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Young children's construction and expression of meaning when engaging with and responding to artworks

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Young children's construction and expression of meaning when engaging with and responding to artworks

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Pre-primary children responding to art

Pre-primary children responding to art (August 2012)

Significance & background of this study

Works of art can:
Provoke aesthetic experience
Offer unique processes of inquiry
Engage an individuals intellect and emotions to explore, create and develop views about self and the world

Works of art are:
Considered as one of the many languages of young children
Distinguished from other forms of communication by ineffable qualities

Significance & background of this study

Recognition that responding to art benefits young children's learning; when children responding to artworks, they are developing their mind

Educators require greater understanding of how children make meaning by responding to artworks, so they can structure relevant experiences to promote and support depth of learning

ACARA states that arts responses is one of two interconnected domains.

Children need to 'apprehend' and' comprehend' art to express personal and social perspectives.

Aims of study

- This mixed methods study identifies ways in which young children explore, construct and communicate meaning by looking at and responding to visual artworks.
- Through facilitated art response-sessions this research specifically examines children's embodied learning; responses to various artworks; the extent to which music accompaniment elicits different responses; how social/cultural interactions influence group and individual responses; and the impact response-sessions have on art making.

Theoretical framework

Social – cultural constructivist

-art is in essence a social activity even if it is performed individually
-Teaching and learning as co-created activity
-Audience is enabled beyond their individual realities to a collective experience and a more profound comprehension
-ZPD
-Culture contributes to the development of individuals
-- meaning is influenced by the particular contest in which artworks appears (semiotic theory) Vygotsky

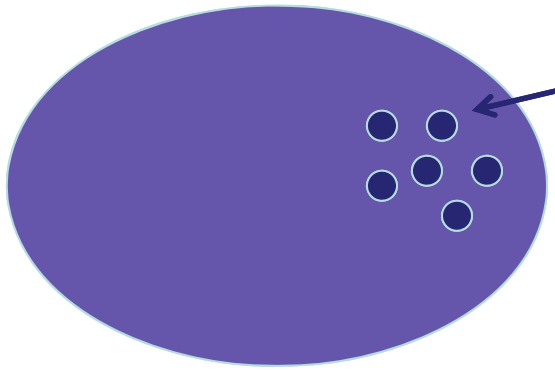
Embodiment

– our bodies contribute to our sense of what is real
-Children use a range of modalities (Kress & van Leeuwen; Lakoff & Johnson)

Imagination and **aesthetics** theory (Dewey)

Proposed research design and methods

- Participants



School with a strong Arts curriculum and pedagogical focus

- 6 x (5 yo) children within their pre-primary class
- Their parents
- Two teachers

Participants	Data Collection	Time	Analysis	Overview of analysis	Relationship to research Q
6 children	Video taped	5 x approx 20 mins	Studio code	Coding of individuals over time, frequency...	Embodied; formal qualities & content, narratives, imagination, sophisticated over time
6 children	Observation by teacher	3-4 days	Anecdotal notes	Naturalistic, coding,	As above + impact on subsequent art making
6 children	Obs by teacher only	2 weeks (part of regular T activity)	Anecdotal running record, ongoing notes, T briefing notes	Coding patterns, comparisons, themes, clustering	As above + play, conversations
Educational doscs	Class journal, T records		Sticky note memos	Content analysis	Subseq. Art making/play/choice of books
Photographs of children's art works	As they occur		Sticky note memos	Content analysis	Transfer of content, form used, narratives, iconography etc
Teachers	Semi-structured interviews	Approx 30 mins	Transcript verification by T. Audio recorded	Coding (generalise natural units of meaning, classify, categorise and order units of meaning, structuring narratives to describe ...	Children's leanring preferences, visual, embodied, narrative characteristics of indiv; PP context, interactions between C/C C/A, PP env. Learning prefs. Impact on pedagogy
Teachers	Semi-structured interviews x 5	Approx 15 mins each	Transcript verification by T. Audio recorded	Coding (generalise natural units of meaning, classify, categorise and order units of meaning, structuring narratives to describe ...	Ongoing impact of R-S on children; art making; play; ripple effects on T
Parents	Standard measure	1 hour		quantitative	What conditions affect how children make meaning in response to original adult artworks?-family-home social context -interactions between adult/child, child/child-home physical envi/attitudes/values of parents individual child personal preferences
Parents	Questionnaires	30 minutes		Coding by researcher/ coding by participants	
Parents	Semi-structured interviews x 2	30 minutes each	Transcribing – verification by participants	Code (generalise natural units of meaning, classify, categorise and order units of meaning, structuring narratives to describe interview, interpreting interview data	
Parents	Emailed observations	As they occur		code	Subsequent impact on art making, conversations, interests
Researcher	Declare myself in the research	Regularly	Document my role as a co-learner. Journals, field notes, Researcher Self interviews		how has it affected my own pedagogy – what have I learnt that has impacted on my understanding of how children learn
Variety of artworks			Consider cultural b/ground of artwork (provide rationale)	Tool artwork participants	Does regular exposure to original adult artworks develop a young child's capacity to make meaning? How artwork is chosen
Music provocations	After some arts-response sessions	5-10 mins			

Method

- Arts response-sessions (fortnightly for about 20 mins) with artworks brought into the classroom; VTS response framework used in combination with Artful Thinking (Project Zero, Harvard) + music provocations
- Artworks stay for 3-4 days for children to continue to engage with
- Teachers; parents; researcher; artworks

Conclusion

- Uniqueness of this study
- Limitations of this study
- Feedback welcome

Thank you

Pre-primary girls responding to an artwork