

Aligning curriculum, pedagogies and assessment, an example of practice in Prep/Year 1

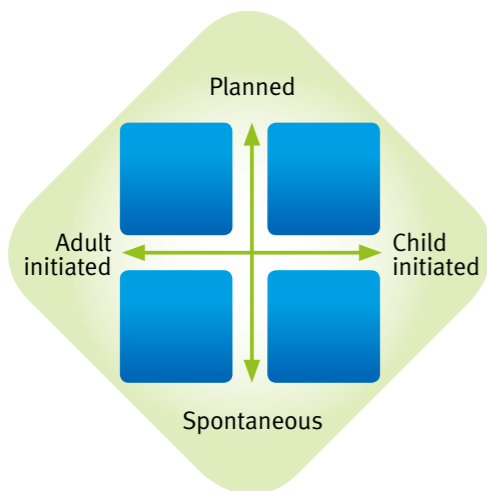
Project approach - 'Tea cups'

Australian Curriculum - The Arts - Visual Arts

Sequencing teaching and learning

How do I teach it?

Achieving range and balance*



Approach

- Project approach

Practices

- Spontaneous teacher-initiated project
- Partner project

Strategies

- Using images as a stimulus
- Using young learners' artwork as a stimulus
- Art gallery as a discussion stimulus

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies*

- Active
- Agentic
- Collaborative
- Creative
- Explicit
- Language rich and dialogic
- Learner focused
- Narrative
- Playful
- Responsive
- Scaffolded

*See over for an explanation of approaches, practices and strategies, and the characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies evident in this Example of practice.

Our students

Working together to ensure that every day, in every classroom, every student is learning and achieving

This is an example of how one teacher incorporated a project approach when implementing the Australian Curriculum learning area, The Arts: Visual Arts in a Prep/Year 1 class.

During the day, the teacher received the gift of a cup and saucer from a colleague. The young learners were very interested in the artwork visible on its surface. The teacher recognised the opportunities this interest provided the young learners to engage with knowledge of visual arts, develop skills, techniques and processes, and use materials as they explored a range of forms, styles and contexts.

Having recently experimented with the technique of paper mache, the young learners were keen to apply this technique to the context of making their own paper mache cups and saucers. Members of the Year 6 buddy class were invited to act as project buddies to assist with the technique of paper mache. This project buddy work happened for one hour per week for four weeks, each young learner working with their Year 6 buddy at one of six paper mache 'studios', both inside and outside the classroom. The teacher, teacher aide and buddy teacher were all on hand to assist the buddy artists with their work.

On completion of the paper mache, the teacher gathered the young learners in front of the interactive whiteboard to view photographs of cups and saucers decorated with artwork from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, works from Asia, and from different times. This viewing stimulated discussion about the role of the artists, crafts persons and designers, and the techniques, technologies, practices and processes they employed. These artworks were used as a stimulus to inspire the work of the young learners.

As the young learners painted their artworks onto their paper mache cups and saucers using acrylics, they shared their representational choices, which reflected their own interests and experiences, with their Year 6 buddies. The young learners were so engaged that the teacher decided to extend this aspect of the project by having the young learners create an associated art journal. The teacher asked the young learners questions about what materials and techniques they wanted to know more about.

The teacher created a set of conditions supporting the young learners to take on the role of artist, craftsperson and designer. Over a period of six weeks, the young learners created six different representations of their cup and saucer. The teacher introduced six different art materials and related techniques drawn from the Australian Curriculum that included: drawing with chalk pastels, wax crayons and watercolour pencils; collage with torn-paper; and, painting with watercolour and acrylic paints. These six artworks were bound together into the art journal.

The young learners were encouraged to make decisions about how to display their paper mache cups and saucers, and journals in a classroom art gallery. To provide an opportunity for the young learners to share and communicate the ideas of their artworks, the teacher invited the families for an informal afternoon viewing.

Throughout the project, the young learners were agentic, responding to their own artworks and participating as part of an audience, viewing, reflecting on, enjoying and appreciating their own and others' visual artworks.

Assessment

What do my students already know? How well do they know it?

Assessment **for learning** - enabling teachers to use information about learner progress to inform their teaching, including anecdotal observations from discussions with the young learners about what materials and techniques they wanted to know more about

Assessment **as learning** - enabling learners to reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future learning goals, including buddy and teacher feedback related to art materials and their related techniques

Assessment **of learning** - there was no summative assessment task attached to this project approach

Making judgments

How will I know how well my students have demonstrated the Achievement Standard?

Although there was no summative assessment task attached to this project approach, by monitoring learning through the use of assessment for and as learning related to the Australian Curriculum, Visual Arts, and providing feedback to the young learners, decisions could be made by the teacher

relating to what:

- the young learners knew and understood
- strengths, misconceptions and misunderstandings were evident
- were the next steps for learning.

Feedback

What do my students already know? What do my students need to learn next?

The teacher used informal observations to inform feedback.

The feedback provided the young learners with progress on their learning to date (*Katie, I noticed that you kept colour mixing your watercolours until you had a colour match that you were happy with*), and gave specific information about what to do next (*Remember to think about what colour choices you will*

make when you use the chalk pastels. Perhaps you could talk to your Year 6 buddy about your choices).

Ongoing, informal verbal feedback was given throughout this project, including feedback from the Year Six buddies.

Curriculum intent

What do my students need to learn?

Australian Curriculum - The Arts

Foundation (Prep) to Year 2 Band Description

In Foundation to Year 2, learning in The Arts builds on the Early Years Learning Framework. Students are engaged through purposeful and creative play in structured activities, fostering a strong sense of wellbeing and developing their connection with and contribution to the world.

In the Foundation Year, students undertake The Arts appropriate for their level of development.

They explore the arts and learn how artworks can represent the world and that they can make artworks to represent their ideas about the world. They share their artworks with peers and experience being an audience to respond to others' art making.

In Visual Arts, students:

- become aware of visual conventions and learn to notice visual detail
- explore how and why artworks are created and ways to use and apply visual conventions, such as line, shape, colour and texture
- learn how their ideas or subject matter can be developed through different forms, styles, techniques, materials and technologies
- learn about how and why artists, craftspeople and designers present their ideas through different visual representations, practices, processes and viewpoints

Foundation (Prep) to Year 2 Content Descriptions (as applicable to this project approach)

- Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks (ACAVAM107)
- Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience (ACAVAM108)

Foundation (Prep) to Year 2 Achievement Standard - Visual Arts

By the end of Year 2, students describe artworks they make and view and where and why artworks are made and presented.

Students make artworks in different forms to express their ideas, observations and imagination, using different techniques and processes.



Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies evident in this example of practice

The project approach was collaborative, allowing the young learners, their buddies and the teacher to engage in sustained shared thinking and action. Artistry was encouraged to explore new possibilities. The project was learner focused, acknowledging that not all learners may be comfortable in having their artwork displayed for all others to view. One young learner was adamant that the audience for his cup and saucer and associated artwork was his mother. He chose not to have his work displayed in the art gallery. The teacher showed responsiveness, incorporating a willingness to be flexible, ensuring that the learning was learner, content, context and discipline appropriate. The young learners were scaffolded by their older peers.

Although only five of the characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies have been highlighted here, there were opportunities to embed each of the eleven characteristics.

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies

Creative

Inviting children to consider “What if?” They encourage investigation, inquiry and artistry to explore new possibilities and ways of thinking.

Narrative

Acknowledging the important role that personal, written, oral and digital stories play in all our lives. They support both the production and comprehension of narratives through active processes, especially play.

Active

Requiring physical and embodied engagement across all areas of learning. Whether this is indoors or outdoors, activity is essential in order to activate children’s full potential. Their focus, concentration, motivation and self-regulation are enhanced through moving, doing and interacting within a range of learning environments.

Explicit

Making conscious for both learner and educator the relationships between the learning purpose and processes employed and the skills and understanding these processes support.

Playful

Encouraging children to make connections through imagination and creativity to explore alternate worlds and ways of thinking. These worlds, not bounded by reality, offer the freedom children need to innovate and enact new possibilities.

Agentic

Ensuring that children have voice in their learning. Their ideas and interests initiate, support and extend learning possibilities in order to build on their real-world understandings and experiences.

Language rich and dialogic

Ensuring that learning occurs in environments where rich language is modelled and employed by both children and educators. Meaningful dialogues between children, as well as between children and educators, are created to support thinking, learning, engagement and imagination.

Responsive

Incorporating a willingness to be flexible, to ensure that learning is always child, context, content and discipline appropriate. To achieve this, educators will balance opportunities for structure and spontaneity, open-ended and specific tasks, and child-led and educator-led learning.

Collaborative

Being social and co-constructed. Children and educators work together to identify ways of learning and understanding through sustained shared thinking and action.

Learner focused

Recognising that all children learn in different ways and that learning is a highly individualised process. They also acknowledge differences in children’s physical, intellectual, cultural, social and personal experiences and perspectives.

Scaffolded

Including such actions as modelling, encouraging, questioning, adding challenges, and giving feedback, provide the support needed to extend children’s existing capabilities. Effective scaffolding by both educators and other children provides active structures to support new learning; it is then progressively withdrawn as learners gain increasing mastery.

Approach - Project approach

Practices*

Spontaneous teacher-initiated project

Engaging the young learners in a spontaneous teacher-initiated project required the teacher to recognise the potential for learning outcomes linked to the curriculum. In this instance, on receiving a cup and saucer as a gift, the teacher saw the potential for the young learners to engage with the *Australian Curriculum*, Visual Arts. In initiating the project, the teacher also needed to gauge the young learners’ interest in the potential project to ensure maximum engagement.

Partner project

The benefits of using Year 6 buddies were two-fold. Firstly, relationships between the young learners and their older buddies were strengthened as they met together each week to work on a joint project. The older students scaffolded the young learners by modelling, encouraging and giving feedback. Secondly, the older students supported the teacher in managing the logistics of having twenty-five young learners working on paper mache at the same time. They assisted with setting up before the sessions, supporting the young learners to adopt appropriate behaviours, including cleaning up and organising materials.

** These are examples of the Practices implemented, and not intended as a finite list.*

Strategies*

Using images as a stimulus

Using images from an internet search engaged the young learners’ prior knowledge and stimulated conversations relating to their own experiences:

- ‘My Mum loves poppies. Maybe I could paint poppies on my cup and saucer.’
- ‘We went to the beach on the weekend. I’m going to paint the ocean. It’s all blues and greens.’
- ‘My Pop taught me how our mob paint emus. That’s what I’m going to do.’

Using young learners’ artwork as a stimulus

Using the young learners’ paper mache cups as a stimulus for further 2D artworks, showed them that their artwork was valued and promoted high levels of engagement.

Art gallery as a discussion stimulus

A classroom art gallery allowed a space and opportunity for the young learners to engage in conversations to discuss and respond to their own and others’ artworks.

** These are examples of the Strategies implemented, and not intended as a finite list.*

Questions for teacher-based reflection

- How is an array of effective pedagogies ensured?
- How are holistic development and academic goals balanced?
- How is a balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated learning experiences fostered?
- How are positive personal relationships with children nurtured?
- How is playfulness in learning and teaching interactions embedded?
- How are high-quality, verbal interactions encouraged?
- How are interactions to scaffold cognitive challenge and develop higher order thinking incorporated?
- How are real-life, imaginary, spontaneous and planned experiences integrated?

Questions for school-based reflection

- How is the provision of training, resources and support considered?
- How are the professional demands on teachers, and the lead-in time required to establish new approaches, recognised and supported?