

Hidden Presence – a [ffotogallery](#) project

Learning resource – Ysgol Plas Mawr

The Participants

Two groups of girls who had been identified by the school as being at risk of exploitation. The first group was made up of six 13 – 15 year olds, the second three 16 – 17 year olds. The Artist and education team worked with the girls for five consecutive days, with the girls being taken out of lessons to attend

Theme

Representation and the social media

The focus will be on 'hiding and revealing' in the everyday. Theoretical concepts of *Homophily*¹ and *Disinhibition effect*² in relation to the social media space were the starting points for conversation, which lead in to discussions around language, identity, self-confidence and self-image.

Final output

- A set of photographs (accompanied with writings) – in the style of Cartes de Visite
- An exhibition within the girls' social space, open to teachers and peers to attend

The aim

- Learn how to decode images (visual literacy) to get a better understanding of how images are used and read online and their legacy.
- Through learning how others see you reflect on own representation through the use of photography and words.
- Through engagement with tactile and digital forms of photography explore longevity of images with particular relevance to the internet.
- Build on the work already done by the group around keywords by focusing on positive representation of oneself and others.

Activities

1. Discussion (and written descriptions) related to representation and image

- Girls in group 1 describe girls in group 2 (and vice versa): what do they look like? How do they look best?
- Girls in group 1 (and vice versa) describe themselves.

2. Photographs

- Taken together with the girls in separate groups, following the two descriptions. These are then compared to provide platform for reflection on:
 - How do we represent ourselves?
 - Using keywords to describe/portray oneself and others.
 - What are we trying to communicate?
 - Are we successful in communicating that?
 - How are the social media use to curate oneself?
 - Disinhibition effect.

3. Discuss

Results are looked at and discussed.

4. Collected into Cartes de Visite style boxes

¹ Translates as 'love of the same' and is the tendency of individuals to associate and [bond](#) with similar others. It has been used in relation to the social media debate. (Wikipedia 2015)

² Is a loosening (or complete abandonment) of social restrictions and inhibitions that would otherwise be present in normal face-to-face interaction during interactions with others on the Internet. (Wikipedia 2015)

Boxes are created from a template, cut out from old storage folders provided by the school. Each girl chooses the images and texts she would like to include, as a reminder of the workshops. Decorative papers are used as dividers, to give a feeling of importance.

Day 1

Using keywords to portray oneself and peers from same and the other group.
Use polaroids to visually represent one chosen keyword.

If the girls have taken photos with the disposable cameras – discuss what they have taken, what they consider the best images, etc. – this will be the basis for our conversation on day 2 when the films are processed and prints ready to view. The aim of the activity to compare perception with reality.

Alternatively: using collage to collectively build an image to describe the chosen keyword to portray either an individual or the group. This would be photographed in stages to construct a gif animation – portrait.

Day 2

Descriptions from day one are exchanged, photos planned and taken. Perhaps a process of building up a self-image with the use of make-up and props to reflect on different representations of self will be employed and photo portraits of young people in these different stages taken.

Day 3

Continue with activity from day one.
If any photos ready we will be looking at and discussing along the themes described above.

Day 4

Final selection, printing and making boxes. Creating invitations/posters for the exhibition. Selecting images and deciding how they will be hung.

Day 5

Printing and hanging the exhibition, preparing the space, talking about how to explain the project to teachers/peers.
Evaluation through recorded conversation.

Impact on learning

'I have rediscovered the power of the photographic image. I also have lots of new ideas to share with future groups of young pupils. I have already discussed using some of the ideas to work with a group of young boys of the same age'
Sian Williams, Participation Officer Ysgol Plas Mawr

'By doing this project we had lots of fun and learned many things. We've improved our confidence and appreciated every minute by working with Eva, Clare and Lisa and from now on we will listen to our 'gut instinct'.
Pupils at Ysgol Plas Mawr