



Art

Chris Tay – edutaytion.uk – 15.4.2023

Art is a specific order of knowledge

- Knowledge in the arts is created via evidence from personal experience mediated through expressive conventions. Because that knowledge arises from a concern for sharing a view of the world as it is personally known, any truth claims contained in the knowledge are considered existential, relating to the experience of being in the world.
- Knowledge creation has two distinct processes: expression and interpretation.
 - In the former, personal experience is the source of ideas that are transformed through an artistic medium such as musical performance, poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, dance, etc, in order to communicate that experience. Validation of those ideas as knowledge relies on its reception by expert and audience alike.
 - However, aesthetic experience can also result in the creation of personal knowledge through responding to an existing work of art in a way that opens us to some new insight that in-forms or re-forms our personal experience of being in the world.
- This twin dynamic of creation and appreciation is central to the experience of existential truth, most notably in a growing sense of agency as an individual, in developing self-identity and in acquiring understanding of and empathy for other sentient beings in the world.
- The essential route to truth is revelatory and this is reflected in aesthetic thinking which in the growing child demonstrates a developing awareness of instances of personal and social significance, and of the value in individual and shared experience.
- Aspects of the self and the world 'as it is known by me' are revealed through aesthetic experience if we design learning that has integrity in its pursuit of existential truth based on the personal experience of the learner.

Three types of knowledge for Art

Practical knowledge – the knowledge needed for making Art

Theoretical knowledge – about Art and its history

Disciplinary knowledge – helping children to understand what Art is and what Art can do

Practical knowledge

- A set of defined skills and procedures for making Art
- Art as a subject consists of a number of disciplines
- Schools should select a few areas to develop strengths in

Drawing	Painting	Printing	Photography
Collage	Textiles	Design/graphic	Ceramics
Craft	Sculpture	Film/media	Installation

Continuous and blocked work in practical knowledge – one approach

- Weekly drawing lesson (20. mins) using Drawing is a Class Act
 - Autumn: Line, Tone; Spring: Texture, Pattern, Looking; Summer: Figures & Faces, Chalk & Charcoal
- Drawing
- Painting
- Printing
- Ceramics
- Sculpture

Theoretical knowledge

- Links are to be made from the practical or thematic focus to the work of other artists:
 - What have other artists made on this subject?
 - How have other artists solved the problems of making?
- 'Other artists' refers to artists of any of the following contexts:

Western

European, American

Eastern

Asian, Oriental, Islamic

Southern

Native/S American, African, Maori, Aboriginal

Early

Ancient civilisation, Medieval

Middle

Renaissance, Baroque, Romantic

Later

Modern, Post-modern, Contemporary

Disciplinary knowledge

- Disciplinary knowledge represents the truth making aspects of a subject
- It is about how aesthetic knowledge is created by a combination of the expressive conventions - practical knowledge (how it is done) and theoretical knowledge (how others have done it) - but it is not Art until these are used to express personal knowledge
- The raw materials of Art come from experience and these are validated as knowledge, open to scrutiny by others, through the expressive conventions of the various disciplines
- Those conventions of expression (how we make Art) allow us to express the ‘world-as-it-is-to-me’, the existential world, in the form of representations
- “Representation can be thought of, first, as aimed at transforming the contents of consciousness within the constraints and affordances of a material” Eisner (2002) p6

Disciplinary knowledge

- Disciplinary knowledge relies on competence in practical knowledge
- In order to make representations of experience, the child has to be systematically taught the conventions that are the accepted modes of expression
- Disciplinary knowledge is fostered through a particular way of working that
 - is grounded in the child's experience
 - is located in the context of what other artists have made in response to similar experiences
 - and then proceeds through training in a specific form or medium to the production of a work of art that represents the child's personal response to that experience.
- That particular way of working gives rise to Art's signature pedagogy

Art's signature pedagogy

- The key elements of the teaching sequence are:
 - Fostering the ideas to be communicated
 - Getting the children to the point where they have something meaningful to express
 - Provoking personal responses to experiences from life or from other works of art
 - Articulating what they feel about this event, object, person, situation
 - Developing ideas through elaboration, trial, dialogue
 - Developing competence
 - In the use of tools
 - Choice of materials
 - Design of composition
 - Connecting with the work of other artists
 - Genre, period, culture
 - Each of these could be the starting point, there is no set order

Planning a unit of work

- Determine the discipline and the practical knowledge that has to be taught
- Identify how you are going to initiate and develop children's ideas based on their personal experience of or responses to aesthetic encounters
- Decide on the tangible outcome, the object or representation the children will make and consider the mode for this outcome – do you want children to make art that is representational, functional or expressive?
- Organise resources
- Many schools identify themes for units of work such as Portraits, Nature, Pattern. Interpret the theme in terms of the learning in practical, theoretical and disciplinary knowledge. Decide what your starting point is – beginning with a new material or technique (practical), with the work of an artist (theoretical) or with an experience to be communicated (disciplinary).

Progression in specific modes of making

- How is complexity developed?
- In each area, children should learn techniques that enable them to make art either **representationally, functionally or expressively**.
- Each of these modes will have their own trajectory of development from novice to expert.
- **Representational:** the extent to which the child is able to record actuality in terms of appearance (shape, form, detail), position and relationships within observed space
- **Functional:** the extent to which the child is able to design and achieve objects for practical purposes
- **Expressive:** the extent to which the child is able to articulate their responses to an encounter through a chosen medium

Progression in the three areas of knowledge

- What does it mean to get better at Art? To do more as a result of knowing more?
- Getting better in any mode of making can be assessed in degrees of **fluency**, the disposition to **experiment** and the achievement of **authentic** work.
- **Fluency** relates to **practical knowledge** and develops through automaticity and proficiency in the use of materials and techniques.
- **Experimenting** emerges when acquired **theoretical knowledge** about art allows for going beyond the norm to produce work of originality.
- **Authentic** work demonstrates the learner's capacity to perform their thinking through the application of **disciplinary knowledge**.