

Teaching creativity in primary schools



Creativity Arts Primary

“ The philosophical foundation for teaching integrated arts in the primary school is based on the belief that aesthetic and creative education is the entitlement of every child and that the nature and quality of the provisions determines the distinctiveness of cultural life and academic performance in school.”(Bloomfield, 2000, pg1).

For this essay I am going to be talking about why teaching creativity in the arts in primary school is an essential part of children’s learning and what children gain from the lessons. I will be reflecting on my own learning experiences in this module as I feel this justifies why creative arts should be taught. I will be explaining how I can use what I have learnt, from this module, in school and talk about the creative lessons I have planned for in school.

“ Children’s natural enthusiasm for the arts, as major and valid sources of knowledge, is nurtured from the first day at school and their motivation and commitment is maintained throughout their primary years.” (Bloomfield, 2000, pg1).

Creative arts is an essential part of school life as it includes practical engagement of all children as they learn how to paint, compose music, write or to dance, and as they progress through the school year their knowledge of each art form deepens. When children discover social, cultural or historical aspects of the arts they are able to increase their knowledge of the topic by referring to books, articles, artefacts, CDs, recordings and videos. This also gives the children a deeper understanding of their work. (Bloomfield, 2000).

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Creative arts also develop the use of children's imagination, the way that they respond to their own life experiences and the way they express and communicate their ideas. This can also help their physical development which includes performing confidently, imaginably and good use of space for themselves and others while performing. (Moyles, 2002). Creative arts also involves children with different learning needs, audio, visual and kinaesthetic. The lessons are designed to include all children and allow children to achieve their goals.

Each creative area helps develop different skills for learning. I am going to talk about how drama, music and art can aid children's learning in school.

" Art and design stimulates creativity and imagination. It provides visual tactile and sensory experiences and a unique way of understanding the world."(DfEE, 1999, pg116).

Art artefacts can be found anywhere, all that is needed is imagination to use these artefacts effectively and this can then bring any classroom activity to life. All artefacts that are found can be used to teach the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. " Art is fashioned from world resources, and the natural environment has provided the stimulus for wide ranging art activities both as the stimulus for the design and in the way in which the properties of its material has determined the form of the art object".

(Bloomfield, 2000, pg88).

During art sessions children acquire a range of skills which include visual and manual skills, skills to use a wide range of materials and media and problem solving skills. These skills then enable children to formulate their ideas and

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use materials and artefacts to create their own artefacts in 2D and 3D form. The use of these skills enhance children's practical knowledge of art making. Children become critically aware during art sessions. They are able to discuss and write about their experiences of art making and develop a metalanguage to discuss their experiences of visual art and design. (Bloomfield, 2000).

“ Children build up their powers of discussion; they incorporate a vocabulary that has meaning for them from their own creative participation as well as in critical discussion.” (Moyles, 2002, pg40).

During a school topic where art is a key focus it is essential to present children's work either in a portfolio or a class display as this allows the class to reflect on the work they have produced and the value of the process and allows children to comment constructively on each others work. (Bloomfield, 2000).

“ Music is a powerful, unique form of communication that can change the way pupils feel, think and act. It brings together intellect and feeling and enables personal expression, reflection and emotional development.” (DfEE, 1999, pg122).

Music sessions in school provide vital skills for children to progress through their primary and secondary years. Music lessons enhance children's listening skills.“ Listening is fundamental both in forms of the sounds independently produced and also the collective responses of groups.” Music also enhances group work as it aids inclusion because children, whatever their background or aptitude, have the ability to express themselves

successfully in the classroom. Mutual respect and self-discipline is acquired during these sessions as children develop good relationships with each other. (Bloomfield, 2000).

“ Participation in music and its integration with other art forms provides a rich social environment for children. Performance and presentational work develops a close working relationship within the peer group.” (Bloomfield, 2000, pg76).

Music is also looked at as a form of communication. Many professional song writers write songs to deploy meaning and get messages out to the greater world. Musical understanding through singing songs helps children use their voices in an eloquent and effective manner. Children in school are encouraged to adapt music as a form of communication as music offers a unique mode of experience where children can receive and express ideas and feelings. This also encourages children to use descriptive language to describe why they have chosen a particular sound to represent their emotions mood or feelings. Music also develops children’s speech as children with musical training have a greater capability to process all sounds, including speech. (Bloomfield, 2000).

“ ICT is a powerful and necessary tool for the children which both enhances and informs their music, whether as creators, performers, or as investigators.” (Bloomfield, 2000, pg87).

Children can use music to find out about the world. There are many links that can be made with music and the celebration of diversity. Children can be encouraged to make music CDs to share with different schools in different

communities and countries. Music which the children relate to or which is related to the topic may create different feelings. These feelings can be compared within the group or between different schools. As with music there is no right or wrong answer and it would be interesting to see how other people interpret their ideas and this celebrates diversity. (Bloomfield, 2000). When children have recorded their piece it is possible for them to use it as backing music to a performance associated with their topic, this then uses music to enhance and intensify the other creative arts.

Drama can be split into two sections, drama and dance. “ Dance education provides children with an artistic language of actions which, linked with their intellectual and physical growth, is transformed into a significant and meaningful mode of communication.” (Bloomfield, 2000, pg46). Dance sessions gain children techniques in coordinating movements, inventing movements, remembering movements and then transferring the movements into a dance routine. During these sessions children are encouraged to use their whole body to do this. Dance can be linked to Literacy sessions as children are “ using their bodies to express metaphors and symbols through the formulation and organisation of movement patterns that capture and convey meaning.” (Bloomfield, 2000, pg 45). This is also a good way to introduce poetry to children, as they are comparing themselves to something different. Children may be encouraged to show how they are feeling as dance has a semantic structure which provides the basis of how children can think, feel and express ideas through movement. Drama and dance can be used to enhance descriptive work of characters the children are portraying. Drama links with literacy development and understanding as it enables

children with the pronunciation of words and recitation from stories and poems. (Bloomfield, 2000). Pie Corbett believes that children should story map to remember plots in their stories. This is to help them when they are reciting stories to the class. He believes that this way helps develop a child's memory as they only need their own interpretation of a picture to tell a story. Dance and music linked together is a way for children to express their understanding of themselves and the world as they perceive it. This can encourage children to research different dances and music from different countries of the world. When children participate in these lessons they are including themselves in the coordination of the group. Once children have been given an initial stimulus they are in control of their group. This then develops their skills in working collectively and harmoniously together because a group who can not function this way will have no hope in producing a final piece of work.

Drama can be linked with music as this can provide an effective atmosphere matching the mood for a production. Art can be used to create wall displays, props and set designs for a drama production.

During this module I can honestly say I have felt lost at times. The reason for this was due to my own experiences that involved creative arts at school. During art lessons I was always under the impression that I could not draw. I would always feel embarrassed about my work. The art teacher gave me no confidence in the lessons. It was a case of turning up, doing the work and then be given no constructive feedback. I took this negativity into my first art seminar. I did not feel comfortable doing the tasks that were set but I carried on. I then had a very long discussion with Catherine about my finished

products. She then told me that I was concentrating on the negatives factors of my art work and I should look closely at the positives. Even though I believe she was cross with my attitude towards art, she took the time to teach me a valuable lesson. This I will never forget and I can use effectively in my own art lesson. By making me see the positives in my work I was able to achieve more because I felt confident in what I was doing. I was praised effectively but not over praised as I would have thought she was patronising me. This is the correct attitude to have in the classroom whilst teaching. Children know when they have been given false or too much praise and then the praise is not effective. “ Praise can alienate pupils because every response is being judged by the praise it receives.”(Cockburn, 2006, pg105).

During my time in school I have planned individual drama and music lessons. For the music lesson the class was split into three groups. Each group was given a number of instruments that made sounds related to Christmas. I gave each group a starting point and this was Christmas Eve, Christmas day morning and Christmas day afternoon. I asked each group to compile a composition relating to the starting point. The children knew that this was their first draft of a composition and they would have time to “ practise, rehearse and perform” ,(DfEE, 1999, pg126), as the teacher was going to use my idea in further music lessons. The children had to note the pattern of their music using symbols; this was going to make it easier for them to improve the composition. The children were left in control of their own compositions as I did not want any of my own personal input involved in their work. Children are far more creative and adventurous when they are left to

their own devices and they will learn more about their work. (Bloomfield, 2000).

“ Tell me and I forget, show me and I may remember, let me do it and I will learn.”(DfEE, 1999, pg90).

It is important when using the creative arts that the children have an end product to show for their work. It was therefore essential that our group was able to show off our work on the ‘ Railway lines through the snow’ painting. This gave us a sense of achievement and finalised all our hard work. As a group we all developed through the module especially our concert performance. I had to listen to my peers and they had to listen to me. We had to stay harmonised and focused otherwise the concert would have been a disaster. Each member of the group had different personal strengths and we had to use each others strengths to aid our concert performance. I developed all the skills that I have spoken about which children develop during creative arts sessions and I understand if we did not have these skills we would not progress, and achieve our end goal.

“ The creative arts permit individual children to conceptualise and understand their strength areas to compensate or overcome weakness in other areas. It also has the impact of motivating children, sustaining their interest and improving their self-esteem. It provides in-depth study and develops all round skills.”(Bloomfield, 2000, pg108).

Experience in the creative arts is therefore an essential part of a child’s learning.

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