended the study of the history of art but only to understand the essence of the principles making for excellence in work of the past—the basic structure. He also incorporated some art history into his art classes at Van Tech. Margaret Strathern remembered studying Van Gogh in his class and doing a painting using Van Gogh’s Sunflowers as a starting point for her own image. I did not hear of Al Wishart or Ed Snetsinger, the other Van Tech teachers of stand-alone design/art courses, using any references to art history in teaching art in their classrooms. This is despite the fact that as of 1925, through the Putman Weir report, the B.C. Department of Education approved of increased instruction in art history.

Kits teacher Moira Macdonald had a knowledge of contemporary art and showed her senior students reproductions of specific examples of modern art to introduce specific principles (Cameron). Judging from Hamish’s paintings of Chinese bamboo, these images were not all from the western canon. Macdonald also introduced music into the classroom in order to have students paint mood paintings of nature scenes reflecting their interpretation of the music. These were imagined scenes of landscape. The subjects were recognizable, as seen in the examples of Stephen Ursulescu’s and Hamish Cameron’s work that I examined. Apparently there was no music in Van Tech’s art classes during the time of this study.

Mural making

A mural was usually a large picture painted directly onto an interior wall. In the case of Van Tech the large pictures were not directly painted on but later attached to the walls. I have not seen references to mural making in the early courses of study or art education texts; nor

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Macdonald. (1927). The Paint Box, 2, 47.
have I heard about any mural making in pre-service training at the art school in the 1920s. A student at Kits in the mid-1930s remembered drawing chalk murals, as opposed to painted ones (Russell White). Apparently the murals were made while pinned up the hallway walls outside the art classroom.

The Kits yearbook for the 1936/37 school year includes a photograph of a mural identified only with the label “mural club” (KH, 1937, p. 43). The figures depicted in the Kits mural were apparently middleclass students in an art classroom. It showed the students as their adolescent selves. They are all males, which is interesting that again in the school the female students do not seem to be fully acknowledged. From what is visible in the reproduction, there seems also to be an absence of any visible minority students, less surprising due to the small numbers of such students at Kits. This Kits mural showing art students was done within a year of Van Tech students in their art club doing decorative panels depicting medieval craftsmen at work (VT, 1935, p. 20), specifically male metalworkers, stonemasons, carpenters and joiners, bricklayers, glassworkers, blacksmiths, pottery workers, sculptors, metal founders, wood turners, decorators, and pottery workers.344 So while the Kits mural depicted students as they were at the time, Van Tech’s panels depicted students’ intended working-class occupations; in short the subject matter of each of these undertakings reflects the nature of the school producing it.

Murals that both Pauli Field and Louise Williamson (late-40s) talked about featured subject matter from social studies although they were done in art classes and didn’t have had any input from the social studies teacher. Even the murals that Ursulescu remembered making for the Latin class only involved input from the Latin teacher not the art teacher.345 Also Blakstad confirmed being involved in making murals at Kits in the late 1940s. At Kits this communal activity did not have a vocational goal. The large, painted stage backdrops that were such an important part of Kits drama presentations plays, operas, and operettas346 used the same skills as mural making just with a different end product.

**Mural making at Van Tech**

Once Jock Macdonald arrived at the school he served as sponsor of the art club to guide students in painting murals to decorate the hallways, which they apparently did as classroom activity as well. “In art class, when I had either Wishart or (Jock) Macdonald as an art teacher, we did panels for the hallways at Tech. I chose to do a panel on transportation”

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344 They were based on the images from paintings upon the walls of the Hotel de Ville in Paris (VT, 1935, p. 20).

345 As explained in Chapter 3, students’ drew preliminary sketches of the images on the paper stretched across desks, before putting the mural in position to paint. The images included Roman statuary, braziers (standing fires), faux marble walls, doorways, etc.
(Banks). These may be the same murals that Jim Rimmer remembers seeing a few years later. He spoke of marvelous murals high up in the school’s hallways on the second floor of the main building. He remembered them as being about four feet high and running for perhaps 40 feet. He said they might have been painted directly on the walls or done on panels of perhaps tempered hard board subsequently attached to the walls. He thought that they may have been painted over a ground and done in either gouache or a powdered paint, but in whatever medium they were done they were dramatic he said. Rimmer said the mural looked like it was line drawing coloured with a brush. One part of the image that he remembered showed people loading bananas onto a boat, which he thought were well done. In any case he remembered the mural revealing wonderful capability in colour, composition, and in depicting anatomy. Perhaps these are the same ones that Bob worked on. Perhaps this indicates an improvement in drawing the figure at Van Tech after the introduction of a stand-alone art course. These could have been the ones mentioned in the yearbook as the panels for the halls that Macdonald planned to do with the art club (VT, 1941). The murals/wall panels are apparently no longer in existence. It is interesting that at Van Tech the goal of such painting was to decorate a hallway, which could otherwise be done by a craftsman, rather than to do painting for its own sake, something that did not fit Van Tech’s vocational goals. The decorating aspect of mural making obscured the line between being the work of craftsman and artist yet was not noticeably different (other than subject matter) from mural making by students at Kits.

**Hand Printing**

Hand printing was the creation of images cut by hand and printed in limited numbers as opposed to larger numbers by commercial press. For Kits and Van Tech during the time of this study this involved primarily cutting the image for silkscreen and linoblock printing. Silkscreen printing here refers to a form of artist-edition print (rather than a commercial procedure) done with an image applied to a screen with some areas cut away or otherwise removed. The image was inked by hand directly over the receiving paper rather than needing a printing press. Linoblock printing involved cutting an image into a piece of linoleum that, when inked, the raised portions of the image printed on the paper and the resulting image printed in reverse of the cut image. Kits brought the silkscreen and Van Tech, linoblock print, to a near-professional level by 1950, and 1947 respectively. While the 1919 to 1923 Courses of study listed stenciling as a printing method for using harmonious colour schemes and motives that have been designed, it is

366 The Kits anniversary video.
not until the 1937 Programme of studies for Grade 9 art that blockcutting in lino or wood were mentioned. Silkscreen was not mentioned, perhaps for lack of instruction sources for the teacher; I am not aware of it being taught at the art school in the 1920s. Linoblock printing, however, was a favoured medium of Grace Melvin at the art school; she taught this in her craft course required of pre-service teachers.

**Hand printing at Kits**

Silkscreen printing in the Kits art classroom was brought to an exceptional level by 1950 as evident in the yearbook illustrations of Stephen Ursulescu [Figure 3.13 and 3.14 are examples of his work]. Stephen’s silkscreen illustrations served on the cover and as section dividers utilizing coloured ink; some were on coloured paper. From this time onwards, silkscreen was an art medium included in senior students’ art classes (Gray). But until late in the 1940s silkscreen printing was in existence at Kits only in clubs; it was through such extra-curricular activities that silkscreen was introduced into the school. Before the introduction of silkscreen in the classroom, Peter Snelgrove referring to the early 1940s, said linoprinting had been “a big thing in those days” even though the prints were small. There may have been a small press for linoprinting (L. Williamson), but linoprinting was also done by hand pressure with a burnisher.

Russell White, a student at Kits in the mid-1930s, remembered providing his own linocutting tools and demonstrating linoprinting technique during a parent’s night. It wasn’t until the 1938-1939 school year that the annual referred to silkscreening as a “new duplicating method which the [poster] club members themselves inaugurated mak[ing] possible large-scale advertising” (KH, p. 32). Perhaps until 1949/50, the silkscreening equipment had stayed in “the little shack behind the old-building” where the poster club worked (KH, 1936-37, p. 42) not having yet being moved into the regular art classroom in the main school building. The cost of silkscreening materials may have delayed its introduction into the art courses. James Gray stated that sometime after 1950 Moira Macdonald produced a manual on the use of silkscreen in the schools that was published by the Vancouver School Board. She may have gained sufficient insight into this technique from work with her students.

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348 (1927). Prospectus (n. p.).
349 Kits’ first yearbook cover (1931) was a silkscreen print, as was the 1936-37 yearbook cover.
350 Gray had been superintendent of art and previously had been in Moira Macdonald’s art class in the 1940s while a student at Kits.
Hand printing at Van Tech

Linoblock printing amongst Van Tech students was at a high level by 1934 when Lewis Elliott, Van Tech’s print shop teacher, wrote and guided through production a manual on linoblock printing for students.\textsuperscript{351} This printer’s manual (referenced as VTPM) incorporated over 45 linoprints by Van Tech students along with procedural tips on how to undertake this art form. In the manual Elliott justified teaching linoblock work for is contribution to learning of good design, which was one of the overall goals of industrial arts at the school.

In this machine age, it is probable that many people will question the desirability of a reversion to pure handwork; yet it will be conceded that in the training of artistic craftsmen, in any craft, an apprenticeship to handwork and design gives a fundamental background that cannot be acquired in any other way. The standards of workmanship in machine production are those of the best type of handwork—the machine merely giving uniformity and precision, with an increased output. (VTPM, p. vi)

He also justified the teaching of linoprinting in stating:

In conjunction with [a] school’s art department, effective and original designs may be drawn, transferred, cut in linoleum and printed, without delay, in an artistic and workmanlike manner.... The student printer is fascinated by the ease with which he may express his talent through the medium of the lino-block and its adaptability to the commercial field. (VTPM, p. 1)

The words workmanlike, student printer (as opposed to student artist), and commercial field seem to purposefully place this activity in a vocational context rather than being associated with fine art, thus positioning it within Van Tech’s vocational goals. Most linoprints appearing in Van Tech yearbooks were printed in one colour, generally but not always in black, although some were in coloured inks. While Van Tech’s yearbook did not incorporate coloured paper, the cover of the Van Tech printer’s manual was printed in brown on beige paper. Perhaps not surprisingly this cover featured the image of medieval printers at work\textsuperscript{352} The image was drawn by someone other than the student who cut the block, and it would have been printed by yet other students. This shared process seems to suggest a distancing from the concept of the artist as an individual with special abilities. Rather it suggests that art too can be subject to a division of labour as in working-class, specifically production line, work. Always with a thought to students’ future work, linoprinting was seen by the teachers as offering a valuable vocational skill:

\footnotesize

352 While this is not accredited there, it is elsewhere identified as having been drawn by student Milton Parsons and cut by Clarence Falk (VT, 1934).

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The spread of the lino-block art caused commercial printing establishments to study the possibilities of lino-blocks, not as a makeshift for shortage of material, but as an adjunct to commercial work. As a result, many printing firms are turning out really artistic and useful work by the lino-block process. (VTPM, p. 6)

Another instance also shows that staff at Van Tech saw the value of linoprint design and cutting as contributing to potential job capabilities. The yearbook notes that:

Old members of the lino-block club, now working in printing offices in the city, have turned to practical use the knowledge and experience gained in lino-block work. Clarence Falk has cut several fine pieces of work for his employer, and so has Ken McLeish. Sing Lim, the most original of our old members, is now writing short descriptive articles, illustrated by his own lino-block cartoons, for the Chinese News Weekly, for Canadian Chinese, printed in English. (VT, 1937, n. p.)

One of the few instances that the Van Tech yearbook revealed a concern about a hobby or use of leisure time for students (as opposed to promoting its vocational aims) occurs in the following that suggests the potential role of linoprinting in this capacity:

Linoleum block cutting is a creative and interesting hobby, and it is hoped all members will retain their enthusiasm and continue to brighten their leisure hours by cultivating this fascinating, inexpensive form of craftsmanship. (VT, 1943, p. 15)

A later yearbook indicated that this in fact had happened, that some students and graduates had "retained their interest in this fascinating hobby" (VT, 1944, p. 20). Shortly after the school's arrival in the new building with its ideal school printing facilities, Van Tech students had been producing near-professional linoblock prints as evidenced by yearbook covers and the production of the student printer manual. Henry Zitko explained that designers of the linoblock print were able to proof their images while the cutting was underway. He said of linoprint design: students "realized pretty quickly the bolder the image, the better. The fine line business wasn't going to work" (Zitko). Students soon learned that to design a successful block for printing they needed to use images that had high contrast and they must cut with decisive lines (Falk, Zitko). Most linoblocks of beginning students were one-colour blocks, but the most experienced student designers could do up to five colours [Figure 4.6 by Sing Lim] and three was not uncommon (VT, 1943, The Lino Club, p. 8).

Some observable differences in the concept of hand printing between Kits and Van Tech schools relate to the fact that at Kits silkscreen was initiated in the production of advertising for the school through the poster-making club and was then transferred into the classroom in the late 1940s. At Van Tech the linoblock print had been worked with earlier in the printing course. I am not aware of any girls designing or printing silkscreens at Kits.
although they were in the poster club. Louise Williamson, who was president of the club in her 1948 grad year, said that she only did one-off, hand-made posters; none of them were printed as silkscreens. There is only one reference in a Kits’ yearbook to a girl being involved in the silkscreen process and that said she was using her finger nails to remove the cut bits from the layer of film. This may mean that the boys dominated this activity at Kits. At Van Tech linoblock printing was pursued through the linocutting club and some of the prints were showcased routinely in the Van Tech yearbook and in the 1934 printer’s manual. Linoblock printing also was added to the activities of VT’s art classroom sometime after the introduction of the design course in 1936 (Strathern, Banks, Rimmer). Early in their existence at Van Tech, the girls began to cut linoblocks and were recognized as lino club members (VT, 1943, p. 15), but they may not actually have had contact with the boys in sitting around a table in the print shop cutting blocks together.

Hand printing summary

In keeping with the nature of the schools, silkscreen was a skill that a Kits student as future graphic designer could use in a commercial art studio whereas linoprints would be something that a Van Tech student could use as a future printer, thus the two printing methods have some class associations as well as relating to the nature of the schools. Students at Kits were not likely use silkscreen in their personal after-school life due to its relative messiness. Van Tech’s future artist printer would be able to use linoblock in work and as well as choose it as a hobby. In short these printmaking media had class connotations. As for gender dynamics, it may have been difficult for girls at Kits to be come full participants in the featured process (silkscreen), but this conclusion is based on too few girls to know if this observation is valid. Linoprinting seemed to have been taken up fairly readily by girls at Van Tech and their efforts were recognized in the yearbook. Also, while I have noted elsewhere that linoprinting at Van Tech was a valuable arena for students of Asian descent, I have no knowledge of printmaking at Kits being either an inclusive or exclusionary activity for such students. Also it seems apparent that the students who seemed most creative in art at both schools had abilities in more than one medium; they did not work in printmaking alone.

Photography

Photography is the art, hobby, or profession of taking photographs and developing and printing them; here photography is primarily discussed as photos that were used in
student yearbooks in conjunction with drawing. Besides the practical use of photography in the yearbooks for depicting the school, the students and activities at the school during the year, the main use of photography at Kits and Van Tech, and as shown commonly in other Vancouver high school yearbooks, was in the integration of photographs of students heads with drawings of them in imagined settings. One Van Tech example by Jim Rimmer has appeared previously as Figure 5.15 and was described under pen and ink drawing. An example from Kits by Rolph Bladstad [Figure 5.17] shows this common form at its most accomplished. This one shows students who had worked on the yearbook as being part of the crew of a ship called the Gosling, which was the name of the annual that year. While photography might be seen as a leisure-time pursuit of the middle classes, there was a photography club at both schools from the 1930s. It is interesting that at Van Tech it was called the camera club whereas at Kits it called a photography club, thus not suggesting the need for a camera to be involved. Kits' 1944 yearbook indicates that art teacher Vito Cianci was trying to get photography accepted by the Department of Education as an accredited course in the high school.

Applied art

Applied art referred to the process by which artistic embellishment was added to a utilitarian object to beautify that object. Often this was two-dimensional design added to a three-dimensional object or surface. In this way the design was applied rather than being part of the formative process of creating the object (unlike the way it was in craft as the art school defined it). At Van Tech all the projects that would be considered as applied design are discussed under the broad category called industrial arts in this chapter and are addressed under the separate headings of Woodwork, Metalwork, and Printing. This included wood projects small and large from a picture frame to a hall bench, some of which were embellished with historic ornament as shown in Figure 4.3. It also included metal projects such as repôté bowl; lamp; picture frame, wall plaque, chandelier as shown in Figure 4.4.

353 The 1937 Programme of study for Grade 9 art under composition mentions the "value of pictorial composition to the photographer—his selection or arrangement of subject" (p. 347) and refers to Photography and fine art, a text by Henry Turner Bailey, the original editor of the Applied Arts Magazine (School Arts Magazine). This suggests at least a growing awareness of photography. In at least two cases that I know of, a photographer in the 1940s was requested to serve as a speaker at the school giving a presentation on photography as an occupation (at Byng and King Edward).

354 One student from the mid-1930s remembers doing papier maché one time in Shadbolt's class, but he doesn't remember details of the actual project. At best papier maché was a minimal presence at Kits prior to 1950, as was any other three-dimensional medium in general art classes at Kits.

355 This includes projects that would be considered applied art as according to the popular de Lemos text Applied art (1920/1933).
As early as 1919, the Courses of study for art (called drawing) included embroidery and appliqué in applied design among other activities that I have discussed under different headings. With Kits’ art teacher Margaret Lewis having helped prepare, with Grace Melvin, the Applied art manual published in 1940 for use of female home economics students, it is likely the textile activities included there were the ones from which Kits’ applied arts activities were taken. This is in keeping with information from one informant from the mid-1930s (Eva Williamson) and another one from the late-1940s (Lyla Brown) who were in the applied art course at Kits.

**Applied art at Kits and Van Tech**

Kits female students in the applied arts from art teacher Margaret Lewis studied aspect of design and art structure (principles of design such as balance, rhythm, contrast, emphasis), as they learned about standards of beauty and fitness. Both Kits and Van Tech had adequate facilities to offer girls an applied arts course in alignment with the Melvin manual. Applied arts as I am using the term involved females in working with pliable materials, mainly cloth and soft leather, focusing on stitching. Such projects involved embellished cushions, appliqué, table runners, and other decorative textile projects. There were no boys’ activities at Kits and Van Tech that were labelled applied arts. Boys’ activities addressing design application problems were considered industrial arts.

Issues of class and race were involved in applied art at Kits and Van Tech insofar as the central activities of stitchery, embroidery, appliqué are media traditionally restricted to primarily white women of a leisured class, those with enough spare time to be involved with these time-consuming activities. Such activities, as taught in the education system during the time of this study, were part of white culture in the same way that learning to make white sauce was a form of indoctrination into white culture in domestic science. Some batik and tie-

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356 The others were stenciling china-painting; stained wood; piercing, inlay, and metal repoussé. In the 1937 Programme of studies, stitchery and appliqué are included under craft. Also the 53rd Report of the public schools, 1923-24, reporting on the teachers’ summer school (p. T94a) shows photos of portfolio covers showing lettering and design and these are labeled with the heading applied design. These examples show the arbitrariness of some of the designations.

357 Plus projects in soft leather.

358 Melvin. (1940). Applied art (p. 6).

359 This is obviously a simplification: Melvin includes the following skills and media in the manual: Brush, pen, and needle; stitchery, leatherwork; embroidery; cross stitch, felt appliqué with cotton; cotton threads on linen; petite point; craft-embossed leather-work. These media were used in filling in geometrical shapes including on panels; conventionalization of nature forms designs for borders, all-over repeat patterns, geometrical forms, nature forms; knowledge of colour in clothing, the home, and in her career (p. 29). Stylization, conventionalization, characterization rather than representation, drawing as symbol to suit an area and purpose, simplification to get rid of all unnecessary details to expose significant form; dress design drawing; fashion illustration.
dye projects, originating in the southern hemisphere, were listed in applied art, but the activities did not aim to introduce textile activities from around the world. So while the activities in applied art at Kits and Van Tech were likely similar, some class assumptions relating to the nature of the schools may have influenced the goals for the courses related to vocational expectations and whether the graduate expected to work inside or outside the home. In the applied art course there was some overlap with fashion design taught at Van Tech within the tailoring course. The Van Tech girl expected to work in the “trades” suggesting use of specific skills as opposed to a Kits student who might use this knowledge in her home or in her career, implying a life-long commitment that would utilize the judgment and taste and other more embodied forms of knowledge rather than specific, more limited skills.

**Craft**

Craft was a decorative or practical article produced with materials worked together toward an aesthetic goal of making that product a pleasure to use, to feel, and to look at due to its form, shape, colour, texture, etc. While this definition is based on a statement made in the 1938-39 Prospectus at the art school, I think it serves well for the entire period of this study. Pre-service art teachers studying at the art school in the 1920s were required to take a crafts course taught by Grace Melvin that included:

- Pottery and ceramics; embroidery and needlecraft; leatherwork; colour-prints; etching; block printing on textiles; commercial art, advertising and commercial layout; lino-cuts; wood-engraving; wood-carving; lettering and illumination; wood decoration; modeling.

If indeed future teachers at Kits became experienced in most of these media while they were at the art school at that time, and if Jock Macdonald was familiar with most of these media through his own art training in Britain, then Van Tech and Kits teachers could have offered

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360 Batik is mentioned as a possible activity in the 1933 *Programme of studies for the high schools* (p. 203).
361 With Grace Melvin's *Applied art* manual of 1940 becoming available, the 1941 *Programme of studies for the senior high schools* included costume design as one of four areas of concentration in the general arts course. It included drawing the figure from a model as well as figure poses and action poses. It also included fashion layouts with lettered descriptions, a cover design for a fashion magazine, fashion page showing several view of one outfit, layout for a society page, etc. Many of these activities overlapped those at Kits and Van Tech in general art, and those in the applied arts, as well as the commercial art course available in the late 1940s (Cameron).
362 (1938/39). *Prospectus* (n. p.).
363 The art school’s *Prospectus* for the session 1929/1930, under the heading teacher training, recommends pre-service teachers take design and at least two crafts. J. W. G. Macdonald was teaching design and crafts that year; Grace Melvin taught lettering and illumination, embroidery, and pottery, which were considered crafts, and S. P. Judge provided instruction for part-time and evening students.
364 (1927). *Prospectus* (n. p.). Many of these activities that were considered craft at the art school, as noted above, are discussed as they related to Van Tech under the various headings noted.
more varied projects in the schools in the general arts courses than what seems to have actually happened. I have to conclude that the subsequent Depression and war year conditions caused some of these media to be too expensive to be feasible or were too time-consuming to be included in their general high school art classes. However, approximately half of these activities, as described under different headings, did get explored at both Kits and Van Tech but in another context within other courses. Embroidery, needlecraft, leatherwork, and block printing on textiles were designated activities with the applied art courses. Each school had its hand printing specialty, silkscreen printing and linoblock printing, and lettering was addressed thoroughly in both schools in the general arts courses as well as in the technical courses at Van Tech. Commercial art, advertising, and commercial layout were located within the printing course at Van Tech and within commercial art at Kits when it was offered by the late 1940s. Aspects of wood decoration and wood-carving were explored within the woodworking classes in industrial art, at least at Van Tech if not at Kits.

Pottery and ceramics, known by then to teachers to be possible using local B.C. clay, were not explored much at Kits and apparently not at all in Van Tech's art program during the time of this study. Perhaps teachers thought clay work was not worth doing in the absence of a kiln. Also I have not heard of modelling (in plaster or clay) at all in either Kits or Van Tech despite this being taught at the art school by sculptor Charles Marega, one of the original staff members of the art school.

Reporting for year-end 1927, Vancouver's supervisor of drawing, S. P. Judge, stated:

The establishment this year in September of Junior High Schools at Templeton Drive and in Kitsilano, has given an opportunity for more practical co-operation between the drawing and craft work, and interesting work is being accomplished along these lines in both schools. This had been a long felt need in Grades VII, VIII, and IX, and these experiences will undoubtedly give the pupils a broader outlook and understanding of the connection of their work with the home, commerce and manufactures.

365 Clay was not widely used in secondary art programs in Vancouver although it seems to have been was one of the most popular art media in American grade schools and high schools in the 1920s to 1950s (Stephenson, 1998). Some clay work was being done at Kits in the early-1940s Snelgrove said, but he thinks he did not do any pottery himself. Hamish Cameron remembers being struck by the fact that at Kits clay came in powdered form and had to be mixed with water. This seemed unnatural compared to his memory of the clay used in his elementary school art class that he and classmates dug out of a creek near his school on Vancouver Island. Cameron thinks that at Kits he or other students may have made small animals out of the clay, but clay was not used often and the work was not fired. Kits art student Louise Williamson said she didn't see any clay at all used at Kits and said that perhaps it wasn't seen as being feasible as a leisure-time activity and therefore wasn't taught.

366 He was the sculptor who did the relief with figures representing various occupations that adorns the front entranceway at Van Tech.

I have not found a former Kits student able to describe any of this so-called craft work done in a regular art class at Kits around this time, although a variety of projects using three-dimensional materials were done then in some student-chosen clubs which were scheduled as a regular part of the school week. One former Kits student in the late 1920s (Howard), remembered being in the electrical club where she made and decorated a lamp (Howard). This included making a pleated, parchment shade, and decorating it with a geometrical design, and decorating the jam-jar base with coloured papers saved from the inside of envelopes. Also, small projects in metalwork, probably jewelry, were done in a club in the mid-1930s at Kits, as shown in a yearbook photograph merely labeled girls' metal work club.

Lettering

Lettering is the graphic communication of ideas using the alphabet that refers here to the hand lettering used in posters and other limited-number pieces. From the early-1920s to the early-1930s there were differing degrees of emphasis placed on lettering. In Blair's Canadian Drawing Series (1906) manual for the senior grade, there are a couple of pages of lettering samples that the student was to use as models in copying traditional Roman serif letters at a larger size. A page for scrollwork was to include lettering that would allow for other forms of lettering. While the Blair manual was still current in the early-1920s, there is no mention of lettering in the 1919 to 1923 Courses of study. Posters and advertising were listed, however, as applications of design, which couldn't be done without lettering. The 1924 B.C. art text stressed lettering and its use in advertising and other communications and provided examples and exercises. Beginning in the late 1920s, the Programme of studies for the applied arts and technical courses also stressed the need for competence in lettering. Thus was true of the Programme of studies governing the general high school art courses beginning in 1930. The 1933 Weston text did not put so much emphasis on lettering.

Lettering at Kits

Training in lettering was included at Kits for students up to and including Grade 10. It was intended to serve students' art needs in the home, business, and community and as a skill for the few art students who were to become commercial artists. Hamish Cameron's Grade 10 art notebook/sketchbook shows his study of monoline letters and numerals using the classic proportions of wide letters to narrow letters and condensed and expanded

368 The 1941 Programme of studies for the senior high schools includes under craft a parchment lampshade as a craft activity (p. 507) for Grade 11 students in the general art course thus validating this activity as an art activity despite being done in a club. It is also set out showing how to do this in Scott et al. (1924). Drawing and design (p. 157).
versions of those styles. The approach shown in his sketchbook was very much in keeping with structure of lettering the 1924 art education text that then proceeded to the spacing of headings, layout of pages, and the use of lettering in specific projects. Despite the Programme of studies that considered lettering as being one of five categories of art learning, Weston's 1933 text does not outline specific exercises for learning lettering, nor does it provide examples. Speedball manuals\textsuperscript{369} were readily available at the time and may have been the source for the various forms of lettering that appeared in Kits yearbooks (Gray). Peter Snelgrove\textsuperscript{370} explained that lettering had become an important part of work in commercial advertising. Hand-lettered headlines for magazines and advertisements were routinely called for; and these were skills that he had been introduced to at Kits. He commented, "There was big money to be made in lettering.... I got quite good at it.... [At Kits] we also learned something about lettering because of the posters we made, that sort of thing. So we were more or less familiar with type-faces and different styles of lettering we could use, or create, or invent." He said he was also taught calligraphy at Kits, either in the classes of Vito Cianci or Margaret Lewis. The hand lettering appearing in most of Kits' yearbooks is quite well done, as if Kits students had spent considerable time studying hand lettering, whether in class or on their own. Another Kits student stated, "I did buy books on lettering, which gave the rules for the spacing between the letters and also gave different styles of letters. The specific details were from books" (Blakstad).

**Lettering at Van Tech**

All texts written by Van Tech teachers or available to Van Tech students in their classes stressed the importance of lettering.\textsuperscript{371} Lettering was especially necessary for Van Tech students' expecting a future in the building trades, as they needed to be able to communicate clearly with others in such work. For this reason, lettering was a major part of the study of drafting, as a drafting project would be incomplete without its descriptive, architectural-type lettering to label the appropriate parts. Students were also exposed to the study of lettering in the printing courses in terms of spacing and principles of overall layout. Adequate lettering was needed if they were to communicate a design for page layout for a typesetter/printer to produce. The same principles were relevant to hand lettering as well. Jim Rimmer chose to do lettering often in his projects where he was free to decide on his own

\textsuperscript{369} The 1941 Programme of studies specifies (p. 508) "practice in free pen letters of different size (Speed-ball)."

\textsuperscript{370} An example of some outline lettering that Peter Snelgrove did for Kits' 1942 yearbook appears in Figure 3.7 showing an image of a cadet. It was one of a series of lettering samples of his work that he took to an interview that provided him his starting position as an apprentice in commercial advertising.

\textsuperscript{371} As in texts by Sinclair (1934); Miller (1930); Jones (1931); Wishart (1936); and Kyle (1931).
subject matter. He explained that his father loved to do lettering, especially lettering that looked like it had been carved out of stone inspired by a comic strip. Jim's own experimentation in lettering, in conjunction with training he got in lettering in Van Tech courses, contributed to his lifelong love of lettering and type design. Van Tech girls in the applied arts course learned lettering for the same reasons as Van Tech boys did, to serve in their future work.

**Industrial arts**

In the most simplistic terms, industrial arts involved design application problems for boys who were working in woodworking, metalworking, printing, drafting, and electricity.\textsuperscript{372} Industrial arts referred to that form of education that aimed to develop skills needed by workers in industry. The term *industrial arts* is in contrast to the terms *manual arts*, which was used to determine handwork activities undertaken in the elementary schools, and *technical training*, which was used in high schools, and *vocational work*, which was primarily beyond the high school years. Beginning in the 1927/28 school year there was a noticeable differentiation in the Programme of studies regarding industrial arts courses in regular high schools and at Van Tech even before moving into their new building, which was to subsequently give more adequate equipment and space to undertake more complex projects. The commitment to technical education at Van Tech and the better equipment, soon forthcoming, were probably reasons for the apparently more complex industrial arts projects that Van Tech students were able to undertake compared to those to which Kits students had access. Despite the name industrial arts, the subject areas allowed for handwork activities that weren't all undertaken in industry. The assumption was that the process of making some hand-made projects, despite not being made by hand in industry, would nevertheless teach design and the appreciation of related, machine-made versions of the object. The term industrial arts included processes of making or shaping objects out of metal and wood by hand whether decorative or simply utilitarian. Activities such as metalworking and woodworking and others that name the material misleadingly suggest a limited kind of knowledge pertaining only to the materials. This assumption ignores the design considerations that go into determining the form and enhancements in planning the object as well as the craftsmanship elements that underlie much learning that is not just relevant to the particular material but to making products in general, products which can be defined as art in themselves when art is defined in its broadest sense and according to what Ellen

\textsuperscript{372} Electricity is not discussed here as a result of having little art learning involved at Kits and Van Tech.
Dissanayake suggested regarding conferring upon an object a “specialness: a level or order different from the everyday.”

**Industrial arts at Van Tech**

The above definitions allow for the acknowledgement that much of the work done in Van Tech technical courses was in fact art or at least applied art. Objects created in woodworking and metalworking classes at Van Tech need also to be considered in terms of the aesthetic precepts of the time that produced them. Woodworking, for instance, whether parts of a building, furniture, or objects could involve enhancements and decoration including architectural or historical design ornamentation. The work undertaken in these technical subjects often drew from the same body of knowledge used elsewhere in art education, as at the art school in the application of ornamentation that was sometimes based on art-historical styles. In this way aspects of fine art were embedded into the curriculum that aimed to educate woodworkers and metalworkers.

One undated photograph (likely 1930s) of an exhibition of Van Tech School woodwork displays beautifully finished furniture that is enriched with adaptations of historic ornament from various periods. Some enhancements are based on floral motifs others on abstract designs suggestive of art nouveau. No two designs on the objects are alike suggesting they were designed by the students rather than being based on available patterns. Projects include chairs, tables, bench, armoire, buffet sideboard, as well as decoratively-treated doors and windows along with some more basic construction projects such as stairways and rafter joists. Some of the objects in wood show a high level of craftsmanship and include enhancements that indicate an attempt has been made to built something aesthetic into the object or added on to the object, as in keeping with applied art.

**Industrial arts at Kits**

My sample is not sufficient for me to be able to generalize regarding the level of involvement of students’ undertakings in industrial arts projects at Kits. However, amongst art students there seems to have been no recognition of art learning having been involved in industrial arts projects as they perceived them. According to one former student, who took industrial arts for three or four years at Kits, a course might consist of woodwork, metalwork, drafting, or electricity, and the class stayed with one of those subject areas for only a few months before changing to another area of focus, which was taught by another teacher. This suggests the approach was broad based but superficial. This person didn’t

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remember any emphasis on becoming competent in lettering, drawing, or design that was useful in other contexts. He thought simple projects were primarily undertaken based on instructions provided, rather than students drawing and designing what they intended to make. He remembered students making objects with simple shapes such as trays, cookie cutters, chisels and hammers and other tools. Asked specifically, he did not remember any one receiving any recognition for being artistic in being good at drafting, lettering, or production activities. This could have been partly because Kits would likely have had mainly the lower grades in industrial arts classes where these were required courses, unlike Van Tech students who would concentrate in at least one of the industrial arts subject areas and would stay with it through their senior years allowing for competency.

As with woodworking, metalworking involved the application of design principles in making projects in real materials, in this case metal. Metalworking was the process or technique of making or shaping objects out of metal. While these could be simply utilitarian, the metalwork of concern here has some decorative elements or enhancements. Photographs of applied art/industrial art from Van Tech from this period display items made of metal by Van Tech students featuring decorated, hammered metal objects, some with incised designs, some displaying geometric designs, some conventional floral motifs, some suggestive of art nouveau or historic ornament. Some of the projects in the photograph [Figure 4.4] of metalwork projects from Van Tech show that indeed both design and enhancements were involved in making the objects whether primarily utilitarian or decorative. Most are domestic items made from copper or brass. Some of these items are similar to those appearing in the de Lemos text Applied art.

In their most limited sense, metalwork and woodwork suggest a male, vocational, and working class orientation. Naming the material only to indicate the skill of metalworking and woodworking unfairly disregards any recognition of the general design elements involved and incorrectly presumes that there are no decorative aspects or considerations to bring the project to the level of arts and craft. Vases, picture frames, lanterns, lamps, candleholders, jewelry box, trays, a decorative plaque, clock cases, plant pot, decorative hinges and drawer pulls, letter openers, name plates, ashtrays, bowls, and tea pots were among the photographed exhibited pieces. If these objects were made out of

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Criticism 41, 40.

374 The 1919, 1921, and 1923 Courses of study for art mention piercing and metal repoussé as practical applications (p. 17).

375 These include bowls, lamps and vases, picture frames, gong set, trays, candle holder, decorative latches, lampshades, kettles, ashtrays, plaques with raised lettering including name plates, casing with clock, decorative relief plaques, paper knives, bookends, and chandlers.

376 Several of these are similar in approach to the hammered copper and brass objects depicted in de Lemos’s art text (1920/1933) entitled Applied art (pp. 304-306). This book was the first text listed
clay, no one would question their status in the realm of arts and crafts and should not question their status here. Also at Kits some girls participated in metalwork in clubs and in the process of their choosing metalwork voluntarily, out of interest, the subject seemed to receive elevated connotations. It is then no longer associated with being vocational and working class. Then it seems worthy of consideration as a hobby suggesting a leisure class activity such as jewelry making or the making of other small decorative objects. In this way metal work was not strictly gendered and limited to working class interests only.

Printing as a trade

Printing designated a branch of education that aimed to develop the skills needed by workers in the printing industry. In this context it involves page layout and the choice and setting of type as well as the actual printing. To my knowledge during the early years at the art school printing was not formally taught, although students at the art school did produce their own publication, The Paint Box (1926 to 1930). The students did the linoprints and other illustrations for the publication and likely designed the page layout; the typesetting and the printing may have been done off site. I am not aware of printing having been part of the industrial arts course at Kits prior to 1950. Silkscreen printing with a commercial approach was done in the huts in the context of the poster club in the late 1940s, but this approach to poster production for advertising student-related activities in the school was on a limited, non-commercial scale even though this activity trained the students in the same skills needed for commercial use as well as for more personal artistic ends.

The printing operations at Van Tech attempted to replicate those of commercial printing plants. Equipped with proper commercial equipment for setting metal type, doing presswork, and binding, allowed for the production of the yearbook, student printer’s manual, and advertisements to be done in the printing course. Up to 1947, the printing of the yearbook included printing linoblock images within typeset pages and engraved images (a photographic process that transferred an image done in pencil or ink to a raised metal surface that could be printed). Printing was offered as a course at Van Tech from 1921 onward when it was established in the leased premises with the minimal printing press facilities and space. Lewis and Mr. Reid were the long-term printing teachers. After 1928 printing was available as a course for both day and night students, so that it was available from Van Tech as both a pre-vocational and a vocational course attracting those over age for regular high school or those workers who were employed during the day.

under references in the two B. C. art textbooks (Scott et al. (1924). Drawing and design; Weston. (1933). Manual of drawing). I am accepting as art any projects that appear in those texts.
Conclusions

By the mid-1920s, a multitude of artmaking materials were known to B.C. teachers of art for their potential as artmaking media and for teaching art skills. There was an awareness of such media through pre-service and in-service training at the art school and at the summer school institutes. This is despite the fact that this wide range of media was not featured, certainly not emphasized, in the two provincially approved art texts. Nevertheless the wider range of media included in teachers' art training were included in the programmes of study for any teacher wanting the justification and having the knowledge and art budget to include other media in her or his high school art program. This arsenal of materials and skills allowed for drawing with many different media, painting in water-based paints, printmaking, pottery, basketry, and applied design, and three-dimensional work. Yet the effect of the financial restrictions due to Depression era conditions and the material restrictions during war years may have been the reason for the continued emphasis on drawing with a variety of media and painting in water-based paints as the main media and skills that dominated Kits art classrooms and Van Tech's stand-alone design/art courses.

The nature of the two schools determined the end goal of the education process in each school and thus the kind of art skills and media that were offered within the two schools. As a middle-class school, Kits aimed to provide art as a constructive and pleasurable hobby as well as to identify skilled artists to encourage them to consider some form of art involvement as a living. This orientation determined the kind of art learning that went on at the school. The same was true of Van Tech with its vocational goals affecting the kind of art learning available in the school. In Van Tech the end was to direct the student to become qualified tradesmen able to do their work neatly and communicate visually clearly. This training aimed to provide workers with skills for which there was a perceived demand to help their students to qualify for the trades in which the majority of the graduates were likely to make their living. This had social class implications in that technical art meant practical art and vocational training, training to make largely useful products, possibly products that the workers themselves wouldn't be able to afford but that would be bought by a more moneyed class. Providing industrial art in the schools attended by working class students gave them a satisfying outlet for their artistic impulses while intending to maintain existing social divisions. It was not attempting to encourage students to aspire beyond their expect role in society.

Limitations of school facilities (inadequate working areas, storage) and time constraints (short periods) also kept some media from being routinely used in art classrooms.
Many of the skills offered in the general art courses at Kits were similar to those available through training in industrial arts at Van Tech. Both groups of students learned lettering, various forms of drawing including perspective, design, and similar processes as in their study of linoprinting, page layout, poster making, etc. Art through the Grade 10 level at Kits was prescriptive, in keeping with the prescriptive art textbooks, and had aspects in common with drafting courses at Van Tech. Yet art students at Kits seem not to have considered drafting as done within industrial arts program as utilizing any art skills.

Kits and Van Tech had different purposes in teaching lettering. At Kits lettering was intended to serve students’ art needs in the home, business, and community and for the few art students who were to become commercial artists, lettering was perceived to be important in that time before press type and personal computers. Of all artist teachers at the art school, Grace Melvin was the one with whom pre-service Kits art teachers had the most contact. Her influence may be seen in Kits students’ interest in hand lettering based on historic manuscripts. At Van Tech a student needed to learn at least one adequate lettering style for use in his or her trade as well as know a considerable amount about lettering if intending to go into the printing trade. Van Tech girls in the applied arts course learned lettering for the same reasons as Van Tech boys did, to serve in their future work.

Drawing was central to Van Tech’s curriculum, but the forms of drawing were suitable for vocational uses. For instance timed sketches were a traditional art activity in an art school and were practiced at Kits suggesting an interest in an aesthetic approach to art learning. But these were not emphasized, if done at all, at Van Tech where drawing was aligned with an art for industry model. Also, drawing the figure at Van Tech seems to have been the weakest subject in drawing prior to the establishment of design or art as a separate subject. I conclude this deficiency came from a lack of training in depicting the figure while students focused on other aspects of drawing, such as depictions of constructed environments, which Van Tech students generally did very competently by comparison. While the weakness in depiction of the figure is apparent in most of the boys’ drawings appearing in the school’s yearbook, my limited evidence suggests figure drawings done by girls in the late 1940s appear to be competent, if not somewhat facile. This may be the result of drawing in the fashion design course that was available to them. In that course they drew clothing on fashion model-type figures as seen in Figure 4.5.

Drawing from memory and imagination does not seem to have been nourished at Van Tech where drawing was intended to serve practical ends, whereas in the senior grades at Kits such an approach was encouraged. Also, senior students at Kits were taught to use abstraction in their art presumably due to a fine art orientation contributed to by their teachers’ knowledge of what was transpiring in contemporary art in Europe. At Van Tech, on the other
hand, abstraction in art seems to have been disapproved of, if not actively discouraged. Perhaps this suggests a general disapproval of abstraction at this time by a working-class populace not aware of current trends in contemporary art. Also abstraction had little use in vocational drawing that needed to be precise and detailed enough as a preliminary stage to convey any necessary knowledge required in undertaking a project.

Cartooning at Kits and Van Tech reveal something of the nature of the schools as well as some issues regarding gender, class, and ethnicity. The most notable generalization about cartooning during this time period, in the student publications of these two schools, is that there are no cartoons done by girls. This is somewhat surprising in that females have been traditionally considered as “other,” which one might think would create a sensitivity to otherness, one of the distancing tactics that enables a cartoonist to see things from a different, and generally humourous, point of view compared to the view of majority. In 1937 five girls out of 23 students are shown in the photograph of Kits’ cartoon club; this suggests that some girls were interested in doing cartooning. This apparent lack of cartoons in Kits yearbooks by female students could have been a function of the selection process determining whose art those in charge were willing to include in the yearbooks. Also, at Van Tech, the cartoons of only a couple of students of visible minority got into the Van Tech yearbook. Their humour was generally not directed against the teachers, a subject for some other Van Tech student cartoonists but missing from the cartoons done at Kits. At Van Tech the assumption that the talented cartoonist would become an artist-printer served to limit such Van Tech students’ expectations in a way that was not evident at Kits. At Kits there was no necessity to see art skills and talent used only within a vocation, especially that of a printer. There was nothing to discourage Kits students from aspiring to being independent artists and designers or to simply enjoy their artmaking for their own sake as a hobby.

Teachers at Van Tech likely did not create any awareness of or approval of the sketchbook habit as they may have associated it with an art school orientation and assumed such sketching relevant only to someone aspiring to be a fine artist. Or keeping a sketchbook may have been considered a leisure-class, time-consuming, perhaps even self-indulgent, activity. Given that it is the boys at Kits that I am aware of keeping a sketchbook, there doesn’t seem to be a gender bias in the absence of such an activity at Van Tech. This is not to say that girls at Kits (or later at Van Tech) did not keep sketchbooks, females I interviewed just did not mention having done so, and I may not specifically have asked them if they did.

In the schools’ approaches to art learning, it is possible to see that at Van Tech there was some power in knowing but more power in doing. For instance the power in knowing can be seen as related to the knowledge of drawing in perspective and knowing how to indicate projections. But the end product, the ability to make something from a plan, was
more important than the drawing of an elevation or a plan in itself. At Van Tech knowing 
supported the doing, which was the main aim. At Van Tech where there was an 
amalgamation of theory and practice, practice was goal. At Kits there was significant power 
in knowing, more so than in doing. To know something for its own sake had value.

At Kits, basic art skills and media were significantly augmented by the activities 
offered through clubs within scheduled class times and during out-of-school times. 
There were generally more opportunities at Kits for extra-curricular art-related activities 
than there were at Van Tech. Again this goes back to the nature of the two schools with 
Kits being a neighbourhood school that was a community for living, not just for 
learning, whereas Van Tech was not a neighbourhood school and its goal of training 
future workers kept the focus off extra-curricular activities. Those activities at Van Tech 
that did provide additional art learning, the prime examples being the art club and the 
lino club, did so with the usual vocational orientation.

At Kits, one does wonder if gender issues kept the girls from having the full 
range of opportunities that the boys had. They seemed not to have full access to 
silkscreening even after this activity moved out of the poster-club hut into the classroom. 
Also they seemed to have had lesser roles in some of the extra-curricular activities 
offering opportunities for art learning. They seemed to have lesser representation in the 
art in the yearbooks. The poster club at times and the activities of the decorations 
committee were other examples. Instead of making huge banners involving painting on 
large rolls of paper, the girls decorated tables with flowers, for the mother/daughter tea, 
etc. Whereas at Van Tech, once the girls were allowed to integrate into the school rather 
than being restricted to their own isolated building and field, they found places for 
themselves in activities including art learning. By the late 1940s there were more girls on 
the production teams for the yearbooks than there were boys. And having just entered 
the school in 1941, the first yearbook cover that a girl contributed to was in 1943, 
whereas Kits girls' contributions to covers as well as other visuals in the yearbooks were 
minimal compared to the boys' input. Similarly at Van Tech some girls joined the lino 
club within the first year of being in the school, although in this time period they may 
not have done their lino work within the boy's circle. While students of Asian descent at 
Kits and Van Tech had a greater representation in any art activity compared to their 
representation in the general population at the schools, race doesn't appear to have been 
a significant factor any particular arts media or skill.

This study acknowledges the need to see the same skills when they are the same skills 
even though in different contexts. It is important to be able to see art learning where it is 
situated not just in traditional art courses. At Kits and Van Tech many instances showed that
the same art learning skills and activities existed in both schools but were acted out in different contexts. It is important to learn to see such activities for what they are and not discriminate against an activity due to assumptions of lost status by being related to vocational, so-called lower-class, interests, or from being done by females making the activities near invisible as a result of blinding gender bias. In short the influence of context as well the effect the nature of the school had a significant impact on the range of art skills and media existing at Kits and Van Tech and the opportunities available to engage in art learning within them.
CHAPTER SIX— Art Subject Matter at the Two Schools

The expansion of subject matter in student artmaking from the early existence of Kits and Van Tech from the 1920s to 1950 seems dramatic when compared with art images depicted in early British Columbia art textbooks. Those and other official sources primarily feature representations of basic shapes and simple objects, elements of nature, the rural landscape, historical architecture, and generic people from history. Images by Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School and Vancouver Technical School students appearing in their yearbooks and other publications and their extant artwork reveal a significantly broader range of subject matter as they reflect aspects of school life, students' activities, larger concerns of society, and approaches to subject matter promoted by Vancouver's art school, where many of their teachers studied or taught by the mid-1920s. The relevant approaches advocated at the art school, discussed in Chapter 5, are alluded to here as they relate to the particular topic.

One advantage to having spent some time with student publications of several Vancouver public schools before deciding to focus on the artmaking at Kits and Van Tech schools is that the shared, recurring subject matter of student artwork appearing in Vancouver high school yearbooks became obvious. Images in Kits and Van Tech annuals are generally representative of those found in the yearbooks of other schools. They differ primarily from other schools and each other in the proportion of the subjects and treatment of the subjects rather than the actual choice of subjects. I was able to compare the images from Kits yearbooks for a certain date with those of Van Tech for the same year. I was also able to compare images from both schools from within any given category. To a lesser extent I have included commentary about student art from the portfolios of work that I handled despite never having been able to bring together such art in any one place.

Tony Rogers (1983) has warned that student art pieces that remain after a passage of some years are likely to be exceptional examples of student artwork rather than the humdrum. The examples I am revealing here are more than 50 years old and they are not humdrum, however, this does not disturb me because these exceptional pieces show what was possible for students of those ages in those conditions. Art learning exercises, such as the study of perspective, colour, design, and techniques, appearing in extant artwork but not related to the yearbook images, were referred to in Chapter 5 on media and skills, and are not included here.

This chapter examines subject matter of student artwork from Kits and Van Tech in eight main categories. Some of these categories overlap or merge into each other, but are nevertheless helpful in considering the student artwork. The categories are as follows.

1. Depiction of the human figure
   a. the figure or parts of the figure
   b. school life and sports images
   c. generic people
   d. popular, notable, and historic personages
   e. exotic or art world figures

2. The phenomenon of First Nations imagery

3. A sense of place including school, emerging city, and surrounding areas of province

4. The presence of industry and technology

5. Representation of war

6. Landscape

7. Lettering

8. Botanical, animals, birds

In looking at these subjects as they are revealed in student images at Kits and Van Tech, I considered, where they seem relevant, issues of race, gender, and class as well as the relatedness of the images to texts, programmes of study, or teacher training especially at the art school.

1. Depiction of the human figure

Probably not surprisingly the depiction of the figure was the most common subject matter in yearbooks, but there were many approaches to the figure and figures were shown in various settings and engaged in a variety of activities in the yearbooks of Kits and Van Tech. These approaches tended to reflect the orientation of the school and therefore the kinds of images of figures produced at Van Tech were generally different from those produced at Kits.

The figure or parts of the figure

In thinking of learning to depict the human figure, one tends to think of the anatomical study of parts of the body, before 1900 traditionally drawn from casts, as well as timed sketches of people. According to my informants at Kits, there was no use made of plaster casts in art classes, at least after 1927, but apparently Kits art students did draw parts of the human body probably by using other students as models. One student from the early-to mid-1930s (William Basil) remembers drawing hands and arms in various positions while...
he was a student in Jack Shadbolt's class. He took these drawings home to discuss them with his aunt who was particularly interested in art. Drawing parts of the body in Shadbolt's class at Kits seems somewhat paradoxical because another of my interviewees faults Shadbolt for having thrown out the art school's skeleton that had been used in teaching drawing there. Shadbolt had turned his back on realism in order to promote what he saw as a more modern look. Yet the art school's Prospectus seems intent on dispelling the notion that this was happening to the detriment of good draftsmanship. It states "the work is modern yet not bizarre and still in keeping with good draftsmanship." Life drawing was included as a major focus in an art students' program. When Kits art teachers, Margaret Lewis, Vito Cianci and Shadbolt were studying at the art school in the mid- to late-1920s, life drawing, drawing from the skeleton, and drawing from casts were part of the programme.

William P. Weston's 1933 art education text devoted one page to depicting timed sketches of the figure that were to take three to 10 minutes. The accompanying comment advises students to "look for general mass, shape, omit detail." The purpose of the exercise was to aid in "better observation of the whole, with consequent relationship of parts." Quick or timed sketches were undertaken in the late 1940s at Kits, as evident in the extant classroom artwork of Hamish Cameron (Kits grad of 1950) done in Grade 10 or higher. His numerous quick sketches of fellow students capture on paper their essential pose or character, some with humour. Rolph Blakstad (Kits grad of 1947) confirmed this in saying, "We did do life drawing; we all served as models. ...Kids in loafers and sweater sets sitting on a stool. I don't know what we learned from [this]; my impression is that we learned more by emulating the illustrations made in magazines and books."

When I asked Van Tech interviewee Bob Banks (grad of 1941) about the source of their subject matter in depicting the figure in art classes, he responded, "We certainly didn't have live models unless they were fellow students. We may have done sketches of each other but I can't remember a particular instance. We were more often doing drawings from photographs or pictures." Jock Macdonald, one of Banks' art teachers, did not feature the

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380 Irene Alexander completed Grade 10 at Britannia and then attended Vancouver's art school starting the year before the war.
381 The Prospectus.
382 There are numerous references made by students to drawing from casts in issues of the art schools' student publication The Paint Box.
384 Hamish Cameron's classrooms drawings done on separate sheets of paper are undated whereas his intact, Grade 10 class sketchbook is dated 1948.
385 Cameron depicted one male student asleep on a stool, leaning against one table with feet up on another table with the caption "action in an art class."
figure much in his own art and may not have emphasized it in his teaching. Many of the portraits that Van Tech students did of particular people were done from photographs and are generally more competently done than their images of the full-length figure.

School life and sports images

Given the nature of the Kits’ yearbook as reflecting school life, as was the aim of most other Vancouver secondary school annuals, it is not surprising that the most common images in the yearbooks contain figures engaged in activities typical of those undertaken in the particular school year. Figures in Kits images are shown dancing at sock hops, playing soccer, baseball or other sports, they’re struggling to stay awake in class, typing, driving an overcrowded car, eating, sharing a soft drink at the local café, playing a musical instrument, photographing, painting a picture, refereeing, sporting a cadet uniform, acting in a play, serving as a crosswalk guard, lounging in the latest fad clothing, twirling a yo-yo, awaiting the outcome of a student council meeting, enjoying a cruise, and socializing outside of class, etc. Similar images reflecting student life appear in Van Tech yearbooks but these images appear to lesser degree there compared with other visuals in Van Tech annuals. The subjects of images showing figures that appear in the Kits and Van Tech yearbooks emphasize the differences between the two schools. For instance, one is reminded of the fact that Van Tech is not a neighbourhood school by the recurring images of students trying to get to school on time by various means of transportation, including bike, street car, or overcrowded car as the school was beyond convenient walking distance for most students. The vocational, job preparation mandate of Van Tech is suggested in a 1945 image headed “Tech Graduates” that shows a line of students waiting to receive their diploma while one student reads the jobs section of the newspaper. Also there is one female in that lineup with whom the nearby males are flirting rather than taking her presence for granted as would have been the case at Kits at the same time. One cartoon [Figure 5.12] records the arrival of the girls as something that had been long anticipated, as somewhat of a distraction, as cause for a begrudging comparison with life in the army where males and

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386 The landscape and Macdonald’s abstract “modalities” were his primary preoccupations up to the time he left Van Tech as seen in his biographies by Murray (1981); Reid (1969); and Žemans (1981).
387 Familiar portraits included Principal Sinclair; General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, Winston Churchill [Figure 2.2] and Arturo Toscanini [Figure 4.11].
388 As previously explained, Van Tech focused, to 1947, as much on promoting the school’s and the province’s image to Canadian and international technical schools as it did to revealing student life and student personalities in any particular year.
389 The most competently drawn of these is a cartoon by Banks (VT, 1939, p. 37).
390 As seen in a cartoon by Banks in the 1941 Van Tech yearbook, p. 52.
females were permitted to interact, something that was prohibited at Van Tech for a number of years after the girls’ arrival.

The more British nature of Van Tech, resulting from the administration’s attempt to run the school like a well-controlled British private school, is also revealed in a 1936 image showing prefects doing their duty. Another 1939 image revealing a British tradition shows the hazards of playing cricket. Presumably Van Tech was still playing cricket, as was Britannia High School, another school with a British orientation at the time. Britannia was the last school to give up cricket after there were no more schools to play against.\(^\text{391}\) I have no evidence of Kits’ students playing cricket.

Most of Kits’ sports figures are integrated into composite images featuring other school activities; there are few stand-alone depictions of particular sports figures. To my eye, these images appear to be of generic athletes rather than specific individual Kits’ students, and they are almost exclusively male. Many of Van Tech’s sports figures are generic, especially those that have been copied from photographs. One sports image in the 1943 Van Tech yearbook (VT, 1943, p. 9) shows a full-page discus thrower that one might think is merely a reproduction of the famous classical Greek discus thrower done only in the interest of copying a dramatic but relatively-simple image. In fact Henry Zitko (grad of 1944), who produced the linoblock, had just exceeded the high school record for discus throwing in a Vancouver inter-high track meet. When we talked he showed me the printed program for the track meet with his distances penciled in beside his name and the following year’s yearbook acknowledges his sports achievements.\(^\text{392}\) Thus the image for Zitko was a form of self expression,\(^\text{393}\) even if it might go unnoticed as such by most viewers.

In this category of the figure depicting student life is a 1947 Kits’ cartoon by Blakstad [Figure 6.1] that shows a female student’s embarrassment on entering a party inappropriately dressed. In diamond V-neck sweater, rolled up jeans, loafers, and socks, she is more casually dressed than the others attending. Blakstad, in a written interview stated he was doing this image for his gang. “This was us,” he stated. He shows his classmates’ middleclass status through their relatively stylish, dress-up clothing. The male students wear shirts, ties, and jackets, or suits with zoot suit trousers (draped), whereas the female students are in arm- and shoulder-revealing dresses. All are well groomed with attended-to hairdos. Blakstad agreed that the setting, an interior with potted palms, drapes, a framed picture, and wide stairs

\(^{391}\) Cocking, 1985.
\(^{392}\) Zitko’s discus thrower in VT 1943.
leading to a sunken living room or lounge, could be either a modern, private home or a rented space such as a hotel.

This image reveals something of gender and power relations among male and female high school classmates through their body language and gestures, which suggest some braggling and holding court (males) and gossiping and admonishing (females). The males look particularly self-assured, except for the date of the underdressed female. While appropriately dressed himself, he has a how could-you-be-so-stupid kind of look suggesting the insecurity of middleclass-ness then, which required to some extent maintaining appearances.

Despite the touch between the three females in the lower corner, which suggests their familiarity with each other, the students’ apparently heterosexual orientation is suggested through the pairing and exact numbers of males and females implying that they were attending the event as couples, some apparently having even received a corsage from their date. The students are noticeably all white with no suggestion of ethnic origins, although Blakstad has explained the sense of accepted, largely invisible or at least “subtly coloured” ethnicity’s as I’ve noted elsewhere, himself being of Icelandic descent. Again, not even one older figure appears (could there have been a parent, chaperone, or sponsor?), nor someone suggestive of a lower class (would there have been serving staff?), nor anyone physically challenged (not even on crutches due to a sports injury?). Again Kits yearbooks seem to suggest that Kits students were unable to see anyone even remotely “other” than their middleclass, able, adolescent selves. This cartoon looks unlike any image in a textbook. Instead the style suggests it could be straight out of New Yorker magazine, whereas Blakstad has denied any reliance on the New Yorker, having suggested it is often easier to look within one’s own circle, rather than to look to the outside for sources of subject matter.

An illustration on a section divider page in the 1948 Kits’ yearbook by Louise Williamson (grad of 1948) shows two couples [left hand image of Figure 2.4], a female and male in each, and suggests a sense of equality between the males and females, despite the particularly feminine clothing the girls are wearing—flowing skirts, blouses with fitted waistlines and flat shoes without socks (or perhaps with silk stockings, available after their scarcity during the war). A dancing, long-legged girl has elongated proportions as if conforming to the fashion drawing guideline designating the head being one-tenth the height of total figure. Yet there is greater lifelike animation in the two female figures. Williamson shows her ability here in drawing these figures and suggesting night and day activities, especially in depicting movement of dancers, and personalities of students. However, her

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393 In 1950 another student later integrated this image in a sports section divider also showing a stage and the stage masks of comedy and tragedy. This drawing is labeled “per danielsen.”
illustration of the totem pole on the cover that year makes elements of the totem pole look like stacked children's toys rather than showing the totem pole's significant form. Williamson admitted to having done the totem pole from memory of poles she had seen in Stanley Park, whereas she may have had source material for the dancing figures. If not, there were such couples around her; familiarity seems to have made for better drawing of the subject.

In the 1942 yearbook (published in June but prepared through the school year), there is an image of army cadets on a record as a dance floor [Figure 6.2] with a young man in a sailor outfit dancing contentedly while two other round-eyed cadets seem distraught as they wait for their turn to dance with the girl. This picture is by Hide Saito, who is acknowledging as having shared in the production of the visuals of that yearbook with another student. Presumably he is of Japanese descent. In a photograph in the yearbook he appears in a casual photograph (not a class picture or group photo) well-dressed in a shirt and tie and stylish overcoat looking notably more classy than any of the other nine students on the page. To me the photograph says that in that context (and at that moment) his race was irrelevant. As explained to me by one former Kits student, Dorothy Howard (student from 1927-31), her family’s concept of class was much more of a determinant in social interaction than was race. And this may have been the case here as it seems to be within the subtlety of this student’s art. It took me a moment to see that the sailor cadet dancing is probably of Japanese descent. Perhaps in some ways this is a self-portrait, as understated as it is, showing almost unnoticeable difference, yet any attempt at showing difference is otherwise absent in the Kits yearbook. Perhaps fitting in was a way of dealing with difference in race at Kits, whereas at Van Tech difference in race may have been more socially marked.

While there are in the Kits yearbooks a greater percentage of images focusing on school life than on any other subject, Van Tech also has its representation of these kinds of images. An interesting difference, however, is that in Kits’ images teachers are rarely depicted, whereas they appear routinely in the images of school life by Van Tech students. It is almost as if the apparently evolving youth culture of Kits was more pervasive there, as if Kits students felt that indeed this was their community, disregarding and rendering almost invisible anyone outside their age group. Even when senior students depicted those in the junior high grades there was a certain condescension making students at Kits in lower grades appear even younger than they surely were, about 10 years old rather than showing them as being in their early teens.
Van Tech’s noticeably hierarchical structure was revealed in its visual images. So while Van Tech’s yearbooks show varied images of students and former students, they also include teachers (usually identified by their initials) generally receiving the brunt of the jokes. Such images show teachers enforcing rules, revealing their habits and idiosyncrasies, directing Monday morning assemblies, winning the “xmas draw” for a turkey, prohibiting a student to take home the valued biscuit-cutter he’d made in sheet metal shop, catching students eating in the library or trying to get into the closed library, carpooling to school in overcrowded and unreliable cars, eating apples in front of drooling students on apple day, reviewing new (apparently hopeless) school cadets on parade, foiling students’ attempts to get out of class, surveying the excavation on the school grounds from the perspective of their various fascinations and subject orientations. Perhaps having cartoons laughing at teachers’ foibles attempted to suggest the yearbooks were controlled by students, something which seems not to have been the case.

Generic people

There are few figures in B.C.’s art texts, but those that appear are generic figures representing a specific type of person. Because most yearbook images by Kits’ students depict student activities, there are very few generic figures other than those representing students in those publications. One exception appears in the first yearbook (1931) where there is an image of a monk as a scribe writing at a podium (p. 29). This image serves as a heading for the literary section. Another image from that same yearbook depicts a genie. Several images of Roman legionnaires inspired by images from Latin classes and associated Latin texts appear in Stephen Ursulescu’s collection of his student artwork. An image in the 1940 yearbook shows a sailor splitting a rope into single strands, but this image appears to be an excuse to turn the length of rope into the popular rope writing appearing on the Sports and Activities section divider of the annual. Even the various versions of cadets during the war years do not qualify as simply generic people as they refer to students. In the depiction of the Fraser Valley flood by Cameron in his Grade 10 sketchbook [Figure 3.6], the figures tended to be more an expression of a particular experience rather than just the depiction of a figure type.

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394 In the 1941 Van Tech yearbook “old boys” are made to look silly with beard or bristles on their chin and no teeth, holding pipe or cane while still eagerly waiting to see the girls of the school walk past.  
395 Scott, et al. (1924) include a 19th century man, desert women, and a women’s profile with fashionable coiffure, p. 159; Weston (1933) includes three medieval figures p. 162, and a page of timed sketches of figures, p. 83.
Generic figures appear more often in Van Tech yearbooks and the student-produced printing manual (VTPM) than they do in Kits' yearbooks. According to some Van Tech classroom art that I have seen, images of generic people were often featured where one medium was being translated to another such as from a photograph to a drawing or to a linoblock print. Many images appear of men engaged in their livelihood. These include loggers, steelworkers, machinists, printers, a baker, airmail pilot, policeman, and a prospector, to name a few. This is not surprising given Van Tech's commitment to honouring labour in general and to promoting the kind of work resulting from Van Tech's technical training. The 1932 Van Tech yearbook cover shows an image of a steelworker in the light of a furnace forging steel objects. A description of the cover begins with the following verse:

Here rugged Labor, in fire's torrid blast,  
Toils on. Little heeds he dripping perspiration,  
For Labor's children must be nourished—  
And to repletion, Capital appeased.

This verse and various representations of physical labour of males and working class positions were assumed to be inevitable and were glamourized and depicted as manly. A 1933 image of printers at work at a medieval printing press shows in an historical setting the technology that forms the roots of an industry for which Van Tech students were training. The quiet air to this image suggests an attitude of respect for those undertaking this activity and a feeling of this being contemplative, worthwhile work. Other examples of Van Tech generic figures include a scientist, a Mountie (1945 cover), a pirate, homesteaders in covered wagon with man and horse, skiers, motorist, cowboy, female golfer, and an old woman.396

The latter two appear in the Van Tech student printer's manual; few females appear in Van Tech yearbooks prior to 1941 or, and any images of females seem to be generic rather than of specific girls or women. Perhaps this is not surprising as there were few females in the boys' midst for them to observe at the school prior to the girls' arrival.397 One languishing young woman appears in the annual the year the boys were anticipating the arrival of the girls the following September. This romantic-looking young woman with eyes closed, chin up, handkerchief or blossom in her hand, dreamily

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396 Scientist (1940, p. 39); pirate (1945, by John McKitch); homesteaders in covered wagon with man and horse (1945, n.p., by John McKitch); skiers, sailor, motorist, female golfer (printer's manual, p. 11); an old woman (entitled "Somebody's Mother" by George Obokata, printer's manual, p. 22); and cowboy (Printer's manual, p. 39).

397 There is a 1940 cartoon suggesting that Van Tech boys were late for school just so they had an excuse to go to the main office to have a female secretary fill out a tardy form for them.
leans against a wall covered with a flowering vine. Despite being in trousers with kerchief knotted around her neck, the boys referring to the image in the annual regretfully predict that she is not the type of girl who is likely to choose to attend a technical school.

You can depend on it, there won’t be any such seductive sirens as that illustrated allowed to wander around to distract boys from their studies. You will observe that she... has that glamorous look which we see in the movies. She is not the type that one would expect to see around a Technical School, though she does have on overalls. (1940)

After the girls arrived at the school, images of girls created by both girls and boys became more common, mostly as subjects depicting school life or as generic females (such as 1950s southern belles). Of course females are depicted in the fashion sketches of women’s clothing as evident in the drawings of Margaret Strathern [Figure 4.5].

Only one example of a Van Tech figure is included here revealing an aspect of race. It is an image by Sing Lim, one of Van Tech’s most original and accomplished student artists. I regret that he is not one of the students I interviewed. Lim graduated from Van Tech in 1935 and while he was not a printing major as a day student, seemingly the area of study of many of the student artists at Van Tech, he was a productive member of the linocutting and art clubs. After he graduated, he returned to take printing at Van Tech’s night school. Printing teacher Mr. Elliott wrote of how “Slim,” as he was familiarly known, was of service to the school in producing images for the yearbook and student printer’s manual, often arriving in the print shop only one minute after his classes were dismissed at the end-of-day.

Lim wrote and illustrated a three-page article for the 1936 Van Tech yearbook (pp. 38-40) entitled “A Visit to a Chinese Printshop” [Figure 6.3]. In it he compares the relative difficulty of setting type for printing in Chinese with its thousands of characters needing a type case the length of a “good-sized room” rather than just the few cases needed in setting type in English. In the process of clarifying the evolution of a few Chinese characters, he draws the characters’ original ideographs, more simplified versions of the character, the present character, and that character combined with another character to form a related word. He explains how the characters were originally made with a brush and how the Chinese people respect these ancient traditions preserving some of the ancient forms. He includes in the article several written Chinese characters that he has cut in linoblock including the symbol for good luck.

398 A five-colour linoblock print by Lim is used in Van Tech printer’s manual as an example of how to register the several blocks needed to create a multi-coloured image [Figure 4.6].
The respect and understanding that Lim's text promotes is not matched in his main illustration accompanying the article despite his graphic ability. Produced as a linoblock, Lim's image depicts a stereotyped Chinese printer looking confused by the plethora of characters in the type cases he is confronted with as he tries to find the character he is seeking. This printer seems not up to the task at hand. The image shows a negative stereotype of a buck-toothed, bespectacled, small, Chinese printer dressed in simple slip-on shoes, tight leggings, and tight-fitting cap. In first seeing this I felt it was drawn by someone unsympathetic to Chinese people. Was Lim so accustomed to seeing his people as objects of scorn through the eyes of the dominant culture that he did not question this image as he created it? Or was he merely willing to poke fun at a Chinese man in order to get his humourous point across regarding the difficulty of typesetting Chinese with its hundreds of different characters that can not be alphabetized in the way that type from Western alphabets can? He wrote, "You fellows who grumble when you cannot remember where a certain letter belongs in your type case, and throw it anywhere in the case rather than try and memorize the handful of little boxes which hold all your type, should visit a Chinese print shop" (p. 39).

As previously seen in Figure 5.9 where Sing portrayed an aspect of Chinese opera, he is willing to show some aspect of Chinese culture in Canada. For Lim being of Chinese descent seemed to be a major part of his identity and he was willing to share insight into some of his Chinese heritage through this student art and writing. The Van Tech yearbook noted that Lim worked for the Chinese Times, an English language newspaper for the Chinese community, beginning there while he was still at school. At that newspaper he was able to use some of his art skills. According to a book he later wrote and illustrated, for many years he owned his own printing business and, after selling that and retiring, he was able to return to his own art.

**Popular, notable, and historic personages**

Again because of the focus of Kits' yearbooks on student life, there are few or no images of popular or notable people in the annuals. Popular figures in Van Tech's yearbooks include actors in what were then well-recognized roles. Notable personages

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399 Sing Lim. (1979). *West Coast Chinese Boy* is his book on the subject written as an adult.
400 The 1936 yearbook states that after graduating from Van Tech he wrote and illustrated and did cartooning for the *Chinese Times* while working part time in the print shop.
401 This information on Lim is noted on the back flap of the dust cover of his book, *West Coast Chinese Boy* (1979).
402 The 1944 Van Tech yearbook carries an image of actor Jon Hall as Haroun el Reshid in a linoprint by J. McKitch. The 1937 Van Tech annual has an image of actor Clement May done by Mel Smith (p. 70).
include those of literary renown, and for Van Tech this includes images of Charles Dickens and Lord Byron\footnote{The linoblock of Charles Dickens is by Philip Pinel (VT, 1943, p. 8); the image of Lord Byron appears in Van Tech 1934 printer's manual (p. 9).} who are, not surprisingly, British. At the height of the World War II when Italy was an enemy to the Allied Forces, Van Tech's yearbook (VT, 1944, p. 36) carried an image of Arturo Toscanini [Figure 4.11]. The Italian-born conductor and musician. After serving as conductor to the main opera house in Italy, Toscanini spent much of his life in the United States. Van Tech's publishing of his image in 1944 served, I think, to confirm that repressive totalitarian regimes, such as those of Germany under Hitler and of Italy under Mussolini, rather than the individual people from those countries, were the enemy. At the beginning of the war, Mr. Sinclair had written that the enemies of the Allies had yet to be determined. Sinclair had not participated in the First World War and was possibly more open-minded than some other Van Tech teachers. Inclusion of this image of Toscanini can be seen as acknowledging the value of Italian culture and asserting the value of the arts in bridging differences.

Also relevant to publishing Toscanini's image is the fact that in the early-1940s Van Tech had been one of the first schools to make a course in music appreciation a requirement for all students. The 1940 yearbook, in commenting on a musical performance at their Christmas jamboree, states, "Despite their affectation of insensibility to things artistic, Tech boys really do appreciate music" (p. 59). This may have been part of the effort of Van Tech's administration to overcome the image of technically-trained or working-class people as being without culture. The Van Tech orchestra, set up soon after the school officially started in 1921, was apparently established for a similar reason. The image of conductor Toscanini lent support to this desire to be recognized for having some interest in music and culture. It seems significant that this image is of a performing artist while no image of a visual artist is included in any Van Tech yearbooks to 1950. This in keeping with the apparent attitude at Van Tech that while design and drawing were valued, for their role in technical work, art for its own sake was a mere nicety.

Another notable person whose image appeared in the 1944 yearbook was "Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill" in a linoblock by student Michael Kuznitzoff. Strong pro-British sentiment at the school, evident in Van Tech's push to have all the school's graduates join the war as soon as possible, makes inclusion of this image of Churchill not a surprise, considering Allied countries' appreciation of Churchill's leadership through the war.

Kits produced some images of historical people for the 1946 yearbook (entitled Thraex) that featured a Roman theme. Depicting Roman citizens and gladiators (all
males), these images to some extent suggest school life. The toga-clad Roman twirling a yo-yo makes this apparent. Classroom art by Kits student Stephen Ursulescu also featured Roman legionnaires and Roman ships as inspired by his Latin class. When I asked Blakstad about all the 1946 yearbook's images being male, many of which he had drawn, he suggested it probably had more to do with the kinds of images of Romans that they were exposed to in their books rather than any disregard for females. He stated,

Every year in junior high, History would start with Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, Classical Greece and Rome. There were plenty of illustrations in our history books of Roman legionnaires, there were films, the ones we saw in [Kits'] penny shows.... And there were comic strips.... So we had a good grounding in these things.... I don't think there were any social assumptions at that time if by that you mean a kind of male dominance. I really don't think so. We all did like the girls very much.

Rather than the Golden Age being the fascination at Van Tech, students there created many figures from the Middle Ages and shortly thereafter, not all of which depicted men working at printing presses, although this was a common image. I am not aware of the significance of St. George (of dragon fame) to Van Tech students, but this knight in medieval armour, including visor, with lance on a charging horse appeared several times over an extended period. Weston's 1933 art education text shows European figures labeled 13th, 14th, and 15th century that would seem to be the inspiration, if not the source, of some of the figures in the 1949 Van Tech yearbook. In this annual, whose art direction was by Margaret Strathern, pen and ink drawings of medieval figures in appropriately darkened interiors dominate any attempt to depict student life at the school. As in other yearbooks, depiction of student life had recently become the foremost aim of Van Tech's yearbooks. This change of focus coincided with the introduction of an enlarged format and altered printing process in 1947. But in the 1949 yearbook, the opportunity to showcase student artwork seemed to take precedence over the depiction of student life and earlier concerns. With the apparent abandonment of concerns of labour, it is interesting that this depiction of medieval life reveals a particularly stratified class system. Drawings of a queen, king, knights, ladies, scribes, entertainers, medieval servers and cooks took over the pages. They

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404 Many created by Blakstad.
405 As seen in his existing portfolio of high school art.
406 Except for the image of the discus thrower done by Zitko after breaking the discus throwing record for intercity athletics.
407 To Henry Zitko who produced his image of St. George for the cover of the 1943 yearbook, this image reminded him of his grandfather who had participated in the Boer War, where he had served on horseback, again making this a form of self expression unrecognized by others.
408 One linoprint of St. George by R. Beaton appears in the 1939 yearbook (p. 82); one on the cover of 1943 yearbook is by Henry Zitko.
seem to be there as art for arts sake. Depending upon one’s opinion as to the purpose of a yearbook and the degree to which the illustrations should support the text, reveal student life, or display students’ art talent, one might see these drawings as cluttered and distracting or visually rich.

**Exotic or art world figures**

Another category of figure appearing in student images is comprised of exotic or art world figures and again there are more of these appearing in the Van Tech student work than in those of Kits. The appearance of as art world figure occurred in Kits’ first annual (1931) but rarely happened again. This appears in the form of a heading title for debating and drama that is enhanced by an illustration in the style of Aubrey Beardsley, the English artist and illustrator known for his linear arabesque designs and dramatic use of stark black and white. This ink drawing depicts a decadent-looking, Beardsley-style woman, man, and a genie on a (magic?) carpet within a curtained, stage-like setting (KH, 1931, p. 35). With Vancouver students having apparently little or no contact with local commercial galleries and students generally having no access to large art galleries through travel, Kits’ students at this time were, I assume, relying on books and magazines as the source of such images. One student from the 1940s said he thought that the British Studio magazine was available in Kits’ art room, but I am uncertain as to which sources students in the early 1930s would have had access. By the mid-1930s, Kits’ library, as explained in Chapter 3, had a good selection of art books.

Given this allusion to the genie of Arabian folklore in this 1931 Kits image, it is interesting that Van Tech student Clarence Falk (student of the early-1930s), before 1934, produced an Arabian image also. This was of “Mohammed Reciting his ‘Revelations’ to his Assistants,” which was published in Van Tech’s printer’s manual (p. 14). This same student also contributed to the printer’s manual (p. viii) an image of a snake charmer who, like the other figures, is also in a turban suggesting a Muslim or Sikh person. This interest in the exotic may have been common in Vancouver at the time. In 1926 my mother received as a prize from her Sunday school, a metal keepsake in the form of a diminutive man in a turban sitting cross-legged on a carpet overshadowed by a large cauldron that actually holds a pincushion. For some years I had assumed the turban in that case suggested India. More recently I associated this image with the British presence in India suggesting race as

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As communicated to me by most of my interviewees. The Vancouver Art Gallery opened in the fall of 1931, but was perceived by Kits students as being a long streetcar ride downtown.

Mohammed is said to have shared his first revelations with the local Muslim people of Mecca, his birthplace, located on the Arabian Peninsula.
difference and as being presented as lesser, thus reinforcing Britain’s right to rule. As posited by John Willinsky in his text Learning to divide the world.

But perhaps my assumptions that this figure represents an Indian man and the intention of the representation have little to do with the figure if it represents a Muslim person rather than an Indian.

An example of a Van Tech figure that refers to the art world appears in Van Tech’s printer’s manual. The image is that of an Egyptian wall relief showing a woman in the traditional profile standing position.

2. The phenomenon of First Nations imagery

There are no examples of B.C. First Nations art in B.C.’s 1924 art text published the year before the Vancouver art school opened. In fact some of the examples of applied design (such as posters and commercial art) that Scott, Weston, and Judge provide in the text may well have been done prior to their arrival in Canada. Their images appear to be European in flavour and one refers specifically to Glasgow. But in the 1933 art text, Weston has included two examples of B.C. First Nations art. One shows the top portion of a pole, which Weston has labelled “Pacific Coast”; the other depicts an eagle mask labeled “Pacific Coast Indians”. These serve as a small introduction, but I believe it more likely was the art school’s commitment to developing designs based on indigenous art and the effect of this promotion on pre-service high school art teachers taking training there moved the fascination with First Nations images into the high schools.

After considerable research on B.C. First Nations art, French-Canadian anthropologist Marius Barbeau determined that Native people themselves would not be able to revive their disappearing art forms. Barbeau therefore felt it necessary to encourage other B.C. artists to use indigenous images as a starting point to try to create art forms and symbols that truly represented B.C. as a region. Art school teachers Grace Melvin and Jock Macdonald, enthusiastic newcomers to Canada from Britain, espoused this view in their teaching in the mid- to late-1920s when future Kits art teachers were studying there. These included Lewis, Cianci, and Shadbolt. Van Tech students were subsequently taught directly by Macdonald, and he may have passed on or at least supported the fascination with First Nations subject matter. Macdonald was a sponsor of the yearbook during his time at Van Tech.

At the art school, Melvin’s approach in her applied arts course, a required course for pre-service high school art teachers, was to encourage the incorporation of First Nations

\[\text{Weston, Manual of drawing (p. 163).}\]
symbols in design work and applied art. Perhaps the presence of so many First Nations symbols in Kits’ yearbooks is therefore not surprising. First Nations images frequently occur in Vancouver high school yearbooks from 1930 to 1950.

Jock Macdonald started with this same interest in utilizing First Nations symbols. Art school student Cianci, a future art teacher at Kits, while he was at art school, wrote that “Macdonald had us design for fabric, wallpaper, carpets, pottery and other forms of applied art... all with our beautiful native Indian designs as inspiration.” By the time that Macdonald arrived at Van Tech in September 1939 with the title design teacher, his commitment to painting had surpassed his interest in design and his best-known paintings depicted First Nations life, not First Nations symbols. On his arrival at Van Tech, he had in fact just completed (1938) a commission for a wall-size mural for the dining room of the Hotel Vancouver featuring a scene from a First Nation’s village.

Van Tech’s yearbook, apparently aiming to present B.C. to a beyond-province audience, routinely carried abridged stories of First Nations myths from 1926. But photographs of totem poles and of scenes of B.C. nature, rather than artwork, accompanied these stories. Van Tech teachers of design prior to Macdonald’s arrival in 1939 had not trained at the art school but had come up the ranks through practical work involving drafting and an applied focus such as woodworking or metal work, so they had not likely been exposed to the art school’s promotion of B.C. First Nations imagery. In the spring of 1939, however, student Banks produced a First Nations image to go along with a legend. Legends were already a recurring feature in the annual, although without an illustrative image. It seems likely that the subsequent inclusion of scenes of First Nations life that appeared in the yearbooks beginning in 1940 could relate to Macdonald’s influence either through his teaching art or through advising for the yearbook.

The two images that I have chosen to describe as examples make evident this difference in approach in images produced by Kits students, who focused on First Nations art and symbols, compared to those produced by Van Tech students, who preferred depicting First Nations’ life. The Kits images are silkscreens designed by Ursulescu [Figure 3.14] based on traditional First Nation symbols that he completed for the 1950 yearbook. The

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414 Cianci (1927). p. 5.
415 Principal James Sinclair, having been art master at King Edward after arriving in Canada from Scotland, had in fact done a four-colour linoprint for Van Tech’s 1926 cover that featured the mythical Thunder Bird, an emblem of success and good luck by the Indians (as explained in a write up in the 1936 yearbook). Other student-designed covers featuring First Nations images appeared in 1928 and 1931.
416 The 1939 image by Banks is a three-colour linoblock illustration entitled the Faithless Squaw shows a blind hunter and his wife in the woods with the deer they had just shot.

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Van Tech image, a three-colour linoprint by Banks for the 1941 yearbook, depicts an aspect of First Nations life [Figure 6.4], a subject he undertook several times in Van Tech yearbooks.

Beginning with the 1936-37 yearbook, Kits’ students decided to name their annual The Haida, and draw upon First Nations’ symbols and the stylistic devices of their art to enhance Kits’ yearbooks. By then the students had already organized a Jubilee Potlach (October 1935), the first of several potlatches (fundraisers involving fair-like activities and performances) and this one included a troupe of costumed “Indian dancers” that Shadbolt had taught.\textsuperscript{417} One does wonder what was the basis of Shadbolt’s knowledge. There is no acknowledgment in the yearbooks of the church and government’s banning of the potlatch or what it traditionally had included and meant to First Nations people. Also by then there was a mural in Kits’ main hall commemorating the potlatch.

The intention was to keep Haida as the name of the yearbook, but it did not appear again as the name until 1948. At that time it appeared with a doubled commitment to keep this as the annual’s name permanently and to have a Haida image on the cover. The 1948 cover shows a generic totem pole by Williamson, which she said she did from memory of the totem poles she had seen on occasion in Stanley Park. Understandably the 1949 and 1950 covers by Ursulescu, done from direct study of First Nations art, appear more authentic. Ursulescu’s 1950 cover is in fact a simplified, stronger, less cluttered revision of his 1949 cover. Ursulescu has pointed out where he took liberties for the sake of the design, such as adding spears, that he admitted aren’t indigenous to Haida peoples. Other detailed drawings of First Nations’ poles and designs utilizing the other First Nations’ symbols, decorate pages featuring the Valedictory (n. p.) and the Haida Staff (n. p.). These images reveal Ursulescu’s detailed knowledge of elements of First Nations’ art forms, which Kits students had no apparent concern about appropriating.

Elsewhere I have explained how Ursulescu came to that knowledge. Through study and examination of cedar boxes, hats, other carved objects, and prints, Ursulescu did drawings that he subsequently converted into sophisticated Native designs. This is how he designed the accomplished series of silkscreen prints that appear in the 1950 yearbook. The images there make use of bi-lateral forms and cross-sections, crescent shapes, ovids, eye shapes as joints, claw hands, and thick and thin curving equidistant lines that First Nations artists use to depict the salient, often exaggerated characteristics of an animal or human. Ursulescu’s First Nations silkscreen images and decorative elements on other pages include variations on birds (thunderbird, raven), the beaver, bear, frog, whale, totem poles, which
he explained to me were not direct copies of existing Haida art but composites using typical motifs he found in Haida art. An image of a raven introduced the literary section and a frog, the under graduate pages [Figure 3.14].

Kits' interest in First Nations' art, especially that from the Haida, "the name of the most intelligent and fearless tribe of Indians in British Columbia... [who] originated in the Queen Charlotte Islands" (1944, n. p.) seems to have been used indirectly, perhaps unconsciously, in lieu of having to acknowledge the First Nations people from the Khahtsahlano band in whose hunting grounds the school stood. While Native art symbols and stylistic approaches were used in Kits' school yearbooks as a way of producing something recognizable as being from the West Coast of Canada, art classes may have used the symbols, on the urging of their teachers, as a starting point for creating something new and homegrown. It may too have been impossible not to acknowledge the existence of First Nations' people, but students chose to keep First Nations' peoples at a distance rather than acknowledge and interrelate with those in their presence. They did this by choosing to focus on the distant Haida and their art, not the local band and the people themselves. In this way they could acknowledge First Nations people without having to acknowledge any issues of land claims. Ignoring First Nations people may have been as much an issue of class as ethnicity, as it seems to have been with my mother's family living in the district of Kitsilano at the time. In short, it seems that First Nations symbols and imagery were deemed worthy subjects for Kits' student artwork, but that did not translate into any bridging of cultural differences in their midst or initiating any exchanges beyond the portrait unveiling event.

The art of Van Tech on the other hand didn't seem to focus on the art of the First Nations people but their traditional way of life. Van Tech's 1941 image entitled "I Bring You the Spirit of Fire" [Figure 6.4] by Banks shows four First Nations figures sitting on the ground watching intently while the one male conjures up a small fire in their midst (VT, 1941, p. 11). As in this image, illustrations of First Nations myths are among the limited instances prior to the late 1940s that depict women in Van Tech yearbooks. Banks has included in this image a generic totem pole and communal house with center house pole.

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417 As shown in the video documentary (1995) on the 75-year history of Kits. The dancers appear to be in costumes made of kraft paper.
418 The 1948 yearbook explained this as their purpose in using these symbols, so that could be instantly recognizable as being from the West Coast of Canada (p. 59).
419 Even the 1928 Van Tech yearbook cover that shows a totem pole does so in a scene that also includes an Indian paddling a dugout canoe with trees and mountains as a backdrop.
420 From within a couple of years of the arrival of Principal White in September of 1944, there was an increasing number of female students on students' council and the editorial board of the yearbook.
behind the figures, and trees are beyond that. This could be a scene from a Tsimshian village, many of which have stood in northern British Columbia for thousands of years. In the yearbook this illustration accompanies the legend of Ne-kil-stlas, the Raven (p. 11), this bird being one of the four divisions to which the Tsimshian clans belong. Despite a romantic view of "Indianness" frozen in time, other Van Tech students' images in the publications include those of a Mohawk, a Blackfeet, unidentified "Young Chief" in elaborate feathered headdress, which at least suggest the existence of culturally diverse First Nations populations historically.

These figures in this linoprint by Banks are competently drawn, even though the figures seem to be floating somewhat rather than being firmly seated on the ground. Two are wearing traditional woven rain hats, another a fairly modest headdress, the fourth just a headband. Bank's image is at least as respectful to First Nations traditions as the text is. Banks explained that as a yearbook artist, he was presented with a text to illustrate and he then had to imagine what the Natives might have been like at the time described in the text. "I didn't learn directly from the Indians. They were absent from Van Tech," he said, as if realizing the implications of their being confined to residential schools for the first time. Banks explained that Walter Lanning, Tech's librarian in the late 1930s and early 40s, was very conscientious about First Nations art. Banks said Lanning had books there about "Chief Mungo Martin and John Innes, an English artist and wrote about First Nations lore." Banks also explained that he used to go to the city archives to do research. He commented "Major Matthews, Vancouver's original archivist, was an avid First Nations art collector."

Two years earlier when Banks contributed to the Van Tech yearbook his initial drawn image of First Nations people to accompany one of the myths, a pre-amble appeared that was signed "The Editor." It states, "So fairy-like in nature are some of the legends that The Vantech has, with universal acceptance, featured one each year" [VT, 1939, p.11]. Further comments attempt to be respectful while at the same time are patronizing in referring to First nations people as the "powerful 'natives' of our land" [quotes on natives in original] characterized as having "childlike faith." Such comments are reminiscent of sexist

and these involvement's seem to indicate an increased acceptance of girls in the school which in turn gave them a greater presence in the pages of the yearbooks.


422 Banks acknowledges his Van Tech experiences in doing such illustrations in Grades 11 and 12 as being the origin of his fascination with B.C.'s First Nation's peoples and their art and his love of B.C.'s history. He says he is embarrassed at looking at those images now and hopes he has learned a lot about First Nations people and their art since then. He has had commissions to depict, as book illustrations and even billboards, B.C.'s historical firsts such as Captain Vancouver's first meeting with indigenous people on Kitsilano Beach, etc., as well as other subjects relating to First Nations people and their art.

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attitudes that put women on a pedestal while rendering them less than fully participating agents of their own existence.

Similarly a 1944 linoprint image of a Blackfeet Chief is identified by a cutline explaining “the Blackfeet are a tribe of Algonquian Indians inhabiting the region...” but the sentence ends ungrammatically with the phrase “but now, like all our Indians, gathered on reservations” (p. 35). This seems a deliberate avoidance of having to state “they have been gathered,” or to allude to who has gathered them and for what reason. Yet in another yearbook (1940) an illustration of a Mohawk in tribal dress is accompanied by an article entitled “We Meet a Real Canadian” (p. 35). There is acknowledgment that Mohawks were a “tribe that claimed Canada as a home long before we, who claim to be Canadians, ever set foot in the land,” (p. 16). It seems as if Van Tech’s yearbooks at least on an objective level recognized the rights of First Nations people and their claim to the land despite any emotional reluctance to acknowledge living First Nations people or the historical or contemporary treatment of First Nations peoples in Canada.

In fact negative attitude to contemporary First Nations people is revealed in a commentary about 1931 Van Tech yearbook cover image by Milton Parsons that shows an an aboriginal paddling a dugout canoe pausing to look at a 19th century sailing ship with full-rigging entering Vancouver harbour. In describing the cover the editorial expresses regret that Vancouverites no longer see such ships, and it adds, “education and civilization have clothed the Siwash, and now he tears round in gasoline launches” (p. 53). This suggests that while the influence of white civilization may have westernized this aboriginal in one way, this change has concurrently caused rather purposeless, if not irresponsible, behaviour or activity. Yet in the same yearbook a photograph taken at approximately the same location, of the R.M.S. Empress of Canada outward bound, shows three individuals in a dugout. The accompanying cutline states, “The Indian of today has graduated [my italic] into the class of power-boat owner” (p. 70), as if the former ways of First Nations people are to be looked down on too. These two cutlines manage to suggest contrary but negative connotations in both situations—relating to First Nations people today and the past.

3. A sense of place

Images of the schools, emerging city, and surrounding areas of the province contribute to the sense of place making up this category of subject matter. The 1924 art education textbook (Scott, Weston, and Judge) does not provide any images to suggest that expressing one’s own environment could be a suitable subject for students’ artwork at that time. And

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423 This linoleum print by John McKitch is in the 1944 Van Tech yearbook (p. 35).

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Weston as single author in the 1933 textbook does not do much more on this subject. More typically he includes an image of a Norman keep (p. 159), a stronghold or the innermost fortified part of a castle, which continues the historical, European approach typical of these original B.C. art texts. But on a facing page there are there two images of modern city waterfronts with docked ships, suggesting Vancouver as a working port at that time. Whether as direct inspiration or coincidence, a Van Tech student has depicted in the 1946 yearbook what could be a Vancouver dock [Figure 6.5] amongst small images of war in pages honouring Van Tech staff and students participating in the war (pp. 23-32).

A 1920s B.C. provincial Programme of studies suggested that students depict a city skyline. This revealed the examiners were thinking firstly of city students. If didn’t happen to live in a city, this suggestion misses the whole point of promoting students’ consideration of their own environment as suitable subject matter. Such an approach, advocated at the art school from the mid-1920, provided a relatively new approach for B.C. art students that had the potential to create new subject matter in art beyond what had been in the art texts.

Perhaps the main evidence of Vancouver as an emerging city finding its place internationally as Canada’s main western port is evident in the building program that was taking place in the city from in the 1920s. Architecture in cement and stone and brick sported styles imitative of respected, traditional European architecture featuring columns and friezes and historic ornament. The architecture tried to express the optimism of the city striving to grow up and establish itself. The intent then was to try to suggest, through architecture, an optimism about the city’s future, an accumulation of capital, and a permanence424 to which the wooden community before Vancouver’s historic fire had not aspired.

The school building program was part of this endeavour to have architecture make a statement regarding an established city. Columns, rooflines, window treatments, and entranceways of many schools were beyond was what strictly necessary in terms of functionalism. As in most other Vancouver high schools started in the mid-1920s or later, this is evident in the new buildings of Kits and Van Tech. Understandably suitable as an identifying symbol, images of the schools appeared in their yearbooks more than other buildings. Kits school appeared on the cover of its yearbooks fairly often, whereas images of Van Tech were restricted to the inside pages of the yearbook. Many of these images of the schools were drawn by students, others were photographs taken by members of the camera clubs. The insularity of Kits’ students, in not generally seeing beyond the immediate world of

424 Harold Kalman, & John Roaf. (1978). Exploring Vancouver [architectural tours]. Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, shows buildings from this time period. Several extant buildings on Granville Street close to Pender and Hastings Street as well as the Hudson’s Bay building, Marine
their school, made this image of the school the obvious choice to represent Kits in this sense of place category. My first impulse in choosing an image for Van Tech in this category was to use an image of a smelter by a Van Tech student. I realized that as dramatic and competent the image of the smelter is, and as suggestive of Van Tech’s technical interest and early working-class orientation, the image is unique rather than representative. For this reason I have settled on a depiction of the exterior of Van Tech as well.

The pen and ink drawing [Figure 5.4] that appeared as title page in Kits 1930-31 yearbook is by Helen Reeve, from Class 8, presumably a Grade 8 student, which makes her younger than most student artists whose artwork is published in annuals. For this reason she probably would have had less training in drawing than yearbook artists who are generally from the senior grades. The image seems to reveal a pride in the up-to-date, modern school that Kits was at that point. This drawing suggests an overall dynamism and vitality largely as a result of the irradiating lines seeming to come from behind the building and the oversize bubble clouds, somewhat like steam, being propelled upwards. The school building is suggestively sitting on the top of the world, or a globe, that is ambiguous as to whether the land formations below are Canada or Great Britain, thus foregoing any needed to decide upon competing loyalties. While the depiction of the school and sky suggest an optimism, this is belied by the dead-looking horse floating upward. The apparently unobtainable ascent is in keeping with Principal King’s message in the yearbook. He suggested that due to the Depression, the world that the graduates would be going out into did not seem to offer very much. Trying to be positive he comments, “Periods of depression are not new. They are always followed by an advance and ascent and your opportunities well soon come” (p. 7). The first object of this image seems to be in creating an interesting pen and ink drawing rather than in depicting the school in an architecturally convincing rendering. Not managing basic perspective very well, this young student was unlikely to have been exposed to the kind of drafting training that enabled some Van Tech students to depict buildings well.

The accomplished pencil sketch of the exterior of Van Tech [Figure 1.2] appearing in the 1947 yearbook is unfortunately unidentified. It depicts the school as a solid, well-established, substantial building with flourishing vegetation and cars that suggest a sense of calm and well-

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Building, and the main library at the University of British Columbia are fine examples of Vancouver buildings from the 1920s.

425 The image of the smelter, by George Obokata, appears among the linoprint examples published in the student printer’s manual.

426 The Putman Weir report of five years earlier posited loyalty to both Canada and Britain as required for the kinds of citizens the school was trying to produce.

427 Perhaps it could have been done by student artist identified only as R.M. who did the pencil drawing on the 1947 cover of the large machinery [Figure 6.6], or perhaps it could have been by Bill
being. In this view the main entrance is shown to the far left while the shops and courtyard are to the far right. Less than two years after the end of the war, there is a relaxed sense of peace here. The person who has drawn this has a firm grasp of perspective, proportion, and drawing techniques such as shading and the architect’s approach to rendering greenery simply. Overall it bespeaks having been done by someone who has drafting training, and yet the drawing goes beyond the mere technical requirements of an elevation drawing. The cars too are competently drawn and reveal knowledge of particular makes of automobiles and suggest a certain degree of prosperity.

It is interesting that the student artist has chosen not to include the school’s towering smoke stack, perhaps assuming that it might diminish the building. It is not surprising that a Van Tech student has chosen not to include a human figure, as Van Tech students’ training in drawing the figure seems to have been deficient compared to other aspects of drawing they learned. Like the appearance of the school itself this image does not indicate that this is a technical school as opposed to an academic high school. Also in looking at this image, you see the school rather than a rendering of the school; the image provides a sense of place, a very specific place.

Many other images by Van Tech students provide a sense of place, specifically Vancouver and British Columbia, when the focus seems to be on something else. This includes the image of the Lion’s Gate Bridge that shows the harbour and mountains beyond; a tug plowing through the water reveals something of a nearby shoreline; and a Mountie seated in a wooded area gives a feeling of nearby forests. The same is true of images of loggers in stands of large trees giving a sense of British Columbia’s forests. As well as providing a sense of place, many of these images can be classified as technological subjects or landscape, crossing subject matter boundaries.

4. The presence of industry and technology

According to Bob Banks, most covers of Van Tech yearbooks were meant to depict some aspect of industry and technology, often relating to subjects offered at the school. For instance, when Banks depicted the Lion’s Gate Bridge (1939) he was in effect illustrating

Gibson who did a pencil drawing of a male student relaxing at the doorstep of the school, also in the 1947 yearbook.

The 1939 image by Bob Banks of the Lion’s Gate Bridge appeared just a few months after the bridge opened in November of 1938; the pencil drawing of a tug close to the water’s edge [Figure 5.7] was drawn by Lavern Ancil and appeared in the 1949 yearbook; the 1945 image of an RCMP was drawn by Jack McKeitch.

The accompanying commentary explaining that “this cover shows a ‘58er panning for gold,” also confirms another intention: “[This is] in keeping with our policy of featuring different departments of our school“ (VT, p. 32b).
an achievement in civil engineering, the Lion’s Gate at that time being the longest span in
the British Empire (p. 51). When Banks did the 1940 cover featuring a five-colour linoprint
showing a prospector [Figure 4.13] that image was to suggest the first stage of mining. Often
an image would also appear in the yearbook to herald the introduction of a new course. To
announce the introduction of the cooking course, a cartoon by Sing Lim showed a student
cook questioning whether he had mixed up his recipe for lemon sauce with that for cement.
When a lumbering course was being described, a double headed axe and a tree (1946, p. 54)
served as a simple visual marker. When an image of a machinist in protective glasses was
superimposed on a sports page, making the text almost unreadable, some other purpose
was likely being served, perhaps merely reminding students that they needed to wear safety
glasses, etc. These images reinforce Van Tech’s technical orientation as a school; such images
did not appear in Kits’ yearbooks.

The 1924 art education text has a page of small images intending to illustrate
principles of harmony in line and form that include images of bridges and historic
architectural structures (p. 89). These are as close to anything relating to industry and
technology that the textbook carries. The 1933 text has not much more to offer in this regard
other than two historic sailing boats as well as a 1931 plane and a blimp labeled as “air
transport” and “aviation.” Several historic and modern ships and airplanes appear in Van
Tech’s linoblock printer’s manual and yearbooks. Shops courses at times did enable
students to design and build boats, canoes and, in one case, a working glider.430 Images of
ships and planes appearing in the Van Tech publications431 of which there are many, are as
well drawn as any in Weston’s text, which in turn may have been based on this popular
subject in the American de Lemos texts (1920 and 1933). At least one Kits’ student had a
fascination with this subject too. A Kits student of the late 1940s (Ursulescu) showed me
images in his portfolio of art he’d done while at Kits. They included rigged-sailing ships
apparently drawn from memory, some of specific vessels he’d seen in the movies. He tried
to reassure me that this was easy once you knew the basics of rigging and where things
were on a ship. Then noting the differences was all that was needed to depict a specific
ship.432 In Kits’ yearbooks, ships are one of the few images that are included that relate to
technology but all of them serve as a prop or setting for student activities.433

430 The working glider plane was described to me by Zitko as a project that several students
started at Van Tech and then took to UBC to finish.
431 These include ships by Falk, Obokata, Cocker, and others.
432 Perhaps with this ability, it is not surprising that this Kits student became a career draftsman.
433 This includes a rigged sailing ship in the 1947 yearbook, The Gosling, where staff of the
yearbook are depicted as being the crew of the ship (image by Blakstad).
One such image drawn in ink is of a tugboat [Figure 3.15] named the Kitsilano that appears in the 1949 yearbook (n. p.). The tug is apparently being used to ensure the privacy of a student council meeting. The door has a sign on it stating “Student council in session” and the one and only girl, in a dress, sits reading a movie magazine while guarding the door, a tattered Union Jack flag flying overhead. A barefoot male apparently interested in finding out what is going on in the meeting, leans on the handle of the brush he is using to scrub the deck, but a hand with a cigarette is casually draped out the portal making this impossible, and suggesting that below deck at least one person is smoking. For some reason a cook with galley cleaver is hiding behind the smoke stacking trying to sneak up on seagull. A disproportionately large youth in the fad-at-the-time saddle shoes is at the wheel steering with apparent vigor but without heeding where he is going. He seems about to run aground on the rocks off Belcarra Park.

Several other cartoon characters of young boys are shown engaged in various activities, a boy fishing off the back of the tug, a boy leaning over the starboard edge apparently looking into the depths, the rope from the winch between his legs suggesting it wouldn’t take much to have him go head first into the water. One child, precariously draped around the railing, is clubbing the spotlight trying to smash it. Another child is poised to put a fire axe to the deck. Such highjinks of the young boys (looking like elementary age children) are apparently meant to represent the activities of the undergrads, as identified in the rope writing. While this image suggests ageism as a condescending attitude to the younger students in the school, the text accompanying this image does not reinforce this. It refers to the undergrads as being unconquerable, perhaps suggesting that they were now secure enough in their accomplishments to be laughed at. Their accomplishments are mentioned as being in drama, orchestra, choirs, singing, acting, art, literature, football, basketball, baseball, and grass-hockey. As late as the 1950 yearbook, the designation on the covers or title pages of the yearbook indicated Kitsilano High Schools, in the plural. This confirms the lingering concept that this was still two separate schools—a junior high and a senior high.

This boat image by Kits student Ian Macintosh, who went on to study and teacher at the art school, is not drawn as a serious working vessel as it might be by Van Tech students knowing drafting and understanding the mechanical functioning of such a water vessel. Instead this boat is a stage set upon which the undergrads at Kits act out aspects of their lives. This is not to say the boat isn’t well drawn; the stairs and decking reveal competent

\[\text{434} \text{ Drawing a vessel based on blueprints only and making the boat appear as if it was already in existence and in the water was one of the first commissions Van Tech student Banks received; he has had several similar commissions of that type since then.}\]
perspective, but it is not imbued with the respect of a working ship the way that it likely would be if it were drawn by a Van Tech drafting student. The intention is different and again reflects the kind of schools that Kits was at this time, a community for living rather than a site for training for one’s future work, as more relevant to Van Tech.

Despite all the ships drawn by Van Tech students, I have chosen another image to represent technology and industry for Van Tech. It is the image on the 1947 yearbook cover [Figure 6.6] that reveals exceptional skill in drawing, appearing to be either the engine room of a large ship or perhaps the inside of a hydroelectric plant. The drawing is identified only as being by R. M., and there is no yearbook listing naming the artists at Van Tech as is done in Kits’ annuals. This drawing depicts huge cogwheels, shafts, tower, access stairs and platforms with railings, ceiling rafters, vent, and fan belt, along with a workman in coveralls, hat, and protective goggles or visor overlooking this massive machinery. In this case the male worker looks quite comfortable with such machinery, not enslaved or dominated by it. This worker looks as if he is up to the tasks of maintaining this machinery and making it work. The equipment is impressively drawn and looks monumental in what is apparently its non-working state, when all these parts are at rest rather than rotating with deafening noise. To me this piece represents a major achievement in student drawing particularly in terms of a goal that Shadbolt had articulated in an earlier art school publication regarding the need for form, not just shape-making:

We need draughtsmen in Canada—artists who have a precise structural knowledge of our forms—above all, those who can perceive pictorially organic relationships between things. We need, in short, minds that penetrate to the very heart of environment to reveal its meaning and hence its deep beauty. (Shadbolt. (1940). Behind the Palette, n. p.)

The image demonstrates this goal in a highly successful manner. Yet again, in a Van Tech image, the drawing of the figure is the weakest part of the picture. The proportions of the man inspecting the equipment are not convincing as he is shown as having an elongated body and short legs despite standing firmly on the lookout platform. The application of the lettering is also a disappointment in that Van Tech students were well trained in lettering, lettering being taught in their drafting courses and also utilized in some of their applied courses. With the viewer’s point of view of the machinery being from the lower right looking upward, the lettering too should have been from this point of view rather than being seen from the left, as suggested by the dark shadows on the left. Perhaps another student did the lettering without seeing the drawing that it was to accompany. While the style of lettering is suitable enough, it does look as if it was done separately and then just stuck into position on the drawing.
A partial wrap-around cover accompanies the image of the machinery; this shows a drafting plan, with lettered labels. This blueprint serves as the back cover and extends to the left portion of the front. The drafting plan does not seem relate directly to the image of the machine it accompanies. Again the overall image is quite different than the depiction of a Kits’ tug, and that difference reveals the mandate of Van Tech to prepare students for a future life work in a technical or industrial situation. The man as worker here contrasts with the evolving youth culture as suggested by the young people and children on the Kits’ tug who are at leisure and free to behave with little regard for their future work. This is acknowledged in a statement by principal James Gordon: “You will realize that [Kits] school served you not only because you were a prospective adult or citizen, but because you were a young person who, as such, had needs of your own” (1939, p. 4).

5. Representation of war

During the war, Kits’ apparent youth culture seemed to have prevailed despite a lot of fundraising and greater seriousness, whereas Van Tech’s students, confronted with a sense of reality of the war as a result of servicemen training in the basement of their school, seem to have experienced a shortened adolescence. In the 1941 farewell to graduates, Kits’ principal James Gordon, stated “Our war efforts.... have made school life more interesting and purposeful, and perhaps more serious.... In your graduating year you were able, in the midst of the world’s agony, to put new life into the old school” (p. 3). As a comparison, an article entitled “On Growing Up” that appeared in Van Tech’s 1946 yearbook, signed D. Stone stated, “Now is the time to awaken these people to the dangers of their complacency, which has been called by many thinking men ‘the worst enemy our democracy can have’ ... Remember, we won't have time to practice being adults after school days are over; the time to grow up is now” (n. p.).

Cadets were a main war-related involvement for students at both Kits and Van Tech. Besides learning to march in school battalions, students practiced rifle drill and signaling, learned navigation and the theory of flight, how to read maps and identify ships and aircraft, and how to do knots and splices. Not surprisingly images of cadets in their uniforms appeared in the artwork in the yearbooks of both Kits and Van Tech. The difference was that at Kits, students’ depiction of the war didn’t seem to go beyond images of cadets and did not seem to indicate some wider implications of war. Like Van Tech, Kits suffered its losses of life in the war. Kits’ yearbook gives one left-hand page to list 140 students, former students, and

435 D. Stone, noted as editor-in-chief, presumably was a student at this time; there is no one on staff with that name.

436 Kits’ 1942 yearbook and several Van Tech sources.

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teachers who had been killed in the war, but the heading to this list gives thanks to the people helping to do the research to come up with the names for the list, rather than acknowledging those who gave up their life and the happiness and welfare of their family to save our way of life. Van Tech committed 10 pages of the 1946 yearbook to an honour roll naming the 1,409 Van Tech teachers, students, and former students who had served in the Armed Forces during the war (pp. 23-32). This list included those who had been killed or were missing in action, those who had been prisoners of war, and those who had been decorated. Small drawings representing the destruction and devastation of the war highlight each page suggesting what the dead and injured soldiers and returned men had endured on behalf of those at home.

The Kits' 1942 yearbook was renamed The Cadet (and retained that name through 1945) and section dividers that year and others, featured images of cadets. The images, by Peter Snelgrove [Figure 3.7] and Hide Saito [Figure 6.2] (students in the early-1940s) depict young cadets and reveal the influence of comic books suggesting that for some of Kits' students the war was not seen as a threatening reality. Snelgrove's images carry various signs with outline lettering that identifies the various sections of the yearbook. Even images of an upright, handsome, more serious looking cadet superimposed over an image of the school, variations of which appeared on the 1942, 1943, and 1944 yearbook covers, show him as pleased to be sporting his new, spotless uniform rather than worrying about the war as an immediate personal threat.

Van Tech also used the image of cadets, a male and a female, on one yearbook cover (1941), indicating the arrival of the girls at the school and suggesting a surprising equality between the sexes. Other wartime covers depict adult war-related activities. The 1943 cover includes generic cameos of the faces not of student cadets but of men of the armed forces: a sailor, a soldier, an airman, and a marine. The 1942 cover depicts the first war ship to be built on Vancouver's Burrard Inlet; it is on a rough, apparently cold sea such as the North Atlantic, with planes flying overhead. However, it is the image on the 1944 yearbook cover that I would like to focus on as it is one of many planes by students appearing in Van Tech's yearbook and student printer's manual. This image of a mechanic fixing a warplane [Figure 4.12] crosses the subject matter categories of technology and the war. This linoprint in several colours is by Zitko. He explained to me that he had submitted several of his prints of airplanes to be considered for inclusion in the yearbook, but Elliott had told him that they were too abstract and asked him to come up with a more simplified version. The one depicted here, Zitko explained, is a composite of several planes rather than being a portrait of any particular aircraft. The figure of the mechanic is not a student but one of the many men from the armed forces who were training at Van Tech during the war. The yearbook commented that at the same time this image graphically illustrates the "prominent part taken by former Tech
students in the activities of the Royal Canadian Art Force.... Both as fliers and as members of ground crews, these one-time students of our School may be found in every theatre of war, in every field of training. According to all records, they are giving a very fine account of themselves” (p. 34). The text describing the cover image also states the design “ably depicts such activity, stressing the fact that efficient ground crew men are an indispensable adjunct to pilots, navigators, and gun crew“ (p. 34). Such commentary seemed aimed to encourage Van Tech students’ commitment to participate in the war as soon as they graduated, and as such served as a form of propaganda.

Again, compared to the image of the plane, the figure in this image (p. 34) is deficient as the body of the mechanic is disproportionately long for the length of his legs. Also this figure seems to be floating on the page rather than having his feet firmly planted on the ground. Zitko did not take art or design as a stand-alone course at Van Tech, therefore he was unlikely to have had any training in drawing the figure. He said that some students were committed to designing and cutting linoblocks, but as members of the linocutting club, he and some friends, “just did it for kicks.” Overall, based on images in the yearbooks, it seems that the students at Van Tech were more aware of the realities of war than were students from Kits and other West-side schools, many of whom were relying on popular images from the media, including comics, as sources and thus, like the sources, tending to glorify the aspects of heroic action, such as British Spitfires and other fighter planes doing fancy manoeuvres in the air to avoid enemy fire while ignoring more grounded aspects of the destruction of the war.

6. Landscape

Many images revealing landscape could be placed in more than one category, as with other overlapping subject categories, as shown relating to technology and industry and the war. This is especially true as pure landscape was generally not a subject featured in Vancouver school yearbooks or student publications, despite being a recognized subject in B.C.’s art textbooks and done in regular art classes. Yet concepts of landscape are revealed in images published in Van Tech publications, even though the images seem to focus on something else, and examples of landscape exist in Kits’ extant student artwork. In a Van Tech yearbook an autumn scene of a stream, for instance, is explained in terms of the

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437 At the visual art inter-school competitions organized as part of the MacMillan Club Festival, three Kits students took among top honours for landscapes they did (1949 yearbook, n. p.).

438 One of the few pure landscapes published in a Van Tech yearbook was of a mountain near Mount Baker that Falk did in the early-1930s, based on a photograph by Van Tech teacher Mr. Fraser. Falk’s linoprint was published in the 1935 yearbook, p. 57. The few others do not depict the student’s environment or nearby land but rather have been produced from other printed sources including advertisements.

439 As seen in the art collections of Ursulescu, Cameron, and Blakstad.
spawning habits of salmon in a stream in this type of B.C. forest (1930, p. 39), salmon fishing being a major industry in the province. A 1927 Van Tech yearbook cover depicting a landscape of looking through trees and past shrubbery to a house in the distance and a body of water in the backdrop seems more like an image from the 1933 B.C. art textbook, with its traditional, British-derived images, or an image from the American de Lemos text (p. 207) that was first published in 1920,440 than a scene derived from personal knowledge of local vistas. This 1927 image is one of the last derivative landscape images to appear in the Van Tech yearbooks although some appear in the student printer's manual of 1934. Other images seem to look directly to B.C.'s environment in determining subject matter in student illustration.

Two images of loggers in B.C. forests appeared in Van Tech's yearbooks nine years apart. The first one appeared as the cover of the 1929 yearbook and the second on the cover of the 1937 yearbook [Figure 6.7]. The earlier image, signed T. Grenfels, shows three loggers dwarfed by the comparatively massive trees backed by the ocean and snow-topped mountains. The image reflects the frontier spirit of the Vancouver area. The logger who has scaled a tree, axe in hand, to a height of about nine metres above the ground, looks as if he will never make a dint in the trunk, the act of chopping down the tree seeming to be a near-impossible task. The scene beyond the water's edge shows a tug pulling a long log boom. The forest on the opposite shore reaches down to the waterline. With both the depiction of the three loggers and the tugboat, there is a sense of the landscape overwhelming man. Also human activities at this point seem ecologically insignificant to the well being of the land.

The later image, by E. P. Wilson, shows loggers in a forest in a snow scene where the men, heads down apparently in conversation, axes in hand, make their way through the forest with relative ease. One logger is shown already at the task of felling a tree. He vigorously swings his axe at the trunk. One gets the sense from the progress he has already made that it will only take a few minutes to single-handedly fell this tree.441 In both scenes one gets a sense of B.C. forests. In the earlier image that includes some seaside landscape as well, possibly at the entrance of the Vancouver Harbour,442 one gets the sense of the land without the presence of

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440 This popular text, first published in 1920 and re-issued in 1933, entitled Applied art: Drawing, painting, design and handicraft was routinely listed in the bibliographies of the B.C. Programmes of study and is among the first texts listed in the two B.C. art education texts.

441 It is interesting that this 1937 image is described in ecological terms by stating, "Our fair province is the home of big trees—not even excelled by the famous Redwoods of California and Oregon. Our forests are rapidly becoming depleted; unless conservation methods are more strictly enforced, our children will never enjoy the beauty of God's wonderful creation, a 'cathedral' tree." This commentary adds that "the largest tree ever known in the world was felled in North Vancouver about thirty years ago. This really magnificent specimen stood 418 feet in height and had a diameter of 25 feet—it fell, a victim of commercial greed" (p. 67).

442 If this image had accounted for the fact that it would appear to be backwards once printed, its source as a Vancouver scene would probably be more obvious. It seems to be a scene from Prospect Point at the entrance to the Vancouver Harbour looking toward the North Shore before
the figures interacting with the land. But despite the accompanying caution about the need to preserve the biggest trees for human appreciation, rather than ecological need, Van Tech sees the land primarily as a resource that can be transformed via technology to serve humans such as for building material or for fuel, rather than as an animal habitat.

Based on a survey of Kits’ yearbooks one would conclude that landscape as an art subject did not exist, rarely even to serve as a stage-set for the activities of Kits students. But landscape was done in Kits art classes and in the sketchbooks that art students kept while they were students at Kits. Ursulescu’s paintings in his portfolio are of landscape and the drawings in his sketchbook, done during in his final years at Kits, document beach scenes and houses from Wreck Beach to Jericho and other areas of Kitsilano. Cameron’s portfolio of paintings contains landscape images and his Grade 10 sketchbook contains drawings of the views of houses and trees in Kitsilano. Blakstad’s drawings and paintings done while at Kits contain elements of landscape but they seem not to be sketches of local scenes but instead were inspired by European book illustration, though they were done from memory and have personal meaning to him. An example of Cameron’s watercolour scenes undertaken in Miss Macdonald’s art classes at Kits in the late-1940s depicts trees that were done primarily as exercises providing a vague reference to being in a setting of hills [Figure 3.5]. The aim seems to have been to suggest different local tree types. They are depicted with simple brush strokes rather than being detailed to depict specific species as might have been done as part of a nature study. This is in keeping with a page of trees in Weston’s 1933 art text. Weston provided several examples of local tree shapes to show how various tree shapes differ. Cameron’s are different species than those of Weston so the images are not copies.

Some landscapes of Kits’ students, done from observation or done in response to music, suggest that some images focus on pure nature, as if landscape as untouched nature existed to help the viewer appreciate nature aesthetically. This is more in keeping with traditional European 19th and 20th landscape painting that was often painted without any reference to the existence of people, animals, or civilization, suggesting an anonymous, objective observer. Paintings and drawings of generalized landscape done from observing nature suggest a middle-class approach of traditional Sunday amateur painters who painted nature for pure enjoyment with no other motive than to observe nature for its own sake and to have a pleasant picture as a reminder of the experience. Such images speak of a class condition wherein people had the leisure to paint for their own enjoyment and had the capacity to get out into nature to make such an image. The concept of producing an art

the Lion’s Gate Bridge was built. It is noteworthy that a high school student artist could find meaningful subject matter in his own environment.

443 As alluded to in describing one of his paintings in Chapter 5.

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indigenous to B.C., as recommended to pre-service art teachers training at the art school, was undoubtedly passed on to Kits students as a worthwhile aim. Some of Hamish’s images revealing aspects of nature were done from observation when Miss Macdonald took her art class outside to draw around the school and in the adjacent park. I have no knowledge of any Van Tech art teacher during the time covered by this study taking a class outside to sketch.

7. Lettering

Hand lettering was extremely important as a skill prior to 1950 in a way that it has not been since the invention of press type (such as Letraset) and computer typesetting on the personal computer. Lettering “is a branch of design which will be practiced by most pupils in after life,” states the 1933 art text by Weston. Chapter 5 describes the context in which lettering was taught in Kits and Van Tech. In looking at lettering in terms of subject matter, I just wish to consider here the styles of lettering that were being done at Kits and Van Tech prior to 1950.

At both Kits and Van Tech the study of lettering began with the mastery of monoline capitals and lower case letters that were studied for the basic structure and spacing of letters. This is very much in keeping with the art education text (1924) that then proceeded to the spacing of headings, layout of pages, and the use of lettering in specific projects, especially posters. Despite the 1930 Programme of studies for art that considers lettering as being one of four categories of hands-on art learning, and the quote above indicating the importance of lettering to people in daily life, the 1933 art text does not outline specific exercises for learning lettering, nor does it provide examples. It only states that skeleton forms of capital and lower case Roman letters should be practiced with pen and pencil and then with different sizes of pen and that subsequently simple alphabets in brush could also be attempted.

I have provided two composite images from Kits [Figures 6.8] and from Van Tech [Figure 6.9] showing examples of hand lettering styles done by students there. These examples, primarily from the yearbooks, indicate the range of lettering that some students had attempted and accomplished. The examples are arranged approximately chronologically starting with the 1930s (both schools’ earliest examples) near the top left to examples from the late 1940s being at the bottom right. They show serif and san serif lettering and numerals, some fitted into shapes and integrated into images. There are also examples of outline

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444 The accompanying composites of lettering taken from the yearbooks and extant art of Kits [Figure 6.8] and Van Tech [Figure 6.9] appear in approximately chronological order from the top of each figure.

445 As seen in examples in Cameron’s Grade 10 art portfolio.

446 On par with the study of colour, drawing, and design beginning with the 1930 Programme of studies (p. 161).
lettering and display lettering showing the influence of typesetting with extreme thick and thin lines on the Roman letters. There are also examples of shaded lettering, examples of positive and negative lettering, and fanciful, unique lettering that has been individualized for the purpose it is serving. Textura gothic (also known as old English) was used for special effects by both schools, usually to suggest times past, despite the disapproval of this hand by some teachers as not being suitable for modern use. Nevertheless, this style of lettering is seen throughout most yearbooks of Vancouver high schools at this time. Some textura gothic lettering by Kits and Van Tech students is so well done that one has to examine the counters of the letters (spaces within the letters) to find the irregularities that confirm that the letters have in fact been done by hand.

Kits yearbooks show a handwritten rope look, whereas Van Tech tried for the same effect by imitating writing in ribbon and even in beard hair. Annuals from both schools show the use of the foundational hand, art school teacher Melvin’s preferred hand and the one that she used throughout the high school Applied arts manual. This book was utilized as the art manual for home economic students. Perhaps due to this exposure to this hand, girls seem more proficient at it than boys having done more graceful renditions of the hand, at least according to evidence in the yearbooks. Sometimes students italicized this hand, other times they outlined it.

At Van Tech, lettering [Figure 6.9] was a major part of students’ study of drafting, as a drafting project would be incomplete without its descriptive lettering labeling the appropriate parts of the diagram, elevation, or plan. Clarity was thus the primary goal of lettering for their work in those courses. Van Tech students studied architects’ lettering and were encouraged to develop their own style of lettering based on those models (Banks; Wong, grad of late-1930s). They were exposed to the study of typeset lettering in the printing courses as well as spacing and overall layout principles there that carried over into hand lettering and production art, such as on the pages of the yearbook. Much of the hand lettering, as opposed to machine typeset lettering, in Van Tech’s early yearbooks was done in conjunction with linoprinted images, so the lettering is rather simple, often san serif, and varies in quality. Part of the reason for the difficulty was that every image in linoleum had to be cut in reverse so that it was right-reading after it was printed. That means that the lettering had to be cut backwards, so it is not surprising that students didn’t try anything too complicated with their lettering done within linoprints.

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447 Melvin, teacher of lettering at the art school, did not approve of this style of lettering (Alexander, 1986). This is in keeping with the attitude of Melvin’s mentor Edward Johnson as posited in his book Writing, and illuminating, and lettering (1906). Bath: Sir I. Pitman & Sons, Ltd.
They chose to stay mainly with block letters and thick versions of serif lettering. But Van Tech on occasion printed images as photo engravings when they were still using letterpress to print the yearbooks. Van Tech's exemplar [Figure 6. 9] shows, that after the printing process changed in 1947, as many variations were experimented with as are evident in the exemplar of Kits lettering. Most lettering of Kits students could be reproduced photographically directly from their artwork; also silkscreen, Kits' preferred hand-printing medium, did not require the cutting of letters in reverse. Over the years the technical aspects of the printing process did have an influence on the style and apparent proficiency of lettering that students produced.

To reflect Van Tech's apparent interest in the Middle Ages, I have included in the exemplar a decorated capital letter as derived from medieval manuscripts. The Van Tech yearbooks also feature lettering used as decorative design to fill a space and used as a shape of a word to provide a form in which to put other images, such as the word *sport* containing silhouettes of athletes. Despite the potential differences in lettering in the schools, both have produced a wide variety of lettering.

Images relating to music appear in some Kits yearbooks; these do not fit readily into an existing subject category so I will mention here the musical notations. These notations can be considered a form of lettering in that they are the form of language involved in writing music. Treble clef and bass clef symbols appear on bars of music along with notes throughout the 1948 yearbook, which has music as a theme. Some bars of music have lettering integrated into them. The inclusion of images about music and musical notations generally confirm Kits' strong interest in the school's bands, orchestra, choirs, musical performances, and operettas. Such musical notations do not appear in Van Tech's yearbooks. Only a couple of images relating to people in music appear there. In this way visual evidence does not support Van Tech's written declaration of the school's interest in music. And comparing the school cultures of Van Tech and Kits, the interest in music and other aspects of the performing arts were not nearly as strong at Van Tech as they were at Kits where they seem to have been a major presence in the life of the school.

8. Botanical, animals, and birds

Botanical subjects, animals, and birds classed as nature forms were one of the most common sources of imagery in B.C.'s art education textbooks (1924 and 1933), and were deemed to be suitable subject matter in almost any programme of study where subject matter was mentioned. Flowers, leaves, and parts of plants such as pinecones, seeds,
blossoms, and leaves traditionally were used in learning to conventionalize forms into patterns and simple shapes that could be used in borders and other design work. Flowers were often recommended as a source for finding colour schemes and were used as the simple shapes in which to demonstrate colour schemes. Flowers were also central motifs in historic ornament, which the art textbooks drew on as a source of design and as inspiration for design projects. The 1933 texts especially draw heavily from these nature sources. Insects including butterflies were used as examples in showing various art principles (such as repetition, contrast, variety), and plant forms were used to demonstrate radiation and lines of growth. Botanical and animal forms too were featured in decorative and historic forms. There are also the stereotypical examples of Weston's animals symbolic of seasonal celebrations such as turkeys, cats, and bats. These images likely contributed to Gordon Smith's utterance that Weston's text was a travesty of art teaching.449

Surprisingly I have not seen a botanical image for its own sake in any Kits yearbook (other than as minor element or as trees in a background) thus making botanical images a more common subject in Van Tech's yearbooks than in Kits'. Yet I was told that flowers were drawn in Kits art classes in the 1930s, at least where, in Shadbolt's classes, students brought into class flowers or leaves to have at their desks to draw from directly and from pictures of flowers that Shadbolt pinned on the blackboard (White, Basil). Elements of flowers were also used in the applied arts projects done by Kits students who were majoring in fabrics in a home economics course.450 This is perhaps because flowers were the most common type of image appearing in the course textbook/manual entitled *Applied art* (1940/41), produced in part by applied art teacher Margaret Lewis. Therefore it may be presumed that Lewis approved of flowers as subject matter for some art projects.

Botanical images, almost exclusively flowers, that appear in Van Tech yearbooks and printer's manual seem to have been done as a student's way of testing out a technical capacity, such as registering a linoprint in three colours or more.451 Linoprints of complex images with relatively detailed line work were usually done in a single colour. The images of flowers called for colour and yet a flower was a relatively simple form that was doable as a printing challenge. Relative simplicity had to be a consideration as each page of the yearbook had to be put through the press once for each colour of an image, using the student's original linoblock, plus once for the colour of the ink of the text. All these had to be carefully registered so they would be in alignment, and several hundred copies of each page had to be

and Zipprich, *Freehand drafting*, (1924).

449 Quoted in Morris. (1978). There she reports on an interview with Gordon Smith amongst other B.C. art educators.

450 As per an embossed and stained, decorated leather purse done by a student in the mid-1930s.
printed. As there were no section dividers in the Van Tech yearbooks, the colour printing had to be done on the same paper as the rest of the text. Paper colour could not contribute to the impression of an extra colour (as it did at times in the section dividers in Kits’ yearbooks), only a multi-colour image could provide that richness in the Van Tech publications. Hence, I think, the occasional, relatively simple, multi-colour image, such as a flower was used to demonstrate the printing student’s technical capacity and to maintain the high standard desired of the yearbook with its aim to be a printing showpiece. The same could be said for Van Tech’s printer’s manual where there are multiple-colour images including one flower.

While there were for these reasons some flowers in the yearbooks when Van Tech was still an all-boys school, this subject did appear more frequently after the school became co-ed. A linoblock image of flowers by Margaret Hannum [Figure 6.10] appearing in the 1946 yearbook (n. p.) entitled *Summer Glory* is an example of these kinds of flower images by boys and girls appearing in the Van Tech publications. Van Tech students’ images of flowers don’t seem to be botanical illustration for the sake of nature study or for moral enlightenment as a close look at nature was meant to be at times earlier in the century. Nor did botanical subjects generally serve as backgrounds to or settings for other subjects, except where full trees appeared in the backgrounds of outdoor scenes. I have only heard of one specific instance of drawings being done of flowers or leaves in Van Tech’s regular art courses, but I find it hard to believe that such images did not appear there. In art classes in the mid-1940s, Jock Macdonald brought some images of Van Gogh into the class for inspiration for students’ own work, and Margaret Strathern (grad of 1949) specifically remembers studying Van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* and using that painting as a starting point for creating her own image in that class.

Also students in woodworking class apparently did sketches of details of local evergreens. This was one of the exercises that their woodworking teacher Alfred Wishart had outlined in his 1936 text entitled *Woodwork practice and theory*, specifically produced for use in his woodwork class. There Wishart provided a page of illustrations of four kinds of local softwood trees and the accompanying study section directs the student to “sketch part of a branchlet from one or more local conifers to show the length and the shape and arrangement of the leaves” (p. 2). Wishart also shows the use of flower forms in demonstrating the progressive stages of designing and cutting of a carved low-relief panel in wood. Wishart taught drafting

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451 Such as the one appearing in the printer’s manual of a rose by Ronald Angus, p. 32.
452 An exception is the drawing of the languishing girl in overalls leaning against a wall covered in flowers (1940 yearbook) as previously described.
453 When Mr. Wishart began with the school in the 1929/30 year, he taught woodwork, metalwork, and machine shop practice. He subsequently taught drafting and began teaching design in the 1935/36 school year. This text on woodworking was published sometime in 1936. Likely he tried out the material with his students prior to it being published.
and was the first teacher to teach design as a stand-alone course, rather than just teaching aspects of design in the context of other courses.\textsuperscript{454}

Elements of flowers, also seem to have been a design element or subject suitable for adaptation in three-dimensional, applied art projects such as metal repoussé or other art metalwork\textsuperscript{455} and wood ornamentation, as shown in the photograph of applied arts projects featuring furniture in wood [Figure 4.3] and objects in metal [Figure 4.4]. Flowers were also seen as a source for simple forms featured in mechanical drawing exercises with instruments especially where one was to make shapes in a circle, variations in the rosette being the most common.

Birds and animals in Van Tech yearbooks are not routine subjects but when they do appear it is for their own sakes rather than as backgrounds to student activities as is most often the case in Kits' yearbook images. In the work of Van Tech students, only horses (and one donkey) appear as domesticated animals in control of man. The others in this category appearing in the Van Tech yearbooks are animals and birds in the wild. They may appear for some of the same reasons that flower images appear. They can be relatively simple images to do in terms of cutting and printing. Most of Van Tech's animals and birds seem to be aggressive, even vicious or, if not, at least full of energy in leaping or suggesting the potential to leap. I know of only three animals that appear outside these parameters.\textsuperscript{456} The image I have chosen to provide is, like the others, fairly dynamic. A two-page spread shows two charging horses each ridden by a medieval knight in battle with lance. One of these is shown in Figure 5.6; the second one is here [Figure 6.11]. The image of the charging knight on horseback is a relatively common image in Van Tech yearbooks. It does not appear in either of the texts, although medieval figures do appear in Weston's 1933 art text.\textsuperscript{457} An image [Figure 6.16] appears on the left-hand page of a two-page spread used as a section divider for Sports in Van Tech's 1949 yearbook (n. p.). The right-hand page also shows a similar, but not identical, horse and rider, also with face hidden under a visor and with lance extended. These horses, like so many of the human forms appearing in Van Tech yearbooks, are short in the legs. Whether or not this student artist, George Croy, took art classes or whether his

\textsuperscript{454} For one year, design took up Wishart's entire teaching load; this was the year prior to Jock Macdonald's arrival as design teacher.

\textsuperscript{455} As seen in John Kyles's (1931) Design for industrial arts, Book II: Metal-work.

\textsuperscript{456} One reveals a state of near-equality between a horse and a man (lying on his stomach) as they drink together out of a water hole. Another is an anthropomorphic image of an owl as a gentleman in formal attire including stripped trousers, vest, cravat, tails, and spectacles who is perched on an undersized branch. Produced after the girls arrived in the school (1941 yearbook, p. 61), it is identified as a linoleum block cut by Roy Kilby, Class 42, presumably a boy from a junior grade. The other example is anthropomorphic; it shows two, story-book bunnies with eyelashes (1948 yearbook, n. p.) meant to suggest undergrads.

\textsuperscript{457} Weston. (1933). Manual for drawing (p. 162).
drawing ability comes from drafting and applied art courses I do not know. But again one
legs of the riders, one with strangely jointed knee (swollen?), and the proportions of the
horses are the weak parts of this otherwise dramatic drawing playing effectively with
shadow, texture, and line.

Animal forms in Kits’ yearbook images are few, other than those images incorporated
into First Nations-style designs, which are prominent in the yearbooks of 1937, 1948, 1949,
and 1950.\footnote{Other than these, there are few animal images beyond a handful of horses lions, dogs, one
gosling, and an anthropomorphic cow in cape with long hair and eyelashes. One horse previously
mentioned is that described as being the title page for the 1931 yearbook with the image of the school
showing the rather life-less horse floating above. Many of the other animals are by Blakstad and
appear in the 1946 and 1947 yearbooks. One Blakstad image featuring horses and lions appears in
Figure 3.9.} Several images of birds in pencil and pen and ink appear in the student art
collection of two Kits’ students,\footnote{Ursulescu and Blakstad from the late-1940s.} so I assume their classmates may just as likely have chosen
such a subject for their artwork. In the yearbook there are several instances of birds, however,
even though these tend to be small images\footnote{The exception is a full-page image of the gosling by Blakstad appearing on the cover of the 1947
yearbook entitled The Gosling.} most often appearing unexplained as fillers at
the bottom of pages, some of these being anthropomorphic, or as background to other
images. The accompanying pen and ink drawing by Pat Murphy [Figure 6.12] from the 1949
yearbook is an example of birds in an image featuring student activities. These two Kits
grads are apparently cruising, as in keeping with the nautical theme of that issue of the
yearbook. The fact that the birds are in motion attests to Pat’s familiarity with these birds in
flight. Given that Kits school is within walking distance of beaches and marinas, Kits
students had easy access to such subjects in a way that Van Tech students probably would
not, as Van Tech school is not close to the ocean. The birds are believable as flying seagulls as
they appear to be in nature, not conventionalized for some decorative art purpose. In terms
of the overall image, the seagulls create a sense of place, that of the West Coast, on the water.

Beyond the interest in the birds in this dynamic 1949 Kits image, the picture provides
other insights that suggest differences in Kits and Van Tech students and reflect differences
between the schools themselves. This is evident especially by comparing this image with a
1948 image of a young couple representing the grads of Van Tech [Figure 6.13]. While there
is some technical problem in the Kits drawing where the couple’s hands meet and in the
depiction of the young woman’s right shoulder and breast, the image nevertheless conveys a
convincing gesture expressing their happiness, vitality, and optimism. These attributes are
not evident in the depiction of the Van Tech couple. They seem less confident about their
future. Clouds gather overhead; the flag is limp suggesting a somewhat depressed feeling.
Despite trying to raise their sights and despite their assumed vocational preparedness, this couple seems already beset with worries. You can imagine them being old before their time.

One cannot know the source of the faces of the couples in the Van Tech and Kits images. Copying a photograph of a face was generally accepted at Van Tech when a face was needed and the renditions here and elsewhere are fairly competently done. Faces such as these by students at Kits were more likely done from memory. Copying didn’t seem to be as prevalent at Kits as at Van Tech, which was fairly common when an image was being changed from one medium to another. The rendition of Van Tech School behind the couple is again very proficient. It is solid, with convincing perspective; the school appears permanent and well established with its partial covering of Virginia creeper and healthy growth of shrubs. Again this proficiency is proof of the thorough training Van Tech students were receiving in their drafting courses. The accompanying lettering on the facing page that says Grads is somewhat weak being inappropriately sized for the page and for the pen with which it was written. It seems to be a variation of the foundational hand that appeared in Melvin’s *Applied art* text. For this reason, there is a chance that it was more likely to have been done by a female student than a male, but there is nothing to say that some other source of foundational lettering was not generally available. The rope lettering in the Kits image is one of the most successful renditions of this popular (used by students in many high schools), but not always successful, style of hand lettering, a style that was utilized by popular media of the time.

Van Tech’s young woman, in her conservative, rather dowdy, collared-dress, could work toward taking charge of a cafeteria,\(^{461}\) with the skills taught in one of the vocational programs available to women at Van Tech at that time. As for the young man, rather than becoming an auto mechanic or sheet metal worker, he could be heading for a job as a draftsman, a position that is basically white collar, as his shirt and tie suggest. Class here isn’t so much revealed through clothing or grooming as it is attitude. There is a difference in attitudes between the Van Tech and Kits couples. The issue relates more to the Van Tech couple’s lack of openness to life’s potential experiences, an inability to dream or to aspire to something a little beyond a conventional approach to life. Kits’ vice-principal provided some advice to grads that seems the kind of outlook epitomized in the Kits couple, whereas the Van Tech couple likely never received or took to heart such advice:

\(^{461}\) The image of the Van Tech female does not seem to suggest a career in hairdressing or fashion design for trade dressmaking, but that she could expect to use her skills in cooking and home nursing, the few other options available to girls at Van Tech (1948 yearbook, p. 17) before the first females graduated from the matriculation program offering more options for their future. The first females of the matriculation program graduated the following year (June 1949).
An essential requirement for the graduate is the need for keeping the present youthful outlook—that continual zest for life—even after the shine has worn off. The young person with a level-headed point of view should never feel that life is an illusion. He should avoid the “pot-holes” of extreme conservatism and, with each new day, should take to the road with renewed enthusiasm and optimism. (H. S. Johnston, 1950, n. p.)

The Kits couple seems to have the élan to which the vice-principal is alluding. Healthy-looking, white, and well-groomed in their cool summer clothing, these Kits grads are comfortable in this instance of their leisure, cruising not generally being available to working or lower classes. In terms of gender, there seems a certain level of equality and ease between the two and self-assurance in both (if not arrogance or conceit on the part of the young man, or is he just breathing in the sea air or protecting his eyes from the sun?). Only five years after the war, there is none of the apprehension in the Kits couple that seems embedded in some figures depicted in yearbooks during that time, whereas some of that anxiety seems still to be with the Van Tech graduates (depicted one year closer to the war than the Kits image).

In terms of class, the depiction of the Kits graduates suggests a certain entitlement that I felt in talking to some of my Kits interviewees. This was suggested in their descriptions of their expectations or their descriptions of aspects of their experiences at Kits during the time that they attended. One instance is the incidence of a few Kits students leaving school a couple of months before receiving their high school diploma on having been offered a job. It was as if, as Kits students, who they felt themselves to be was enough to ensure them their future; they did not need a paper credential to confirm their worth, including to a potential employer. To me there seems an aspect of class distinction in this attitude where people from higher classes seem not to have the need to prove themselves. It is as if their class speaks for them; it is enough of a validation such that they do not have to do anything to prove themselves as individuals.

This 1948 image of the Van Tech couple confirms the beginning of the dissolution of the primarily working-class, pro-labour stance, with its pre-vocational direction prominent in the Van Tech yearbooks through Sinclair’s tenure as principal.662 Concepts of class seem more inclusive by the late-1940s during Mr. White’s time as principal. The increasing involvement of the girls on the students’ council and the editorial board and illustration of the yearbooks seemed to help cause a shift away from the projection of veneration of manly labour, at least as evident through the pages of the yearbooks. In fact, Van Tech’s 1950 yearbook, which has the theme “all the world’s a stage,” shows grads in formal attire looking quite sophisticated. A

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662 Sinclair retired in June of 1944; he was succeeded by Mr. E. M. White.
now long-legged young man looks almost effete and the young woman appears to be something of a fashion-model cutout doll.

With matriculation (university entrance) programs available both to boys and girls starting the 1945-46 year, the school may have attracted more students from the immediate area thus beginning to make it more of a neighbourhood school. Margaret Strathern from the grad class of 1949 class said her year was the first to include girls graduating on the matriculation program. About that time the Van Tech yearbook stated that students should realize they “have responsibilities as citizens of a school community” (1949, n. p.). This begins to make Van Tech seem more like Kits than it had previously seemed as a pre-vocational school where a sense of isolation was accepted, if not purposefully set up, with students staying as they did in their one class group throughout their four years at Van Tech. I sense that in building this sense of community and with the many matriculation options leading to further study at university, Van Tech began by 1950 to be more like other high schools rather than as set out initially by principals Lister and Sinclair as a singular, male institution preparing boys for work in technical, primarily blue-collar, jobs.

Student artwork in Van Tech yearbooks reflects this shift and the kind of school it was during the time period of this study as well as revealing something of the kind of city and province Vancouver and B.C. were at that time. The fact that depicting one’s own environment and one’s own life was promoted at the art school in the 1920s, and subsequently encouraged in the schools, was possibly the biggest factor in the expansion of subject matter in student art in these two schools during this time period.

Comparison of the art images from Van Tech and Kits helped make apparent the position of Kits as a West Side neighbourhood school with assumptions I had previously taken for granted and therefore not seen clearly. In these ways the artwork from these two schools prior to 1950 seems valuable in expressing the nature of those schools at the time. In a future study it would be fascinating to compare the pre-1950 artwork with the artwork that these two schools are producing today. I suspect such artwork would provide insight into the kinds of schools that Kits and Van Tech have become and the kinds of populations that they now serve.

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663 Signed only by initials that I consider feminine looking, I assume this image was done by a female student, possibly studying fashion design and accustomed to drawing the figure one head to ten as a body proportion.
CHAPTER 7—Conclusions

In this chapter I discuss some of the differences evident in approaches to art learning in Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School and Vancouver Technical School from the early-1920s to 1950 in relation to the motives, purposes, and ideology relevant to the cultures of the two schools at the time. I consider the findings in light of the over-all perception of class, gender, and race. I suggest how these differences reflect the kinds of schools Kits and Van Tech were and how they resulted from different attitudes and goals. In this final chapter I also acknowledge implications for further research.

Differences in Assumptions about Art Learning in the Two Schools

The different educational, vocational, and social objectives that Kits and Van Tech high schools had for their students to 1950 affected the assumptions about art learning which also affected the art learning opportunities within the schools. These objectives determined the role of art, design, and industrial arts in the courses of these two diverse educational institutions. In order to compare differences in student assumptions about art learning in Kits and Van Tech, I have constructed a list of assumptions for each school. These assumptions I inferred from what my interviewees told me and I have ordered them by popularity, i.e., the number of informants holding the assumption (informants are in parentheses). It has been difficult to keep separate knowledge of how my interviewees used their art learning in their lives as compared with how they experienced the assumptions about the art learning in their school. For instance amongst my informants, there seems to have been no assumption when they were in school, that a Kits art student would become a career draftsman or a Van Tech student would become an independent cartoonist/illustrator, despite this having been the case. I have included the girl’s first names so as to be able to differentiate them from the boys\(^{464}\) to be able to note gender differences in assumptions.

Kits’ assumptions about goals of art learning included the following:

a. Would create an interest so students would have an enjoyable art-related hobby as adults. (Basil, Cameron, Pauli Field, Snelgrove, White, Louise Williamson)\(^{465}\)

b. Would promote students’ appreciation of art or design in products in order to know better quality from lesser quality. (Cameron, Dorothy Howard, Lyla Brown, Whyntenbroek, Eva Williamson)

\(^{464}\) As well as to be able to differentiate Eva Williamson and Louise Williamson (unrelated).
c. Would provide a creative outlet to give students a constructive means of expressing themselves. (Cameron, Pauli Field, Dorothy Howard, Ursulescu, Louise Williamson)

d. Would encourage appreciation of the arts and thus a more cultured citizenry. (Cameron; Pauli Field, Wytenbroek. Louise Williamson)

e. Would provide art skills to prepare to become a commercial designer. (Ursulescu, Cameron, Snelgrove)

f. Would develop visual sensibility that could be applicable or transferable to other arts-related activities. (Blakstad, Ursulescu, White)

g. Would prepare students as future entrepreneurs to have some ability at visual representation in one's business, whether doing a task on their own, planning a print advertisement for example, or getting someone else to do it, as in making a sign or visual display for a store window. (Wytenbroek, Basil, Cameron)

h. Would provide knowledge of visual requirements so as to be able to dress in a more attractive manner and create a pleasing home environment. (Eva Williamson, Lyla Brown)

i. Would expect students as future citizens to contribute to determining visual enrichment of their community's environment by making decisions on committees about design of parks and public buildings, etc. (Cameron, Wytenbroek)

j. Would encourage students to become fine artists to create art for galleries to be purchased by consumers (Ursulescu, Blakstad)

k. Would teach individuals to be themselves and to get away from conventions. (Louise Williamson)

l. Would develop skills to be a painter able to express Canada's identity. (Blakstad)

Van Tech's assumptions about goals of art learning included the following:

1. Would help students acquire the ability to draw as a universal language. (Banks, Falk, Wong, Zitko)

2. Would provide design skills for the student as a tradesman in metalwork or woodwork contributing to the creation of better Canadian-designed goods. (Zitko, Wong, Nelson)

465 Louise Williamson said she was always more interested in doing her own [art] work for own enjoyment. There was no push [at Kits] to get students to do commercial art as a job.
3. Would provide art knowledge necessary to work in the printing industry. (Falk, Banks, Rimmer)

4. Would enable students to be competent draftsmen able to draw and read blueprints and do illustrations from blueprints. (Banks, Nelson, Zitko)

5. Would provide design knowledge and skills as part of understanding the theory of one’s trade as an industrial or technical worker. (Wong, Nelson, Zitko)

6. Would provide design knowledge as part of the professionalism of being a qualified tradesman or industrial or technical worker. (Nelson, Wong, Zitko)

7. Would enable one to become a printer-cartoonist. (Banks, Falk, Rimmer)

8. Would provide linoprinting experience in order to have a recreational activity to carry on with after leaving school. (Falk, Banks)

9. Would provide design skills for girls as a basis for clothing design to accompany sewing for the trades. (Margaret Strathern)

10. Could give some grounding in drawing useful for an illustrator. (Margaret Strathern)

Prior to 1950 at Kits, art learning was motivated primarily by consideration of the needs of the individual whereas at Van Tech art learning was primarily driven by needs of industries. At Kits the assumptions were that art education aimed primarily to provide the future citizen with an art hobby as a creative outlet, would contribute toward producing an informed consumer and more cultured citizen, and could help prepare the student to become a future designer or artist. This is in contrast to primary assumptions at Van Tech that art learning would help produce draftsmen, industrial and technical workers, and tradesmen and tradeswomen with an adequate sense of design in order to make better quality products and drawings appropriate for their jobs. Van Tech’s art learning provided the opportunity to learn at least one art activity suitable as a hobby for after-school life.

Revisiting the Research Questions

In the following I will address each of the original research questions as set out in Chapter 1.

Research question 1—To what extent did the culture of Kitsilano and Vancouver Technical high schools affect the formal and informal art learning in these schools?

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466 Louise Williamson said, “Art was one of the best parts of education as it taught you to be yourself, to get away from the regular conventions.”
The culture of Kits enabled students to explore activities and interests that might stay with them through their lives. It facilitated becoming an informed, discerning consumer and art viewer, and with a hobby in art, or becoming engaged in work as a commercial designer or in the fine arts. Exploration was a central principle in the orientation at junior high schools, and the concept of experimentation permeated the higher grades at Kits as well, especially in extra-curricular activities. The many extra-curricular activities and clubs were a major source of informal art learning, encouraging growth in interpersonal skills and leadership. In future life, art might be required, for instance, in planning civic amenities. As a hobby, art was recognized for its potential to create engaging and fulfilling activity. There seems to have been an awareness of the importance of amateur artistic activities in the school and students inclined toward visual arts were able to find a place within the school wherein their abilities could be recognized, utilized, and appreciated.

In keeping with expectations of living a constructive life, Kits students were expected to do their best in art. Development of art skills was taken seriously; in art classes students were expected to achieve their potential, projects that indicated less were returned for revision. In the words of one informant, one could not “slough off” and hand in less than one’s best work otherwise the work would be returned to the student to be reworked. But these personal habits at Kits seemed to be balanced with an approval of independent thinking and a valuing of original ideas. Skills in lettering, drawing, and design along with the study of colour as set out in art curriculum guides from 1919 to the late-1940s were practiced directly in Kits arts courses, including in the commercial art course, when it was offered, and in the applied art course.

The intention to instill students with an aesthetic sensibility also guided some of the extra-curricular activities at Kits. Some clubs, such as the poster club, were in a time slot within the regular school schedule. The many plays through the year contributed to art learning opportunities in the production of accompanying visuals. The stagecraft and scenery club, at one point at least, was a source of art apprenticeship, as was the decorating club. Students created associated printed programs and handmade posters in conjunction with performing arts events. The production of the yearbook was valued as an integrated project requiring art-related skills in the form of illustrations, cartoons, lettering, and layout and design. The arts culture at Kits was seen as being as important as sports. While both Kits and Van Tech high schools acknowledged their most accomplished student artists, there seems to have been more opportunities for recognition at Kits. By 1950 there was the golden flame award given to the student deemed most outstanding in art in his or her senior year.

The culture of Van Tech reflected the school’s mandate to provide students with vocational training for jobs in industry and the trades. The school maintained a skills-
orientation related to the student's future employment rather than to the student's life in general, as was the case with Kits. Aspects of lettering, drawing, and design that were common to all art-related curricula were practiced within the drafting, metalwork, woodwork, and printing courses and, once the girls arrived, within the applied arts and tailoring (fashion design) courses. Capability in design was considered an aspect of professionalism in the work that Van Tech students undertook. Students did not have the opportunity to use, in other than a controlled, applied way, the art skills they learned. Personal experimentation within prescribed courses was not encouraged, other than in the most limited sense, such as determining one's own lettering style after studying the lettering of others.

As for informal learning, Van Tech was not a neighbourhood school, so many of the students had to spend time traveling to and from school, leaving less time for extra-curricular activities, and thus missing out on some activities with potential for art learning. The linoblock club was most consistently the outlet for art energies and the opportunity for students to experience peer learning in a group that was not age segregated. Returning alumni were among the most qualified and they returned to cut and print linoblock designs in a way that inspired those less skilled. In this context, the task, although limited to linoblock as a media, was selected and undertaken by the individual student. The art club provided additional scope in media but, it seems certain projects and subjects were decided within and for the group, not by individuals themselves. One could choose a subject within an agreed category (i.e., boats within the subject of transportation). The vocational orientation of the school meant that all projects chosen within the clubs, even within the art club, were applied arts projects. Club members painted or drew panels to decorate the halls rather than doing paintings per se. The sponsor teachers were available as guides in these clubs giving students additional access to forms of art learning. I have no evidence of Van Tech students being given outlets to utilize any art learning acquired from outside of the school. This is despite the fact that some Van Tech students went to Vancouver's art school concurrently or prior to their years at Van Tech. Perhaps this was as a result of art school training not being valued, as the school was not attempting to produce "fine" artists, which may have been the assumption about the intention of the art school. Van Tech did not acknowledge having students painting scenery for stage performances even though they apparently had annual Shakespearean plays through the 1930s at least. Commentary about stagecraft acknowledged only the stage lighting and handling of props. Through this time period the fact that the students stayed together in their class group seems to have produced a sense of isolation keeping separate the art-minded students who may have found each other had there been more mobility within the school's organization. Any peer stimulation
and peer approval regarding art seems to have been indirect, through one's art, rather than through direct contact of working together in extra-curricular, art-related activities, with exception to the linoprint and art clubs.

Goals relating to industriousness and careful work were evident in the art-related courses in both Kits and Van Tech. Inculcating a committed work ethic and reliable work habits, including neatness and clarity, were especially evident in information on the technical education at Van Tech.

Research question 2—In what ways did class, gender, and race play out in the art learning in these schools?

The middle-class assumptions of Kits students allowed for alignment with a fine arts orientation including freedom of expression in senior years, but this was only after thorough training in junior high where foundational exercises, aligned with prescriptive art textbooks and curriculum documents, were largely based on an arts for industry approach. This could have been limiting for Kits students who took art only in the lower grades where they may never have experienced the freedom to pursue their own art interests that could encourage participation in artmaking as a rewarding hobby. However, the structured approach did provide basic design training relevant to how students might use art in their daily life. The prescriptive approach was also supportive of working toward becoming a designer in a commercial art field. At Kits, art was considered an aid to becoming a more refined person or providing an enjoyable hobby and leisure pastime; it assumed students were of a class that would have some leisure time. Capability in art was aimed primarily at the student's enrichment. At least with the female students, they were more interested in doing art for their own pleasure, and that of their family, rather than using art skills in the context of a job such as a commercial artist, although such a position was an option, particularly for male students.

At Van Tech, the perception of fine art seems to have been largely kept out of its classrooms; the focus instead was on art-related learning within the context of practical, technical activities and applied art. The working class was not expected to entertain an involvement with fine art; to do so related to a station in life that would seem "above" the role for which they were headed, as fine art was considered a symbol of more refined culture. But that in part related to what counted as art and art education. When a course entitled art was provided in 1946, it did not provide students with the freedom of a fine arts approach or with a creative self-expression orientation. There was a general concern during the Depression years for the constructive use of non-work time. At Van Tech that did allow for the encouragement of one constructive hobby, that of linoprinting, which was a useful
skill for those intending to work in the printing industry. There seems to have been a limited view at Van Tech regarding expectations for the future of accomplished student artists. A job as a cartoonist/printer seems to have been the loftiest ambition for someone accomplished in art at Van Tech whereas no such limitation was suggested to Kits students. To spend one’s career as a draftsman was seen as an honourable occupation for a promising Van Tech student, whereas at Kits this seemed a disappointing use of art talent.

Art was gendered in both Kits and Van Tech but in different ways and for different purposes. From at least the mid-1930s at Kits, girls with a home economics major were provided with an applied art course and continued with the availability in the 1940s of Grace Melvin’s Applied art manual. Taught by Margaret Lewis, the applied art courses for the girls featured practical projects focused on design within the textile arts including stitchery, appliqué and embroidery, as well as tooling on soft leather. From 1930, a course in costume design was available as a specialty within the general art course featuring many of the same activities and skills outlined in the applied art course including drawing, design, lettering, and colour. While the curriculum guide did not indicate that the course on costume design was for female students only, it was one of the options under the general art program that ran parallel with a course in commercial art, which Hamish Cameron (grad of 1950) remembers as having only boys. Again, despite the name of the art course, headings in the curriculum guide—drawing, design, lettering, and colour—were the same just with different applications. The point here is that despite any gender-segregated attendance, many of the same skills were used. Van Tech’s course in applied arts for the girls offered similar knowledge but projects were assumed to be for students’ future work in the trades rather than just for use within their families. The same was true of the tailoring course. There, within the context of fashion drawing, instruction was offered in design, lettering, colour, and, most important, drawing, as well as actual sewing of student-designed garments.

The racial diversity in the student population at Van Tech found students of Asian descent highly represented in visual arts clubs indicating they were exposed to art learning beyond the classrooms. Also, Van Tech gave some of these students a chance to use their art to express themselves and explain something of their non-Western heritage. Social acceptance of visible minority students at the school and their role in arts-related activities may have been greater than in the general population of Vancouver at the time. I have previously alluded to one student of Chinese descent who graduated from the matriculation program at Van Tech in the late-1930s while doing the technical courses as well, and subsequently graduated from mechanical engineering at the University of British Columbia. But while the education system

467 Course was available in the newly revised curriculum guide for students of Grades 10 to 12.
was able to offer this potentially liberating opportunity, Vancouver's professions apparently were not. Also, it is difficult to know to what extent students of Asian descent at Van Tech were preoccupied after school hours with family duties and thus unable to participate in extra-curricular events at their school where much art learning took place. As indicated in Chapter 4 in discussing extra-curricular activities at Van Tech, I had not questioned extra-curricular time as being equally available to all. Presumably students at Kits would not so likely have missed such extra-curricular activities at the school with its predominantly white, middle-class student population perhaps having fewer family demands than what was expected of students of Asian descent. This acknowledges that at times extra-curricular learning at some schools may have been privileged. At Kits, differences in race seem to have been less noticeable, perhaps as a result of students' efforts at fitting in and perhaps based on the commonality of all being middleclass.

In the art learning at Kits and Van Tech, there was very little recognition of art from non-Western cultures in art-related courses. The exceptions were batik and tie-dying, the art of hand dyeing cloth in generally free-form patterns. These techniques were popular in cultures of the southern hemisphere. These were available to the girls and in the general art course. There was also Chinese brush stroke painting, which seems to have been more about abstraction and economy of means in painting than it was about Chinese art and culture.

Research question 3—To what extent did the skills and art media recommended through formal sources manifest themselves in the in-class instruction and extra-curricular art learning in these schools?

As shown in Chapter 5, the basic skills addressed in all the art-related courses from the 1920s to 1950 were constant, featuring drawing, design, lettering, and colour. These emphases remained central to the art and art-related instruction despite the change in focus of any particular course. This was largely because these were skills needed in any activity involving a visual end product. Colour, however, seems to have been less emphasized at Van Tech. Understandably experience in handling colour was not central to Van Tech's woodwork and metalwork, but even when the independent design and art courses were introduced, colour seems not to have been stressed. At Van Tech painting was given a utilitarian purpose such as to "decorate" a hall, etc., in extra-curricular projects. Such a practical purpose was not considered necessary at Kits where the aesthetic approach of an art school was acceptable in their painting. Also, with linoprinting being the main extra-curricular art activity at Van Tech, colour knowledge was not generally called for as many of the prints were done in only one colour. The art club did work in colour in creating panels for the halls, but I don't know if students were given specific instruction even on basic principles of mixing colours. By the
late-1940s silkscreen was listed in the curriculum documents as a potential art medium for the general art courses and silkscreen was done at Kits, firstly in the poster club and in the late-1940s in the regular art classroom. This is despite the lack of potential of the silkscreen process as a leisure-time pursuit in after-school life, due to its messiness and equipment requirements. It was, however seen as a form of the commercial silkscreen printing that could be done by a commercial artist.

Learning to draw was central to all art learning through this period. This was evident at Van Tech in Principal Sinclair's willingness to teach students in an after-school art club. At Van Tech, drafting courses provided the major arena for learning to draw and this was in keeping with the school's vocational purpose. Also in Van Tech's stand-alone design and art courses, drawing was emphasized almost to the exclusion of other activities. This narrow range of options may possibly have been due to materials shortages during Depression and war years. While both schools produced a wide variety of lettering, the approach to lettering was motivated by assumed different purposes and needs. Skills in lettering were learned in a variety of different contexts. In Kits this was primarily the general art courses and in extra-curricular activities, such as the poster club and in yearbook preparation. At Van Tech lettering was learned primarily in drafting and other technical courses.

As for media, there were always more media recommended through the curriculum documents than were utilized in any one course or extra-curricular activity. The wide range of art media worked with at the art school and alluded to in the curriculum documents in the 1930s were not all available at Kits or Van Tech. Generally curriculum documents were not a reason for limited experiences in art courses in the schools. Nor was the training of Kits teachers' a limiting factor, as the teachers at Kits came from an environment at the art school that introduced them to a wide range of media. During this time of understandable material shortages, there apparently wasn't much improvisation with available materials at Kits and Van Tech as generally was the case in B.C. elementary schools, as suggested by Rogers (1990), and as evident in articles appearing in B.C. Teacher, and as undertaken elementary schools in the United States.

By 1930, the formal curriculum documents under the heading of practical problems gave commercial art students permission to deal with "problems arising out of school activities, plays, or theatrical performances, scene-painting; emblems dramatic and historical;  

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466 The identical curriculum documents in art for 1919, 1921, and 1923 even then listed for practical application, stenciling, embroidery, appliqué, china-painting, stained wood, piercing, inlay, metal repoussé, as well as poster-work which suggests some colour capability, in short enough media to offer a rich assortment of artmaking experiences.

469 Under the headings of Materials or Mediums, Processes, and Practical Problems in most course descriptions for each of the grades.

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store-window arrangement and decoration....” In this way, the curriculum documents legitimized some of the projects undertaken in extra-curricular activities, especially those relating to the performing arts that encouraged creativity, productivity, and co-operation of Kits students, and may have done something similar for Van Tech students during the years their annual Shakespearean plays were produced. Extra-curricular activities and social events of the schools allowed for heuristic learning as some of the activities were undertaken in groups. Earlier, any trace of this in class at Kits, mural making for instance, came through the initiation of the teachers themselves. Outside the classroom, art-related, extra-curricular activities involved learning from a variety of sources in a self-directed way, such as in researching and painting stage settings, and undertaking such projects through group work.

So while more skills and media were recommended in the art curriculum documents than were undertaken at the two schools, many art materials were still used. One student describing media they used in Kits arts classes recounted “pencil, charcoal, pen and ink, scratchboard, conté, pastels, paint, linoblocks, silkscreen...” and concluded, “We did a lot!” (Cameron). In addition to traditional art media, at Van Tech there were also those utilized in industrial arts that were acknowledged as media (wood and metals) and skills (drawing exercises featuring drafting exercises) in the art documents of this time period.

Research question 4—To what extent did students’ exploration of subject matter in their artmaking reflect personal concerns, the character of their school, local art concerns, or broader interests of society, and how were they different in the two schools?

As shown in Chapter 6, the subject matter in student art of both Kits and Van Tech reflected the nature of the two schools and to some extent the broader interests of society, especially as related to the Second World War. As Kits school was based on adolescent interests, student art seems to reflect students’ own interests and aspects of the school culture as students’ community for living. The extent to which student art at Van Tech reflected personal concerns was subtle. Students were limited to making choices within a prescribed activity. The wide range of subject matter can be partially accounted for by the teaching approach at the art school, specifically to Grace Melvin’s and Jock Macdonald’s advocating that students look to their own environment for their subject matter. As Kits pre-service art teachers at the art school, Margaret Lewis, Vito Cianci, Jack Shadbolt and Macdonald became art teachers at Kits and Van Tech, they seem to have taken this approach with them into their art classrooms. Kits and Van Tech students, in having “permission” to depict what they knew from their environment, got away from the limitations of what had been conventional art subject matter. To varying degrees their art depicted their own lives and interests. Through

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the images that they produced for the yearbooks, Kits and Van Tech students reflected the character of their school. Van Tech student art particularly provided a broader sense of place by incorporating images of war, industry, and technology, thus reflected broader preoccupations of society. In examining yearbook images, I have documented how subject matter in the two schools expanded and differed from each other. Van Tech's focus was on technical and vocational concerns and a willingness to reveal the inter-relationship of students and staff, where Kits students emphasized the depiction of adolescent life as if people of other age groups hardly existed. I have also shown some differences in approach to representing First Nations subjects, nature imagery, and lettering.

Beyond these findings, there are several trends, differences, or similarities relevant to artmaking in Kits and Van Tech schools from the early-1920s to 1950 that have become apparent through this research and seem worthy of note.

**Effective Sources of Art Learning Beyond the Art Classroom**

The former students I have interviewed from both Kits and Van Tech have confirmed the effectiveness of certain sources of art learning within the school and through extracurricular activities related to the social life of the school, many of them giving students additional exposure to art and teachers of art. Books, and the librarians who directed the students to those books, seem to have been important in art learning for students. Studying images in books seems to have been an important aspect of art learning for Kits students especially, perhaps as a result of having an enhanced collection of art books during that time. But the library as a source was important to some art students in both schools. First Nations life was apparently well represented in books at Van Tech; art history and fine art were strong at Kits.

The alumni's role was significant at Van Tech during some years with the school having had channels that encouraged alumni to return and interact with students. The most noted effect at Van Tech involving visual art-related activities was that of the linoblock cutting club where students returned to cut and print linoblocks with current students in the school. At Kits, former students maintained informal contact with the school and were invited back to give talks at the vocational fairs that the school instituted. The students represented a variety of occupations such as architect, lawyer, actress, journalist, commercial designer, etc. (KH, 1940s). One former Kits art student, at the request of the art teacher, returned to help directly with scenery painting doing this in the context of an apprenticeship for the current students.

Having clubs in a required time slot at Kits seems to have been particularly beneficial to some students. Through these clubs in the required time slot on Thursday afternoons, Kits teachers were able to share their personal passions in a particular endeavour, many of them
being arts related. Having them scheduled within the school week enabled all students to participate, which was not the case for extra-curricular clubs and activities. During the Depression and war years particularly, extra-curricular activities could be considered privileged for some Vancouver high students, as not all were able to participate if they were needed at home to look after younger children, or needed to work themselves to help support their family, or had community responsibilities. Also, with Kits having been a neighbourhood school, it was feasible for it to have more clubs and extra-curricular activities than did Van Tech. This practice has made a difference in the proportion of art learning in and outside of regular classes in Kits and Van Tech. The arts culture at Kits promoted a multitude of creative outlets that involved individuals in extra-curricular activities that helped students to develop their talents, whether that was in the visual arts, acting, or music, etc. Van Tech, on the other hand, provided for proportionately more art-related learning in classes in the context of shop work, as drawing, design, and lettering skills were practiced in most of the technology courses. Some such opportunities existed in both Kits and Van Tech’s academic courses as well.

Aspects of Progressivism in Art Learning at Kits and Van Tech

As I began this study motivated by wanting to understand the effect of the Putman Weir report (1925) and the introduction of progressivism in Vancouver schools, I would like to revisit the concept briefly in terms of art, even though the Report did not remain a major focus. That one learns by doing was officially recognized in B.C. schooling in the Putman Weir report, but formal physical and social restrictions in most schools meant this approach did not get implemented to the extent that the Report intended. Subsequent to the tabling of the Putman Weir report and to 1950, there were hardly any specifically progressive elements in art curriculum documents, but some approaches at Van Tech and Kits did contribute to some of the main aims of progressivism, and many of these approaches are relevant to the art learning opportunities that these two schools were able to provide.

The general aims of progressivism that were encouraged at both schools especially through shop and art courses and extra-curricular activities included the following:

To end formalism, rote learning, and reliance on a single, subject textbook
To promote hands-on experiences

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473 Rogers attributes this to William Weston, in a position of influence working on the curriculum committees, as dressing up the same content slightly differently, not changing much at all.
To promote appropriate work attitudes and habits
To create citizens with loyalties to both Britain and Canada
To keep students in the school system beyond minimum leaving age of 15
To emphasize project-focused work

The progressive aims existing at Kits especially through art and extra-curricular activities included the following:
To prepare students for daily life, not just for university entrance
To create well-rounded, cultured citizens
To establish healthy, productive, life-long avocations
To encourage enjoyment in art courses to keep students in school longer
To encourage extra-curricular, art-related activities that featured cooperation, group work, and problem solving; the opposite of rote learning
To promote a more cultured citizenry in a more refined society

The most relevant progressive aims existing at Van Tech that promoted art learning (although indirectly), primarily through shop work, included:
To provide practical, applied work not just theoretical knowledge
To prepare students for their vocation, not just for university entrance
To prepare students for future employment despite discouraging questioning of their role or social position as working class people
To offer an alternative to academic learning to encourage enjoyment of being and staying in school longer
To provide technical training with relevant art skills while producing graduates who would stay primarily in manual-based jobs
To keep students in school longer by needing to complete the preparation for their livelihood

In brief, Kits art courses encouraged students’ artistic knowledge and aesthetic sensibility to create more refined future citizens as well as encouraging art activities for students’ own enjoyment as productive leisure-time activities. Kits offered a well-rounded education, focused more on the needs of the individual. Extra-curricular activities dealt with the whole person as the activities engaged the progressive emphases on socialization, group cooperation, and “learning by doing” as students worked on projects together.

On the other hand, aspects of art learning at Van Tech were primarily taught as part of what students needed to know for their future trade. Featuring a focus on practical, hands-on
education, Van Tech's vocational orientation was in keeping with the social efficiency aims of progressivism to prepare students to take jobs directly from high schools. The lengthening of the time required to prepare students for jobs occurred during the Depression years when there were no jobs for students to go to. The original three-year vocational program at Van Tech, offering also a scaled-down, two-year alternative, was converted into a four-year program in the early-1930s co-incidentally as society needed to keep students in school longer to avoid potential social unrest by having even more people unemployed during the Depression years.

Some Broader Considerations

The social effect of vocational training has been highly contested (Broughton, Burrows, Lada, 1988; Petrina, 1998) in its role in social reproduction or social mobility. I don't think it is possible to say whether the art/design training offered in technical training at Van Tech was socially limiting or socially liberating. I think the result would be different for individual students. Based on the former students I interviewed, their training at Van Tech did not seem to keep them in working class, low-paying, waged jobs. In fact these students seemed to have found more socially expansive alternatives. But their increased social status could be due to a number of conditions, not just the actual training received from Van Tech. The Second World War, the training that returning veterans were eligible for in rehabilitation programs, and immigration all served to produce social mobility in Canada during this time period. To a certain extent, Canadian society has been based on social seniority of immigrants. Immigration helped to fuel social mobility through wage employment while immigrants were Canadianized and became proficient in English. Perhaps it is not surprising that Van Tech encouraged immigration by promoting B.C., specifically Vancouver, as a good place to live and work. Undoubtedly staff knew that immigration created technological needs and demands for other materials that Van Tech grads could construct or provide.

The vocational training that Van Tech provided had the potential of being expansive for students who, without such education, would have had fewer job opportunities and probably lower-paying jobs. Some of the Van Tech students I interviewed took post secondary training either graduating from university or attending art school. All seemed to have achieved a higher social standing than what their parents had, but then their parents had been living with difficult realities of the Depression and World War II years, whereas these students' working lives extended into and beyond the more affluent, socially expansive 1950s and 1960s. There were obviously potential increases in social standing for those students who went through the matriculation program at Van Tech. They received the technical training that the school provided, offering the assurance of a trade while qualifying to enter university...
and with access to additional opportunities there to widen their horizons and social standing. In this way, the training Van Tech students' received was, as quoted by Jean Barman, “fatal to class privilege.” Barman has discussed how parents “believed in their children’s ability to use education as a liberating experience rather than being conditioned by it into the existing socio-economic order.” This seems to have been true of working class parents who sent their children to Van Tech. Gidney and Millar saw such training as giving children from skilled and unskilled workers' families some upward mobility. Also concerned with how the schooling affected them, J. D. Wilson stated:

...the concern is with how people responded to what was happening to them. The emphasis is upon how groups and individuals strived to fulfill their own aspirations within—and often against—the wishes of the school system, its authorities and its political and social masters.

Admittedly the students at Van Tech were taught “to play the game,” to go along with/obey the rules rather than to question the rules or who had the right to make them, or to choose to try to remake them. Nor were they encouraged to become critical of the society that was interested in maintaining a portion of the social strata as low-paid, waged workers. Van Tech principals George Lister and Sinclair seem to have had realistic yet optimistic views of what they could do to offer students a better working life than what they were likely to have without such technical training. These principals also believed that the kind of training and art/design education that students received at Van Tech during their time at the school had as much potential for expanding students’ opportunities as limiting them. Gidney and Millar have stated that “schooling was expected to reflect and to help preserve [stratified society]” and vocational training such as that available was aimed at providing a training with “actual practical value to the individual in his struggle for existence in the particular society in which his lot may be cast,” but, for the students I interviewed, a ceiling on their social standing did not seem to remain in effect.

**Effect of Teachers’ Long Tenures**

Rogers discussed William Weston’s long tenure at the Normal school in both positive and negative terms. Rogers acknowledged the stability that Weston provided in his presence as art master at the Normal school for such a long period, but stated that Weston might have postponed beneficial change had there had been a capable art master.

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available who had more up-to-date ideas.\textsuperscript{478} The same might be said of Lewis and Moira Macdonald, both of whom were on staff at Kits for more than 30 years and 20 years respectively. However, they provided stability but they also provided dynamic art training. At least this is the opinion of the students I interviewed and that of J. A. S. (Jim) MacDonald who knew Lewis and Moira Macdonald as teachers when he was a Vancouver art supervisor. He also studied art at Kits with Lewis and Miss Macdonald in Grades 11 and 12. In discussing them\textsuperscript{479} he said they had “impressive art programmes” and within the city “these were isolated pockets of exciting art activity.” He added, “These programs were individually driven by the guts and determination of individual teachers such as Kits’ Miss Lewis and Miss Macdonald.” He added:

\begin{quote}
The principals could support, but not initiate, these art programmes; it was up to the [drive] and personality of the teachers to set up a good art program, one which provided an exposure of the major art activities to students and ... gave students a chance to grow in whichever line interested them. It was also to find the gifted ones and them help them develop their art for its own sake, not necessarily with a vocational end in view. Their principals supported the art teachers by recognizing art as a necessary part of a well-rounded education. (Jim MacDonald)
\end{quote}

While Lewis’ long tenure may have maintained in Kits some ideas about approaches to art teaching that were current in the early years at the art school, both she and Miss Macdonald travelled to Europe in the summers while they were at Kits. Apparently they used some of this time in keeping up with what was going on in contemporary European art. Lewis kept her sketchbooks while in Europe; Miss Macdonald apparently had expatriate friends there who were active in the arts so she was able to discuss current ideas with them (Cameron and Snelgrove).\textsuperscript{480}

The long-term tenures of Van Tech’s shop teachers probably also had the effect of keeping the art and design aspects of the technical courses much the same over many years. Jock Macdonald was one of the few changes in staff involved with art learning from the time of construction of the new school to the end of the war. September of 1939, the school year that Jock Macdonald joined Van Tech’s staff, was the year of the most staff changes, a result of teachers having left to serve in the war.\textsuperscript{481} But Jock Macdonald was hired as a result of the industrial art training background rather than for his status as an artist at the time. From my limited sources, I believe he did not transform his teaching at

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{477}Gidney, & Millar. (pp. 23 & 287).\textsuperscript{478}Rogers admits that he does not know of a more effective art master being available at that time.\textsuperscript{479}And the art program of Magee Secondary School.\textsuperscript{480}Peter Snelgrove, as an adult, had contact with Lewis and Vito Cianci so it is feasible that his conversations with them then revealed Lewis’ and Macdonald’s activities in Europe.}
Van Tech to correspond with his conversion from an industrial designer to one of Canada's most experimental artists of that time.

Context for Art as a School Subject at Kits and Van Tech

Two art educators knowledgeable about art in Vancouver in this time period have characterized school art in Vancouver prior to 1950 as a "dry period," although they agree that this period set out the "antecedent conditions" (Gray) for the subsequent innovations. This so-called "dry period" served as a bridge from the earlier restricted drawing and design approach (of the pre-1920s) to the more richly endowed art programmes of the postwar years. Despite the fact that Kits art courses and Van Tech's art-related courses introduced art experiences that were primarily centred on two-dimensional media emphasizing drawing, design and at Kits, painting, and at Van Tech woodwork and metal work, there were within these activities a wider range of activities and focuses than in pre-1920s courses which focused narrowly on drawing and design. At Kits, students could approach these skills and knowledge from the point of general art, commercial art, applied art, interior decoration, and costume design, enabling them to determine which approach would be relevant to them in terms of their future life. Also the significant expansion of what was deemed acceptable subject matter enabled students to use their backgrounds, life, and environment, and contemporary art as sources of imagery. For this reason the term "expansionary period" or at least "transition period" gives art more its due during this necessary phase of secondary school art learning from 1920 through 1950. During this time period art was considered a valuable part of a good secondary school education in B.C. Art was respected for the development of art skills, for its promotion of art as a valued leisure-time activity, the transformation of unenlightened individuals to those with the art appreciation sense of a cultured person, and for its potential of finding and developing future designers and artists. School art as a subject did not then have to be constantly

481 Sinclair's message, 1940.
482 Jim Gray, the former Vancouver art supervisor; and Bob Steele, former secondary school art teacher who subsequently became an art instructor at UBC. Jim MacDonald, who supervised student teachers at Kits in the mid-1950s was himself a student at Kits from 1949 to 1951.
483 Art gained then when federal money began to be infused into the B.C. school system, starting by 1952, and continuing until about 1965. These more economically favourable years, which allowed for innovations and more materials, have been labeled the "golden years in school art" (Steele, Gray). In 1965, the negative impact of the Chant Commission Report (1960), which lessened the importance of secondary school art programs, began to take its toll (Gray). The so-called golden years in art extended longer than they might have as the Chant commission took longest to address art as a subject. This is because commission officials perceived art as relatively unimportant (Gray). Art courses thus gained by this delay in revisions by the Chant commission, which ultimately relegated art to a much more minor roll in the secondary school curriculum than it had enjoyed from the mid-1920s to mid-1960s.
defended or promoted to counteract those who would undermine its role in the curriculum, as has been required much of the time since. For this reason, this time period deserves to be recognized as a particular location along the historical road of art education in Vancouver high schools.

**Implications for Further Study**

This study has focused on general art courses while providing some comparisons of the art learning offered within industrial arts and applied arts courses whose aesthetic systems are different than those of fine art. Across these courses, I have looked especially for elements of art learning that were the same or noticeably different. It would be beneficial if someone with a thorough background in industrial arts could approach a study of art learning in Vancouver high schools from that position of understanding. A thorough study needs to be done of John Kyle, who was director of technical education in B.C. for many years. His background in painting and design, and his role in the training of industrial art teachers, including through his offerings at the summer institutes in Victoria, needs to be understood. Some Van Tech shop teachers also taught at the summer schools so there were opportunities for the sharing ideas between them and Kyle, possibly accounting for some similarities in beliefs, especially in the importance of design in technical education. Also, my focus has been from the point of view of students and their learning as opposed to teachers and their teaching. While teachers in the schools in the 1940s or earlier are becoming lost to us for direct interviews, a researcher could attempt to find evidence of their teaching experiences and perceived intentions and results, so as to be able make a comparison with aspects of learning presented in this study.

I have tried to show the way in which the culture of a high school can impact and shape art learning in the school. I have not attempted to compare this with information on art learning in private high schools in Vancouver yet this could add another dimension. Also, while I feel it has been an advantage in some ways to be from Vancouver and with a family history that includes this time period, I recognize that in effect belonging to this tradition may dull my critical understanding. Someone coming from a different educational culture, with or without an art background, especially from a non-North American school culture, would likely be struck with more differences and be able to articulate them. In some respects also, in dealing with history that is still relatively near to us, many assumptions go unchallenged; someone from a foreign culture could likely come up with new questions and interpret evidence in new ways.

Much has happened technologically within the time period of my having undertaken this research and such developments will make similar future research for
myself and others easier to undertake. The main difference is the use and greater acceptance of the digital camera. At the time that I was doing my interviews, a digital camera was the approximate size and weight of a cantaloupe (more than I could manage due to physical circumstances at the time); today a digital camera can be as small as a chocolate bar. My emphasis on the analysis of the yearbooks has been partly because copies of them (or major parts of them) were available for my continued use during the entire research process. I was able to look at them and compare those of the two schools in a number of ways, including similarities and differences in specific types of images and, year by year, to compare how the two schools presented the same time period and referred to outside events. Having copies of the yearbooks at hand to compare contributed to my understanding of the attitudes within the schools and differences in school culture. The same is true of being able to revisit tapes and transcripts of interviews. For a researcher to decide in advance to focus on the art of even just a couple of former students from this time period, it could then be feasible to locate and arrange to photograph their sets of school art. Much could be learned from a close examination of this work. At the time that I examined the two most comprehensive collections of student art that I located, I was still assuming that I was focusing on the art of 10 schools rather than just two. In both cases I visited twice to view this art, but seeing the art for a short period of time compared to having access to it over the entire research process could make a considerable difference to what is observable. I know this based on the insight I obtained by having a photocopy of one entire sketchbook/notebook of a Kits student and another earlier one from out of province. While it likely will continue to be infeasible to carry away an entire collection of student art from a person’s home, in some cases arrangements might be made to photograph all of it for reference and detailed analysis.

It seems to me that Vancouver’s high school yearbooks are a largely untapped source for education historians. The yearbooks can be valuable historical documents as they record the major events and changes in a school year and, in some cases such as Van Tech’s yearbooks, provide some valuable historical context in terms of what was happening in the rest of the city. For instance, through a variety of Vancouver high school yearbooks I have been provided with insights into the effect of the Spanish influenza at the end of World War I and later forms of influenza that closed schools or cancelled inter-city sports leagues. There has also been information about public transit strikes and snowstorms that similarly interrupted school activities. Yearbooks during the war years describe wartime curfews, light restrictions, cadet training, and fuel shortages impacting schools’ extra-curricular events and some causing school closures. Also, there is information about major political and civic events and aspects of popular culture. While
reflecting the personalities of the students, they document trends in student life and fashions (tams, yoyos, zoot suits, diamond socks, saddle-shoes, ways of getting to school, etc.). In short, yearbooks are an excellent historical source providing insight into the major changes marking school history as well as documenting aspects of the history of the city.

In the same way that family photographs help create the culture of childhood as well as reflect it, school yearbooks helped to establish the culture of the school while also revealing it. The image of a happy, productive community for living and learning for healthy, able-bodied, middle-class, largely white adolescents as projected by the yearbooks of Kits helped to create such a culture as well as transmit and shape the idea of it to current and younger, up-coming students in the school. The same is true of the Van Tech yearbooks that projected the school as site of valuable, effective technical and practical training, that helped students on their path toward their vocation and becoming reliable, dependable workers within a city and province with much promise for industrial development. There seems to have been an unwritten, perhaps even unconscious, concept that only certain things were suitable to be included in a school’s yearbook. Whether the projected concept was aimed at the present and upcoming generation of students as at Kits or at a wider external audience as at Van Tech, a form of each school’s ideology was revealed that may not have been evident in any other way.

Also, production of the yearbooks was valuable for students as this production provided a real-life problem to work on, that of producing a publication. Yearbooks served as projects in integration bringing together students’ abilities in writing, photography, artwork, advertising sales, design and page layout, typing, and, in Van Tech’s case, the typesetting, printing, and binding of the publication. The value of producing an annual as a real activity can be seen in the yearbooks of many Vancouver high schools where the staff lists read as a who’s-who of future people who became well-known in Vancouver and further afield. Many such students got their start by working on their high school yearbook. Work on the yearbooks generally seems to have been a valuable training ground for students who early recognized their interests or, perhaps through the production of the yearbook, found an interest they later pursued whether as illustrators, cartoonists, reporters, writers, editors, page layout artists, production people, advertising managers, photographers, etc. In fact experience in yearbook production seems to have served as a useful launching pad for Vancouver students. With many of the required activities being art related, the production process encouraged the development of artistic talents. At Kits and Van Tech, there were varying amounts of work on the yearbooks done in school time, some done in extra-curricular time, but the artwork within them was generally done on the student’s own time. In realizing the impact yearbooks
had, I am prompted to encourage schools to consider producing their own school histories as well as the yearbooks. Producing a history would require the same integration of a multitude of skills as preparing a yearbook, many of them art related. English classes, printing classes, art and technology classes, and history classes at the very least could have some valuable input in creating an historical record of their school.

Also oral history can provide insight into experiences that don’t tend to get written down or recorded in any other way. Researchers need to do more interviewing of students from the 1930s before they are lost to us. I have alluded to some of the ways that art learning has been used in the lives of my informants, but indeed a study focusing on this specifically, and considering the kind of art learning experiences that individuals had in high school, could indeed be worthwhile in attempting to understand the relevance and effect of art education in individuals’ lives. Such a study could provide a critical understanding of the dichotomy between the school’s aims in providing art education and the individual’s intentions in participating in and using art learning.

There are materials in high schools that are largely unidentified and unsorted that have been collected in various circumstances or by a staff member with a particular interest and these materials have been passed on to others who do not know the potential significance of these materials nor have the time to examine the documents to determine their potential use and value. I didn’t get into boxes in backrooms, but I know some exist; some of the information within such collections might be protected by the privacy act, but some could be likely cleared for historical usage by a researcher. Most importantly these materials need to be assessed before some space-efficiency staff come along and throw away such materials without knowing of their historical importance and usefulness. This is why I am recommending that history projects be undertaken in the schools to at least encourage staffs’ awareness of materials in their midst and to encourage students to help collect, set aside in a protected location, compile, interview former students, and in other ways contribute toward writing their school’s history. When my daughter was in Grade 9, some years ago, one of her English assignments was to interview an older person and produce a transcript of that conversation. A similar interview process could be undertaken with former students from a student’s school based on agreed-on questions relating to the history of the school. Interviewing former students from the 1930s or earlier would be a good place to start before these people are no longer available to describe their school experiences to us.

484 When the Vancouver School Board archives are reorganized (having been disarranged by their move to the new location a few years ago), they could serve as a holding location for such material on a permanent basis.
Despite the differences in cultures between Kits and Van Tech, art flourished in the two schools although in different ways. Depending on how one defines art, whether with a fine art emphasis or an applied arts orientation, it is apparent that Kits and Van Tech offered their students substantial opportunities for art learning. The cases of Kits and Van Tech have demonstrated that historians will find what they look for in schools in so far as one's historical lens can determine what we “see.” For example if I had limited my definition of art to fine art, I would have overlooked most of the art that was “applied” in the schools. It became apparent that to consider all the art learning that was going on at Kits and Van Tech, I needed to redefine the margins of art as a subject.

Within the histories of Van Tech and Kits are embedded some of the ideas that were prevalent in education in Vancouver during the first fifty years of the twentieth century. This study offers some understanding of art learning within that context and thus contributes to the larger picture of Canadian art education history.
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PORTFOLIO OF IMAGES

Examples of school artwork of the students of
Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School
and
Vancouver Technical School
to 1950
Figure 1.1  Photo of Kitsilano Junior/Senior High School. From 1931 yearbook. Courtesy of Kitsilano Secondary School.
Figure 1.2  Unsigned. (1947). Pencil sketch of front of Van Tech School. Courtesy of Vancouver Technical School.
Figure 2.1  Presentation of portrait, (1944). Photo showing Major Don McKay, Indian Commissioner for B.C.; Charles H. Scott, principal of the Vancouver Art School; August Jack Khahsahlahno; and Swanamia Khahsahlahno. Courtesy of Kits Secondary School.
Figure 2.2  Michael Kuznitzoff. (1944). Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill [linoprint]. Courtesy of Van Tech.
Figure 2.3 Photo of Van Tech print shop (1928) as it looked when the new building opened and as the space remains today. Courtesy of Van Tech School.
Figure 2.4

Figure 3.1  Jim Genis. (1948). Front entranceway of Kits [scratchboard drawing]. Courtesy Kits Secondary School.
Figure 3.2. Photo of Shadbolt with students from art class and friends on Hollyburn Mountain. (1928, Spring). Photo by Dorothy Howard. Reproduced with photographer's permission.
Figure 3.3. Stephen Ursulescu. (1950). *The Robie house, Jericho Beach*. With permission of the artist.
Figure 3.4  Hamish Cameron. (1948). *Abstractions of tree forms [watercolour & temperal]*. With permission of the artist
Figure 3.5  Hamish Cameron. (1948). *Bamboo in Chinese brush strokes*. With permission of the artist.
HE MUST BE NEW TO THE DYKES—HE WANTS TO WORK!

SHOW HIM THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THINGS—
HOW HB'S GETTING FREE IRRIGATION—
AN HOW HE NEEDED A NEW BARN ANYHOW!
Figure 3.7

Peter Snelgrove. (1942). Cadet manoeuvres [section divider of yearbook]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 3.8  
Figure 3.11 Photo of the poster club. (1937). Designers and their work. From yearbook. Courtesy of Kits Secondary School.
Figure 3.12

Figure 3.13  Stephen Ursulescu. (1950). Whale and bird composite [pen and ink]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 3.14  Stephen Ursulescu. (1950). Frog (undergraduates); Raven (literary) [silkscreens]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 3.15  Ian McIntosh. (1949). Tugboat *Kitsilano* [pen and ink]. Courtesy of Kits Secondary School.
Figure 4.1  Bob Banks. (1940). Van Tech staff’s reaction to the construction site [pen & ink cartoon]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 4.2 The drafting classroom. (1921/28). As room existed in the old Labour Temple building from March 1921 to June 1928. From industrial arts' department archival photo album. Courtesy Van Tech School.
Figure 4.3  Exhibition of woodwork projects. ( Likely 1930s). From industrial arts' department archival photo album. Courtesy of Van Tech School.
Figure 4.4 Display of metalwork projects. (Likely 1930s). From industrial arts' department archival photo album. Courtesy of Van Tech School.
Figure 4.5 Margaret Strathern. (1949). Drawing from fashion design course [in Strathern’s existing collection]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 4.6  Sing Lim. (1934). Linoprint demonstration piece indicating process of registering colour blocks. Van Tech printer's manual. Courtesy Van Tech School.
Figure 4.7  Marion Barber & Henry Zitko. (1943). Charging knight and servicemen. Cover of 1943 yearbook. Courtesy of Zitko and Van Tech School.
Figure 4.8 Milton Parsons & Clarence Falk. (1933). Medieval printers at work. Cover of 1933 yearbook and cover of 1934 printer's manual. Courtesy of Falk and Van Tech School.
There’s joy and a thrill on the great highway
When your car takes no man’s dust;
But watch the road, by night or day,
When you pass—if pass you must.

Figure 4.9 Orville Carnahan. (1934). “When your car takes no man’s dust” [linoprint]. From Van Tech printer’s manual. Courtesy of Van Tech Secondary.
Figure 4.11  Michael Kuznitzoff. (1944). Arturo Toscanini [linoprint]. Courtesy of Van Tech Secondary.
Figure 4.12  Henry Zitko. (1944). *Serviceman mechanic fixing warplane* [multicolour linoprint]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 4.13  Bob Banks. (1940). The prospector [multi-colour linoprint]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 5.1  Hamish Cameron. (1948). Views of Kitsilano from window [page from sketchbook]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 5.2 Hamish Cameron (1949). *Art class in action* [rapid sketches in pen and ink]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 5.3  Hamish Cameron (1948). Portrait of female in profile [page from sketchbook]. With permission of the artist.
Figure 5.4 Helen Reeve. (1931). Exterior of school [pen and ink; Grade 8 student]. Courtesy of Kits Secondary School.
Figure 5.5  Clarence Falk. (1935). Mount Shasta [three-colour linoprint]. With permission of the artist.
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Figure 5.8  Al Bushell. (1933). Lesson on projection [ink drawing]. Courtesy Van Tech School.
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Figure 5.10  Al Bushell. (1933). Lesson #2 [cartoon in pen and ink]. Courtesy Van Tech School.
Figure 5.11  George Obokata. (1933). Techno(c)rats [pen and ink]. Courtesy of Van Tech School.
Cartoon by Robert J. Banks, Class 12-A.

Bob Banks. (1941). The girls' arrival at the school [cartoon in pen and ink]. With permission of the artist.

Figure 5.12
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Figure 5.14  Perry Hall. (1925). *Execution of Mary Queen of Scots* [Scratchboard or pen and ink]. Courtesy of Van Tech School.
Figure 5.15  Jim Rimmer. (1948). The bouncing Baldwins [photographs with pen and ink]. With permission of the artist.
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Bob Banks. (1941). *I bring you the spirit of fire* [three-colour linoprint].  
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Figure 6.13 Unsigned. (1948). Van Tech graduating couple in front of school [pen and ink]. Courtesy of Van Tech School.
**Certificate of Approval**

**Principal Investigator:** Chalmers, F.G.  
**Department:** Curriculum Studies

**Institution(s) Where Research Will Be Carried Out:**  
UBC Campus

**Co-Investigators:**  
Stephenson, Wendy, Curriculum Studies

**Sponsoring Agencies:**

**Protocol Description:**

The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

**Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by:**  
Dr. James Frankish, Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.