LOOKING FOR CHANGE

LOOKING FOR CHANGE

ROY SMITH

Tate Modern

SHELBY WOLF

University of Colorado at Boulder, USA

Placing value on the traditional skills of observation and drawing, Looking for Change offers you and your pupils a model for engaging with art, using discussion, drawing and reflection to affect change in how we learn.

The following is split between two voices, artist Roy Smith and researcher Dr Shelby Wolf. Sometimes their text appears side by side in columns on one page, and sometimes Roy's or Shelby's text fills the page. The texts can be read either in conjunction with each other, or separately. This two way conversation describes both the practical elements of the project and the theoretical approach that underpins it.

To begin using the Looking for Change approach with your pupils, follow the schedule of work (outlined on page 10) which provides an action plan for 8 weeks of project activity. The subsequent sections describe the suggested activity for each week and provide ideas that are developed in more detail in the pages highlighted in yellow.

Made possible by support from UBS

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago I took my children to an art event at a local beach. An artist had arranged a series of competitions for all the families who had come along. We built sandcastles, made things out of flotsam, and generally had an enjoyable hour or two. At one point we were given vegetables to make prominent figures from history (we made Winston Churchill out of potatoes and carrots crudely cut with a plastic knife). One girl of maybe 12 years carved a beautiful head out of a potato! It was amazingly detailed and delicate.
We all gave appreciative "Aah" noises except for the artist who regarded this small wonder sorrowfully. He agreed that it was indeed a beautiful object, but questioned its craft, as he explained it was *a bit like using a typewriter, nobody needs to do it anymore.* Although it was very accurate and showed skill, it was redundant, for conceptual art is more concerned with ideas than skill alone. Our crudely stuck together Churchill potato won.

This remark of the artist stuck with me for a long time. Was something wrong here? Why was the representational craft of art being rejected? I had been teaching for over 10 years by this time, and I was a firm believer in the importance of these "redundant skills." It's very easy to dismiss more traditional aspects of art such as drawing and carving, but let's not forget that in an artist's early days this "craft" was probably the spark that put him/her onto the conceptual road and one that s/he perfected until eventually the choice was made not to use it any more. The concept can become the work, but the concept is connected inherently to the legacy of our first experiences of art, which is the observation and interpretation of the world around us.

Yes, this does begin with Mr. Potato head with a line for a nose and improbably thin arms coming out of where the absent ears should be (this is the child's *symbolic* concept of face and body), but it then becomes informed by observing the world around us and recognizing that everybody doesn't live in a house from which Mr. Fussy will emerge and compliment us on our cotton wool clouds. This is "cute" when children are very small, but what happens when they're still drawing this at the age of 10? Their intellect becomes so far removed from their ability that one day they look at that drawing that every adult has said is great for so long and they think, *This picture is rubbish. They've been having me on. I can't draw at all.* Every primary school teacher will have witnessed the sudden reluctance and lack of confidence that happens to children around the age of 9 in connection to anything that may make them look ridiculous. It's also the time that they make the decision whether they can draw or not; usually not. But isn't this obvious? You're either born with the ability to draw or not, right? Wrong. Those who can draw can do so due to exposure to drawing and being stretched in the skill of looking through language. "That's lovely but what would happen if your legs were really that thin? How many fingers do you have?" Art becomes a dialogue that is constantly referenced to real life experiences. Drawing isn't just looking; it's thinking, it's solving problems, making decisions, noticing the detail, and making connections.

Children's drawings tell stories that, even if they are superficially very similar to the child's next to them, will be completely different when verbalized. If a child loses confidence and enjoyment of art (almost horrific to imagine when they are very young), then what is being lost? A form of expression older than writing? Possibly older than language? Art is a vital story-telling tool that can bring our imagination to life and even help us to understand this dizzyingly visual world around us. Our visual literacy depends upon our interpretation of signs and symbols in order to understand "the bigger picture" but these are secondary representations of the real thing. A child's drawing of a cup often refers to the symbol in their head rather than the object in front of them. We need to encourage our children to look for themselves and make up their own minds.

Visual literacy allows us to explore language and analyse detail. In our project, Looking For Change, we believe that we can do this through encouraging language and observation through art and that this will then led to a more personal conceptualization born from experience and dialogue. There is so much in the world that we take for granted and we need to stop, have a look around, notice the detail and pull the wool away from our own eyes. We are becoming desensitized to detail and over-reliant upon supplied information. Art isn't just for the magic few who confuse us with tales of redundant typewriters. It's much more than believing that you are helping a child by telling her that tree trunks are brown. They are in fact every colour but brown. Don't believe me? Go on, I challenge you, go outside and have a look at the real thing…

Roy Smith
Hythe, England, April, 2009

Gallery workshop, Photo © Tate

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

LET'S GET STARTED

This resource has been designed to support learning in schools using the language of art to inform and enrich thematic-based teaching in a creative curriculum. Over 7 or 8 sessions, pupils and teachers will learn together by using collections in galleries or museums as the inspiration for language, experimentation, and articulation. This will be achieved primarily through the discussion and observation of artefacts during offsite visits that will then be explored further in school through practical activities. Here is a breakdown of the timescale of activities. These aren't set in stone, but we anticipate that you will visit the gallery twice; the first time is for initial exploration and the second for more specific research.

GALLERY – Pre-visit

Week 1: SCHOOL – Introduce your theme

Week 2: GALLERY – First visit

Weeks 3-6: SCHOOL – Practical exploration

Week 7: GALLERY – Second visit
(this could be at any time from Week 2)

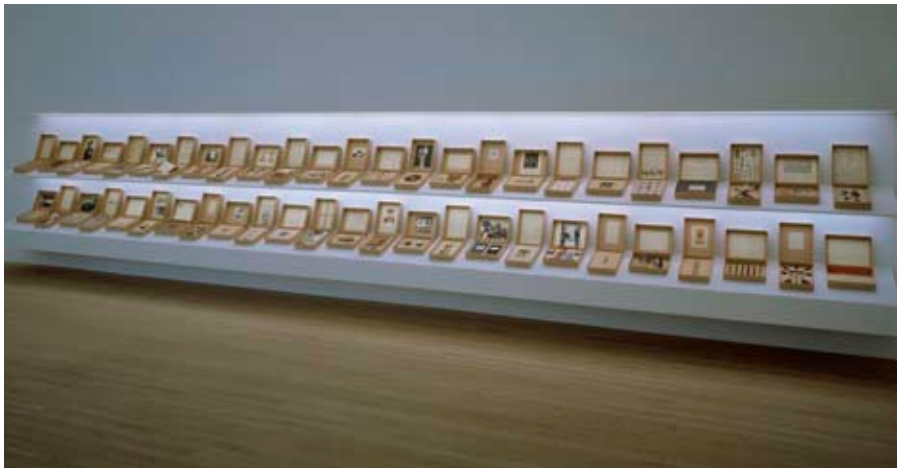
Week 8: SCHOOL –
Completion and reflection

THEMATIC PLANNING

Thematic-based teaching aligns perfectly with an integrated curriculum, and both are linked to careful, yet flexible planning. While observing Roy's sessions either in school or at the Tate, he often weaves together different media and brings in writing as well. In one series of sessions, Roy began by teaching the children how to use cameras. Then they set off to photograph their environment – their families, the neighbourhood, objects that intrigued them. When the children returned for another session, he had them cut up their photographs and reassemble them in a photomontage. While some children followed the outlines of people they had photographed and arranged them artfully to demonstrate their daily life, one boy remembered Roy's comment that this kind of surreal artwork is often like a dreamscape. The boy cut out a series of swirling curves and placed his sleeping form in the centre of the vortex. When he began his written narrative he wrote, "I tried to awake from a deep sleep in which I dreamed of the darkness as dark as the sky, as black as a cave." Creating abstract images from familiar photos resulted in the children's high engagement, packed with multiple opportunities for developing their language and imaginative thinking.

Pupil's artwork, Photo © Roy Smith

GALLERY PRE-VISIT



Susan Hiller *From the Freud Museum* 1991–6

THE GALLERY AS SMORGASBORD

Don't try and see it all; that will leave you mentally bloated. Think of it as a meal. Don't try and eat everything on the menu – select and savour. When first taking young people to the gallery have a plan. This should be formulated *before* you get to the gallery. It may be concerned with a particular theme: travel, cultures, environments, social history, machines, war, etc., whatever is relevant because this needs to feed what you are doing at school. Thus, the gallery work with children is not a starting point. *Your* pre-visit is. If you prepare for your visit well, then you can arrive with an intention when you bring the children. Here's what to do.

1. Plan a visit to an appropriate place dependant upon your studies in school. Galleries and museums provide lots of information about what's available. Seek this out.

2. Go and see the place first! Get all the logistics worked out so that your trip with the children can focus on the learning, not the lost coat. Preferably, go with a friend or colleague. Avoid reading the explanation alongside the artwork for the moment; instead, imagine your own response and talk about this. Then read the text, and you'll be surprised by your own insights.

3. Digest what you have seen, take notes and collect images, and change your plan in light of what you have experienced.

4. Plan on getting the young people there with a purpose. *Don't* feel you need to see it all, confine yourselves to a particular space and discuss the works – select and savour.

Jeff Wall *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)* 1993

TEACHER RESEARCH

Michael Fullan (2007) argues that successful schools are places where teachers have a "mindset of being empowered, proactive, and optimistic" (p.144), and they often achieve this through collaboration. He suggests that teachers need "deep engagement with other colleagues and with mentors in exploring, refining, and improving their practice" (p.55).

When Looking for Change began, Roy and artist Claire Smith explained the purposes of the project, but very quickly took teachers into the gallery. But they didn't try to take them on a grand tour. Instead, we visited specific rooms with specific purposes in mind. Claire took us to a room of photographs by Cindy Sherman – an artist who photographs herself in a variety of costumes. She plays the protagonist in small scenes: a woman sitting in a bar weeping, another woman staring solemnly down at the camera, a third young woman standing on a lonely road gazing off into the distance. These highly cinematic stills reveal the stereotypical roles that are often found in female portrayals in film. Claire asked the teachers to discuss what might have occurred before and after the image was taken, and the teachers spent several long stretches of talk, debating the past and future lives of these women. Sherman's choice to leave her work untitled helped the teachers look closely and ponder the possibilities. Thus, having a focus both literally and figuratively as well as engaging in collaborative discussion provided the teachers with deep insight into not only the art in the room, but how best to use gallery spaces for their own work.

A SEQUENCE FOR YOUR WORK

The following sections explain how Looking For Change works within the 8 week time period. The advice below is based upon three years of working with young people in the gallery, and it's one method that really works. Consider this structure: discussion, drawing, reflection. Regardless of the institution you visit or the materials that you use, this should be your foundation.

WEEK 1: SCHOOL – INTRODUCE YOUR THEME

You will need sketchbooks, pencils, reference materials.

PUPIL RESEARCH

It is expected that you will have already discussed your theme or focus with the pupils prior to your first visit and that they are already aware of the context. The gallery is not the source of all answers or the subject itself; it is there to compliment your pupils' research.

Explore your theme with pupils in school and use secondary images from books or the Internet. Project these on a larger scale and ask the pupils what they believe is the story connected to these images. Remember to point out that these images are copies. Discuss the subtle differences when you see the real thing, particularly if it's sculpture!

Explain that you will be visiting a gallery and reinforce the need for safety, respect for others, and respect for the gallery itself. It is very important that they understand that they must be in sight of an adult at all times and not to wander away. Have all children wear their school identity badges just in case.

CHILD ETHNOGRAPHERS

Since the publication of Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) *Ways with Words,* researchers and teachers have been looking for ways to provide children with research opportunities. Taking on the role of young ethnographers, the pupils learn some basic research techniques. In Heath's work, she insisted that when the children were collecting data, the answers to their questions "had to come from at least two sources, one oral and one written. Otherwise, their data would not be accepted as reliable" (p.318). Helping pupils build on their meta-cognitive skills – being aware of what they are learning and trying to learn – helps change their disposition for learning. As David Perkins (1994) suggests "art provides a context especially well suited for cultivating thinking dispositions… helping learners mobilize their mental powers. Art assists in a natural way. Looking at art invites, rewards, and encourages a thoughtful disposition, because works of art demand thoughtful attention to discover what they have to show and say" (p.4).

School workshop, Photo © Shelby Wolf

WEEK 2: FIRST GALLERY VISIT

You will need: sketchbooks and pencils.

Gallery workshop, Photo © Tate

SEEING SPACES

This is THE most important aspect of this project, and if you have prepared well by visiting the gallery in advance then hopefully you won't end up wandering around like a lost shopper. Your first visit should follow the guidelines below as we have found that it gives the pupils the opportunity to really explore artwork in a way that they probably haven't tried before, but which enables them to see the gallery as an accessible space. Your second visit can happen at any time during your 8 weeks and should compliment and inform your thematic work.

DISCUSSION: Split the pupils into as small a set of groups as you can, and allow them to lead the conversation. Use open questions: "Why did you choose this?" and "What do you think is the story?" Allow other students to join in the conversation, and above all give them time and opportunity to do this.

DRAWING: Ask your pupils to look closely at the work and find details to draw and then make notes around the drawing itself. The main thing is that they will have explored, fairly intensively, a very small, self-selected group of images and artefacts and have had the chance to voice their ideas.

REFLECTION: Make sure that your pupils have been making notes around their drawings, and then they can return to their small groups to discuss their choices and stories in front of their chosen artworks. Allow other members of the group to offer their own interpretations as well.

Gallery workshop, Photo © Tate

THE ART OF SEEING

I think it's critical to stop and think about why Roy would call the project "Looking for Change." First looking implies deep concentration. The world is a visual place, yet we ignore much of what we see. Images fly past, even when they've been carefully placed to call for our attention, such as curated works in a gallery. If you've ever watched people in a museum, some are intensely looking, but most are on the move. They treat art as a checklist – moving from Monet's *Water-Lilies,* to Picasso's *Weeping Woman,* to Dali's *Lobster Telephone.* They spin in and out of the Tate Modern's *Rothko Room.* Viewers like these visit museums in the same way as travellers who visit seven countries in six days! So the second part of Roy's project title asks a basic question: How can we *change* this?

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) asked similar questions in *The Art of Seeing:* "What is the nature of the aesthetic experience? Is it the same for everyone, or does it differ?… Is it possible to facilitate its occurrence? On the basis of the answers to these questions, more informed steps can be taken to improve visual education in schools, museums, the media, and perhaps most important, in personal life" (p.3). The foundation of discussion, drawing, and reflection is a way to take more informed steps in the education of young children's visual literacy, for "visual *illiteracy*… detract[s] from the quality of life and leads to a cultural impoverishment that is very real" (p.2).

ADVICE ON DRAWING

Here is a list of some Do's and Don'ts that may help you through this:

— First of all, don't ask your pupils to do something you wouldn't feel comfortable doing yourself! Practise first.
— Demonstrate how you would like them to begin their drawing. Take time on this so that they can see the level of care and observation needed. This means that you cannot finish this drawing during the demonstration. Very bad. If you only take five minutes, why should they take an hour?
— When working on compositions, always use visuals connected to the elements of that composition (preferably ones that they have studied/collected themselves). If they want a car in this image, then what car? What angle?
— Draw from something that you can see. Accept that the imagination is being explored through discussion and reflection. Expecting young people to be able to draw what's "in their mind" without resources to aid this is expecting too much. This will end in cotton wool trees, cotton clouds, and cotton hair – urgh!
— Always face what you are drawing (this includes your paper!). If you have to turn your head then information is lost; if the paper is wonky, then so too the drawing, and this makes children growl.
— Always look at the subject of the drawing as much as the paper itself. Eyes should be flicking up and down (unless they have photographic memories of course).
— Discourage the use of rubber erasers. If your pupils lack confidence then there'll be nothing left except some scruffy dents in the paper… even if they do look busy. Try fine-line pens instead if this is an issue.

FROM "ARTISTICALLY UNDISCOVERED" TO DISCOVERY

Roy's suggestions align with Blake and Cassidy's (1999) advice for "drawing speed… use a civilized walking pace when you draw" (p.23). Even more important, Roy is asking for your participation and demonstration. Often teachers are put in the position of saying things like "Do this" and "Do that!" But Roy's asking you to do it yourself as well. Your participation is key to showing your children your own engagement in the activity, and your demonstration models just how to engage.

Drawing from life calls for focused attention – from the object[s] to the paper and back again, a cycle that continues throughout any session. And when the children work with Roy, he asks them to draw complicated objects, never simple ones. In a recent session with Roy, he placed a full-sized human skeleton on the table. All the children agreed that to capture the curve of the hip, the bend in the knee, the immensely complicated foot was hard work! Blake and Cassidy argue that when drawing from life "there's a problem with too much information. You are seeing more than you can ever possibly get down on paper. Putting pen to paper feels a bit like trying to catch a waterfall in a cup. A small sense of hopelessness sets in" (p.30). Although several children despaired in trying to put this skeleton to paper, with Roy's encouragement they persisted.

In a section of their book entitled "What If the World Doesn't Like My Drawings," Blake and Cassidy argue that the world will soon be close to 8 billion people, and it would be ridiculously impossible

School workshop, Photo © Roy Smith

School workshop, Photo © Claire Smith

— Never allow them to cross their work out. I don't know where or when this started, but it is universal and must be stopped now!
— Strongly discourage starting again as this is endless and is as bad as crossing it out.
— Always encourage respect for the work of others and to never interfere with someone else's work.
— When they say "finished!" gently ask if they can see anything that they may have missed. Accept that they will "finish" almost straight away at first but this is often due to a rushed demonstration, unfamiliarity with the material, or just plain ignoring your instructions (fingernails can be so interesting).

to have everyone agree on the efficacy of your work. They suggest: "Your job is not to poll 8 billion people for their collective taste in artwork. Your job is to take your pen, pencil, brush, crayon, chalk, and greasy thumbprint – and set them to paper. Our concluding suggestion? Draw, produce, create. Don't criticize yourself. Don't cringe when someone looks right through your drawings – and don't fly off on wings of ecstasy when someone else loves them. You're working for yourself here. And your Mum, of course" (p.22).

Pupil's artwork, Photo © Claire Smith

WEEKS 3–6: IN THE CLASSROOM

INVENTING INVESTIGATIONS

Ideally you need to spend at least one whole group session per week to do this project or split group work. One way to do this would be to use your support staff to look after the main group after you have them settled on a task. This will allow you to work with a small group for a specific and intense session as well as listen to their language.

The direction of your investigations with your pupils will depend upon your chosen theme. Remember the structure: discussion, drawing/annotation, and reflection. Try and get at least two of these aspects into each session that you have with your pupils. In the gallery we always aim to deal with all three techniques, which help to reinforce each other by directly referencing artworks through distinct activities.

Here, we have devised a series of activities that can give you a "way in" through discussion, drawing (practical work), and reflection. Combine these in any way that you wish to create lessons that are particular to the abilities of your pupils. These activities are far from exhaustive, and you should add your own expertise and experience to this so that we can develop an even richer document.

CREATING CURRICULUM

At this point, you might be asking yourself when is Roy going to tell you *exactly* what to do? But keep in mind that it is, indeed, "your investigation." Whatever project you choose has got to come from your purposes, your goals, your creativity, and most important, the needs of your children. Too often teachers are deprofessionalized and deskilled by outside forces that demand that they follow a particular curriculum lockstep.

But if we want children to grow in their language and learning, what should be at the core of the curriculum? Research suggests that a teacher's central role is to help children *make meaning*, an action that invites questions, comments, and conjectures. As Bruner (2005) argues, effective instruction includes teaching children "good guessing," learning that "facing up to dilemmas and paradoxes… leads to enriching conjecture." Adding your own expertise and experience – in short, your own educated guesses – will help set up an environment for exploration (Wolf, 2009). Yes, this will involve both time-consuming and mentally challenging work, but it's designed to be intellectually stimulating, devised to highlight the vibrancy of a teacher's professional life.

Gallery workshop, Photo © Tate

Pupil's artwork, Photo © Roy Smith

DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

— Your discussion sessions should be based upon child-led storytelling initially. It is important that they realize that their ideas are valid but that they need to be able to express why they have come to this conclusion. Encourage them to articulate an idea and then allow them to expand upon this to create a more complex story. The imagined details and histories will bring the story to life visually through language and will create a dialogue among pupils that will inform other imagery that they explore together later.
— Begin with a carefully chosen selection of images that you can spread on the table or across a wall. Ask the pupils to choose one that they would like to talk about in connection to your theme.
— Create your own gallery of images by asking the pupils to group them together through their relationship (i.e., colours, textures, emotions, etc.) Discuss these choices.
— Choose two contrasting methods or concepts (i.e., paintings/sculptures or dreams/reality and make pairs of images). Ask questions: Can two opposites tell a similar story? Which two convey the same emotion?
— Choose an image that can be discussed in pairs. Allow 3 or 4 minutes to talk about this together. Get them to present their findings/ideas to the rest of the group.
— Brainstorm words connected to your theme and match these with images that you or your pupils have gathered.
— Show the pupils individual images and ask what is happening, what they believe is the story contained in what they see. Don't forget to ask them to articulate their reasoning. Then ask what they think could have happened before and also what they think could happen next.
— In groups, or individually, ask the pupils to select 3 images and to put them in an order, a bit like a comic strip. Ask them to describe their reasoning for this extended narrative.

Pupil's artwork, Photo © Roy Smith

DRAWING OUT LANGUAGE

Roy's discussion activities are designed to draw out as much language as possible. He begins with the idea of small groups, and then puts them into pairs allowing for maximum talk. In Roy's sessions, the children often spend as much time talking and writing as they do making art. Still, it's all in the *making*. And because meaning making is individual and complex, Roy makes ample room for multiple meanings. Bruner (2005) emphasizes the importance of "appreciating divergent perspectives." He suggests: "There are always *different* ways of understanding things – kids certainly know that! But it's important not only to know it but to respect it."

Through such open spaces for talk, children learn to open their minds to new experiences. With every trip to England I interview the study's twelve target children, asking them to interpret images from Tate Modern. In their initial interviews, they had a limited view of art. A landscape painting was *art,* but a Barbara Hepworth sculpture of three smooth, pale stones was WHAT!? Chicken eggs? While one child correctly identified the piece as a sculpture, she then quickly stated: "I think he's just making a decoration. I can't think about what the artist is trying to think about. I don't know what this means to me. It's just a rock." Now the children shape extended narratives – finding the story in the art, and it's *all* art. Yet, why is story so important? Barbara Hardy (1977) says "narrative, like lyric or dance is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention used by artists to control, manipulate, and order experience, but as a primary act of mind transferred from art to life" (p.12). And in the process of making that transfer, pupils learn to articulate their ideas with more creativity as well as clarity. Robert Coles (1989) famously called it the "call of stories," but in that call there is contemplation of moral dilemmas and an opportunity to reflect on how art connects to our lives.

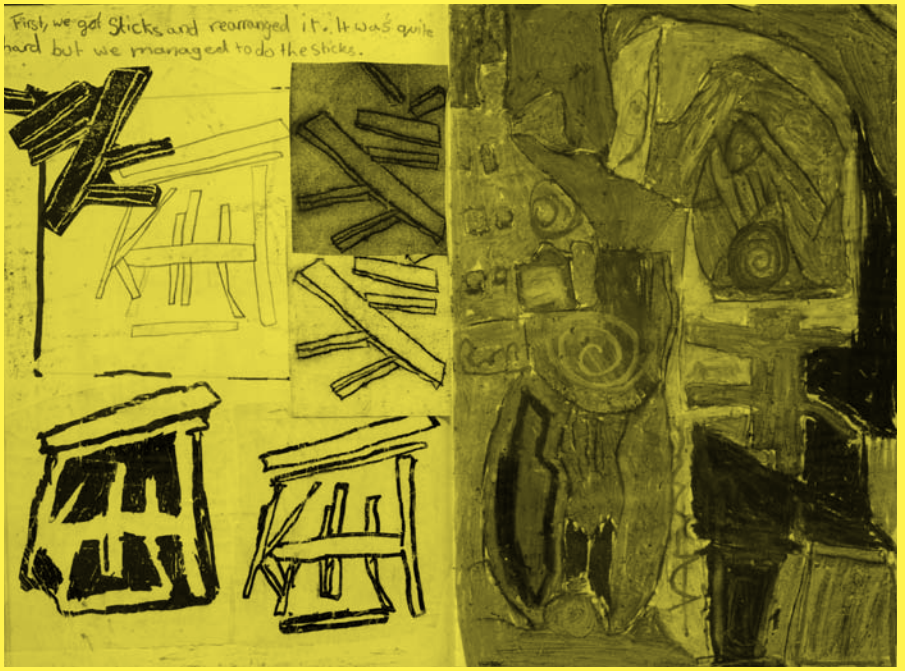
DRAWING ACTIVITIES

— PENCILS: Fairly obvious but tricky none-the-less. Use 2B or 3B pencils (drawing and shading pencils) and quality paper (at least 110gsm cartridge). Avoid pencil erasers. (Tip: Enlarge small drawings to A3 on the photocopier, great for adding colour or collage to later.)
— FIBRE TIP PENS: Varying thickness depending upon the size of your paper, but great for bold marks. And because you can't rub it out, mistakes are more easily ignored than pencil. Try using a damp paintbrush (number 6 brushes) to "paint" over these lines to add areas of shade.
— CHALK PASTELS: Lovely colours if you buy a decent set but limited, pale, and a bit hard if you buy "classpacks." Remember that pastels can be fairly crude compared to pencils, so you need to work on a larger scale (A3). You really must use sugar paper for this because the textured surface grips the pastel; use anything else, and it will smudge and slide off the page upsetting children noisily. Use spray fixative or hairspray to "fix" the pastel to the paper and prevent smudging and fading.
— OIL PASTELS: Better than chalk because they smudge less and have stronger colours. Use with fabric paints or coloured ink to create a "textile" or stained glass effect. The thick lines of oil pastel will resist the dye.
— MONOPRINTS: Use a roller to apply block printing inks to a piece of plastic (photocopy acetate is good for this) or even directly onto a smooth class table (messy to clean, but you can make huge prints this way). Place a clean piece of paper over the top of this, and use a ballpoint pen to draw directly on the paper (you can also press your finger or finger nails to make marks). This will

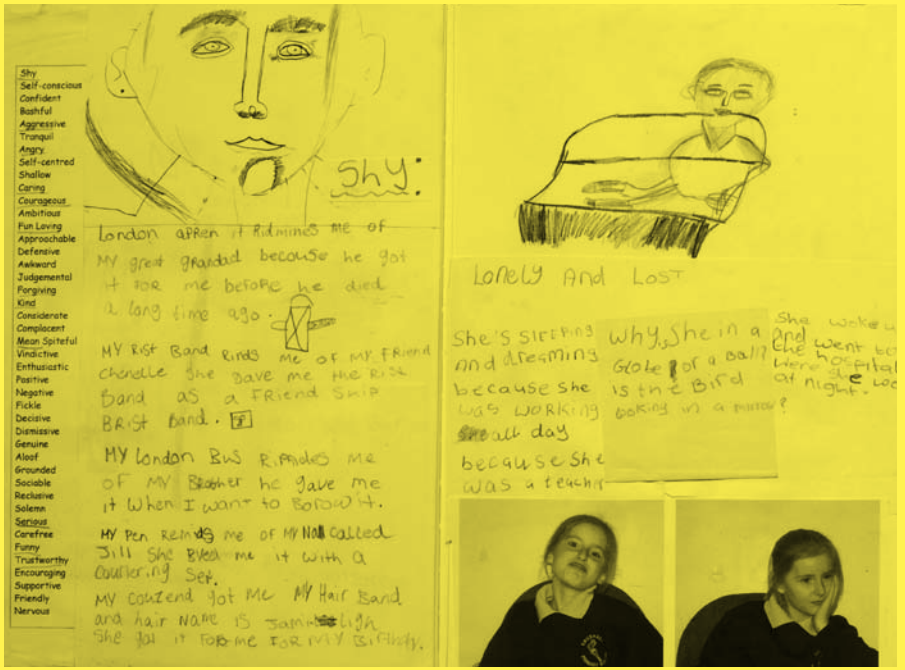
THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Just as language is the "tool of tools," in learning about artistic technique there are the tools of the trade. Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan (2007) suggest that this kind of "studio thinking" is focused on "developing craft" in which pupils "learn to use a variety of tools (e.g., viewfinders, brushes, pottery wheels) and materials (e.g., charcoal, paint, clay). Teachers demonstrate the use of tools and materials and guide students as they work. Students are meant to learn the varied properties of tools and materials and the range of ways that they can be employed in a skilled and mindful way. Students develop a sense of what they can and cannot do with different tools and materials, and they become more adept at choosing the right tools and materials for the piece they wish to make" (p.33). Yet, when these researchers say "teachers," they mean art teachers. So, teachers who are not trained as artists need to develop this same sense. In understanding materials and technique, we both generate and communicate our own ideas more skillfully, but can also read images better as we understand how ideas are manifested through particular and very highly considered materials.

Some of the processes Roy describes seem approachable and easy – pencils, paper, fibre tip pens, and even oil pastels. Some seem expensive – the quality of the brush or paper and the need for digital cameras – but that is much more easily conquered these days through small grants and the help of your IT person. Some seem messy – acrylics, water colours, and even collage – but they are still manageable, if you're willing to set it up and establish the boundaries for use.



Pupil's artwork, Photo © Tate



Pupil's artwork, Photo © Tate

attract the ink below, and when you peel it off you will have a negative "etched" monoprint.
— PRESS PRINT: Fantastic material for instant multiple prints. This is the same foam material that you often find under pizzas. Simply draw on this creating indentations, roll block printing ink over the surface and press onto paper. You can cut up the used foam material for sculpture, or collage. Display both to explore positive and negative space.
— ACRYLIC PAINT: Buy the best you can, preferably acrylics with a good number 6 brush. You might as well paint with your eyebrow if you use the brushes commonly found in school. Demonstrate clearly how you expect the children to use the paints, keeping the brush clean and dry at all times (each pupil should have a scrap of newspaper to dry their brush after washing). Use a palate (don't share!) to mix colours and shades (margarine lids are perfect). Don't give them every colour at first because they'll revert to past behaviour, and you'll have a right khaki mess.
— WATERCOLOURS: Invest in the professional sets for this. The pupils have to use them differently because of the size of the blocks and the fine-ness of the paintbrushes (number 6 is fine). Use pencils to lightly draw the image and then add watercolour to this. You must use good quality cartridge for this. Don't let anyone catch you using photocopy paper!
— COLLAGE: Collect images from newspapers and magazines to create an image based upon your theme or in reference to an artwork.
— ABSTRACT COLLAGE: Draw with torn paper of different shades. Work from objects in front of you or images from books/photographs. Add detail to this with ink, paint, or pastel creating a layered image.

Finally, others seem not only messy but complex – especially the monoprints and press print.

Watching Roy and Claire work with their students over the years has made these many techniques seem less daunting, but I've had the privilege of observing them closely. Without an artist to instruct you, you'll want to experiment on your own. Start with techniques that are comfortable and build up your repertoire as your own expertise grows. As you progress, keep in mind that "tools, materials, conventions, and skills [need to be] introduced in the context of larger projects that require students to 'think with these skills,' rather than as tricks to be mastered for their own sakes" (p.33). In other words, don't take on a technique for the technique's sake. Think carefully about which technique will meet your larger curricular goals.

Pencil and paper are a good place to start, and Roy would argue that they are the foundation of most artistic techniques. In addition, Roy's point about avoiding pencil erasers is a part of his philosophical foundation, for it prevents children from constantly worrying about mistakes. In their marvellous little book called *Drawing for the Artistically Undiscovered*, Quentin Blake and John Cassidy (1999) steadfastly believe in the no eraser rule. In a section humorously entitled "On Misteakes" they state, "We don't believe in them. You'll note, in fact, that the erasers have all been painstakingly removed from our pencils. We did this ourselves, by hand, at our eraser-removal plant because you won't (can't) make any mistakes in drawing with these particular pencils" (p.5).

The same is true with the more daunting techniques Roy's suggested. Try not to

School workshop, Photo © Shelby Wolf

Pupil's artwork. Photo © Roy Smith

— PHOTOGRAPHY: Use digital cameras to record reference material to be used as inspiration for any of the techniques above. Create your own compositions of objects or scenes and allow the pupils to arrange and capture these on camera.
— SEQUENCES: Use the camera to record a narrative story based upon your theme. You could create collaged photomontages for this. Think before-middle-after. These could respond directly to an existing image, which can be used as stimulus, and it could also become a videoed performance.

think of the mistakes (or the mess) you might make. Concentrate on what you can learn and pass on to your children. As Blake and Cassidy suggest, we all suffer from "blank page anxiety," and they remind us, "You're bigger and stronger than any sheet of blank paper" (p. 18). So don't let the number 6 brush or monoprint roller scare you. Learning is about experimentation, risk taking, and a willingness to think flexibly, and if you want your pupils to gain these skills, you need to model them.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES

— Create your own gallery of pupils' work. Ask them to take part in the decision making. You could use your second visit to the gallery to research this, asking why certain works have been selected and placed together (curation). Use push pins or blue tack so that your display can be updated throughout.
— Annotate your drawings with key words and paragraphs. If your pupils are particularly worried about "ruining" their work, then place a piece of tracing paper or photocopy acetate over the top and write directly on that.
— Use brainstormed words as inspiration for story writing and poetry. Combine them together to create similes and metaphors that can enhance their writing.
— Create a new gallery of images that surround a few chosen words or a line of text (perhaps from a line of poetry belonging to your pupils). This will enhance ideas concerned with curation and is great fun.
— Review past work in the pupils' journals whenever possible particularly if a pupil "finishes early." They can add to and enhance any previous work in light of new ideas through drawing, colour, extra annotation, or further writing.
— Encourage the pupils to talk to each other about their work. Ask them to explain their favourite piece and why. It is important to look back as well as forward.

REFLECTION LEADS TO RETHINKING

Roy's emphasis on reflection is key to any responsible curriculum. As children craft words, phrases, similes, and metaphors – especially within oral and written stories – to match their images, they ask and answer multiple questions, ponder possibilities, agree and disagree, test out new vocabulary, and bring their background knowledge to bear on the issues at hand.

Perhaps most important, reflection leads to rethinking and revision. Research has shown how often children resist revision. And no wonder. All too often they're asked to write to a specific prompt with predetermined criteria in mind. As Grainger, Goouch, and Lambirth (2005) explain: "The endless instructional circle of teaching, targeting, and testing, positions children as somewhat impotent and without a sense of voice or volition" (p.67). They go on to explain Michael Rosen's view, who "describes writing as a way of opening up conversations with others", and through these conversations children "become more aware of the impact and influence of writing, on both the reader and the author, and find meaning and purpose in what they write." As they move from image to written word, from isolation to conversation, they take ownership of their work and rather than wait for someone to come along and assess them, they assess themselves.

WEEK 7: GALLERY ACTIVITIES (SECOND VISIT)

You will need sketchbooks and pencils.

In all of these examples, first work together in as small a group as possible with an adult to discuss the theme. Let the pupils dictate the images discussed, but prompt them with the first question. This can be as simple as "Who can see a piece of art that reminds you of…" If you can, get each of the children to say something about what they see, encouraging personal interpretations. Then allow the pupils to work individually or in pairs to explore this theme themselves within a supervised gallery space encouraging drawing and annotation of ideas in their journals.

TWICE UPON A TIME

— WORDS: Brainstorm a selection of words (at school before the visit), and ask the pupils to find images that connect with these words. What is the story that connects the word and the image? They can work in pairs or small groups for this. Draw and make notes.
— TEXTURES: Place objects in a bag of varying textures. Ask the pupils to feel inside the bag (in the gallery) and take the group to an image they believe has the "same feel," which is particularly good for abstract work connected to emotions. Discuss this choice, draw, and make notes. You can also do this with objects to be taken out of the bag. Choose one of these and find other works that have the same "feel." Draw and record these.
— SYMBOLISM: Objects within artworks (clocks, flowers, books, mirrors, etc.) often have a symbolic meaning that can enhance a narrative. Find, discuss, and record these.
— BEFORE AND AFTER: Discuss the story of a piece of work with the group. What could have happened before and after?

OPENING UP POSSIBILITIES

Roy's emphasis on reflection continues in the second gallery visit as he constructs activities that promote discussion and drawing, comparison and contrast, as well as sequencing and storytelling. Language swirls around these activities. Most important, he's asking your children to not only talk about what they see, but what they feel, and this only comes with intense seeing. To complete any one of these challenges, children must concentrate, hold sustained attention, and think hard in symbolic ways. They must open themselves up to learning.

Roy's choices align with Bruner's (2005) plea for innovation: "My own view is that pedagogical instruction should take as a central task not only passing on knowledge, but making students aware of the *possibilities* inherent in or opened up by what they are learning. It is a sure way of assuring an escape from the ruts of the ordinary, helping kids make the leap to possible worlds. We know all too clearly already that the world of the future will

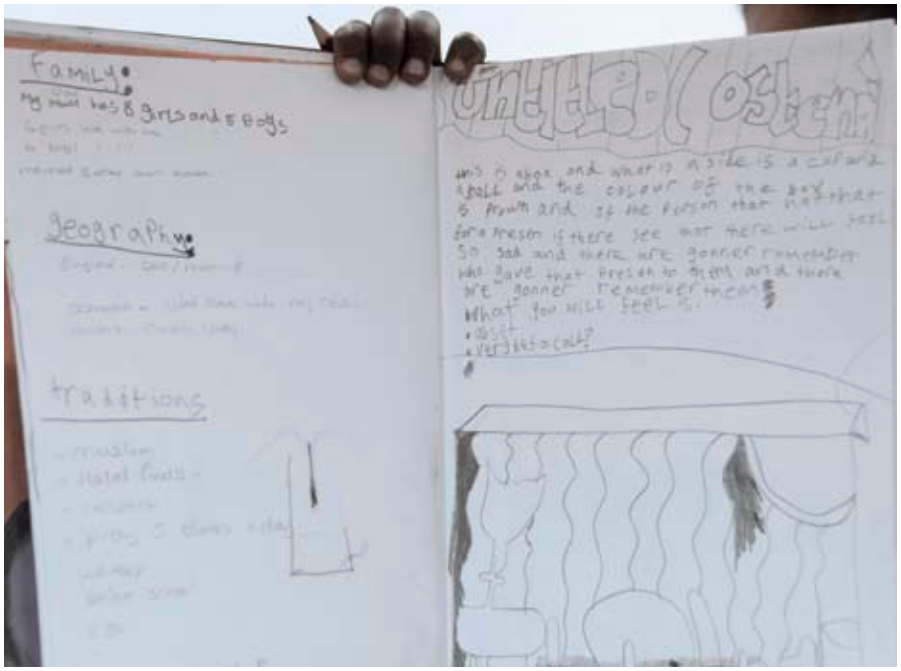
Gallery workshop, Photo © Tate

(Great for realistic work and photography.)
— SEQUENCES: Work in small groups or pairs to discuss the story of an image. Record this through drawing and note making and then find other artworks that could be the next in sequence, either before or after. Draw and make notes for each of these. Some artworks are incredibly difficult for adults to 'read' but children are often less restricted.
— HIDDEN DETAIL: Many works of art often have discrete or hidden "things" as part of the composition. Search for these and discuss what they add to the "story."
— EMOTIONS: Particularly good for abstract works. Ask the pupils to identify an artwork connected to an emotion (e.g., "Where is joy?"). Let them take you to these and explain their choice.
— OBJECTS: Contemporary artists often make use of real objects in their work and even make collections of these. What are the stories connected to these objects?
— CURATION AND THEMES: Look at how work has been presented in a particular gallery space. Do they compliment or clash? Why is this? Is there an overall theme linking all works? Make annotated drawings to record these. Use this knowledge to curate your own exhibition at school.
— PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST: In most artworks it is possible to encourage young people to identify with the "story" within the work, but it is not so easy to decipher the "artist" in the work. Ask the pupils to say what they think the artist was like from the imagery. Why do they believe this? Does it give them a clue to another meaning contained in the work that may not be immediately apparent from the subject matter?

not be a stable and easily predictable one. It's such a world that we must have in mind in thinking about our pedagogy. How do we go about preparing a next generation for a world of expanding possibilities? I'm less interested in *what* we must teach our young, but *how* we might go about teaching them in that spirit, no matter what the subject matter. *How* do you teach in order to broaden a grasp of the possibilities that lie on the other side of what we've just learned?"

Many activities offer children the opportunity to ferret out their own feelings. One child, recently put into foster care, studied the strange woman staring out from a surreal mix of paint and collage in Richard Hamilton's "Interior II" and surmised, "I think she's thinking she's gone mad or something. She's in danger. Maybe her husband's trying to kill her. He's turning her life upside down. The floor's upside down and the walls, and that looks like a crocodile. My life turned upside down when I got taken from my dad and my mum."

Donald (2006) argues, "Art attacks the mind, not usually through its logical or analytic channels, but more commonly through its senses, passions, and anxieties. Under the distant guidance of the artist, the brains of the viewers gather the disparate pieces of evidence placed before them, while they draw on their own experiences to reconstruct the artist's intent" (p.13). Thus, while Roy works to have the children consider their own interpretations, he also asks them to bring the "distant" artist up close and consider his/her intentions and motivations. What is dominant in these discussions is helping children develop their "thinking dispositions"– making decisions and learning to justify their choices.



Pupil's artwork, Photo © Tate

Pupil's artwork, Photo © Roy Smith

WEEK 8: COMPLETION AND REFLECTION

You will need sketchbooks and pencils.

Always find something good to say about the work, and never let other pupils laugh at their own or the work of others.

Display everything, even if it's unfinished. They love seeing the work on the wall, and it can often be an incentive to do better next time.

The display of all work through a positive lens is essential. When Roy exhibits the children's work he always takes great care to design the display professionally, which offers the children an opportunity to rethink their work in relationship with others in the class. These opportunities for reflection help to open their eyes and avoid what some might call a "museum spin," so habituated are we of *not* looking. But with careful observation, multiple opportunities for drawing and discussion, and culmination of your project with a well-curated exhibit, you and your pupils will go looking for change, and you will find it.

Looking for Change Exhibition 2009, Tate Modern, Photo © Tate

Looking for Change Exhibition 2009, Tate Modern, Photo © Tate

DISCUSSION

THE ARTIST'S POINT OF VIEW

FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Schools and galleries, chalk and cheese, or strawberries and cream? What is it that draws them together or keeps them apart? Historically, the gallery, or museum has been perceived as a place that can give a defining answer, and education often seeks to find this answer as something that may be tested against. But answers are not an artist's intent, and definitions are not learning. This is a quandary: Should we treat galleries as knowledge providers or as a canvas that provokes? More often than not they are treated as the former, but if it is the latter then what form of provocation could this be? Provocation suggests the promise of a response and response is complex, requiring input from the individual. It can be negative or positive, or at worst, neutral. But if it is our intention to encourage free thinking (and by that I mean a formulation and an articulation of ideas that have resonance and relevance to an individual), then one of the things we must consider is experience. We can read through the text that often accompanies artworks and artefacts, and as adults it is possible to access this. But that assumes that we have an historical and contextual understanding of the social and the artistic. What happens when a seven year old confronts this? For many, this informative text is the first "way in" to understand works of art and is especially valuable when there is so much

THE RESEARCHER'S POINT OF VIEW

ENGAGING CHILDREN

That schools seek to find "defining answers" bumps up against years of educational research, because interpretive work – whether analyzing a written or visual text – involves *engagement,* providing children with opportunities to actively construct meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). Pat Enciso (1996) defines literary engagement as "a complex interplay of personal, emotional, visual, evaluative experiences and perceptions that are typically felt privately but also may be expressed publicly among a community of readers who share a variety of purposes, interpretations, and interests in reading" (pp.172-173). The same is true in artistic engagement. The best teachers begin the process by asking children intriguing questions: What might this painting mean? Does this sculpture remind you of anything in your life? If you were going to make a change to this piece, what would you do? What do you think happened before this photograph was taken? Through questions like these, teachers can encourage engagement through interpretation, connection, and critique (Wolf, 2004). If the teacher wants to discuss the curator's explanatory card to enhance the experience, that is fine as well, but it should come *after* the children have a chance to think for themselves. As Rosenblatt (1994) explains, "Coming to the critic after one's own transaction with the text, one can be helped to realize more keenly the character of that

Gallery workshop Tate, Photo © Tate

Gallery workshop Tate, Photo © Tate

to see. However, in Looking For Change we take much longer over a few pupil-selected images. There is a reason why children are drawn to these works, and it is important to hear their reasoning art-iculated first without the influence of text.

ART AND OPPOSABLE THUMBS

Looking for Change addresses this head on. Its basic premise poses the question: How is visual literacy formed and what skills do we need in order to achieve this? Our visual understanding of art is often informed through our life experiences ("I don't know much about art, but I know what I like"). Art is all around us and is something that we live and breathe; we are exposed to it and it is part of our lives whether we like it or not. But perhaps "liking it" is the way forward. Let's assume that it is for a moment. If it is important, then why? Well, we could argue that it increases our understanding of the subjective and the objective, and this is essential if we wish *not* to become a *homogenised* whole whose only creative outlet is the discussion of reality TV (as an extreme example). We could argue that without a creative outlet then we would cease to question and instead become a repository of stored information ready to upload and download on demand. We could argue that questioning and hypothesising (speculating) brought about the beginnings of science and civilization (ignoring opposable thumbs for the moment).

SCRATCHING BEYOND THE SURFACE

If these are the questions that you have asked yourself, then this is for you. What experience. In this way, critics may function not as stultifying models to be echoed but as teachers, stimulating us to grow in our own capacities to participate creatively and self-critically in literary transactions" (p.148).

PROTECTION OR PROVOCATION?

All too often, children are characterized as innocent, egocentric, and in much need of guidance and protection. Still, far more insidious is protecting them from complex ideas rather than helping them to question and hypothesize. As Perry Nodelman (1996) eloquently explains: "Children become what we believe they are; assumptions about childhood have the potential to become self-fulfilling prophecies. The more we believe that children are limited in various ways, the more we deprive them of experiences that might make them less limited.... Deprived of the experience of anything more than the little we believe them capable of, children often do learn to be inflexible, intolerant of the complex and the unconventional" (p.80). Thus, highlighting the unique intelligence of children is essential. Older theories of development (e.g., Piaget, 1972) suggest that children's learning moves through increasingly complex stages to full fruition as an adult. Yet, given the chance, children often demonstrate their flexibility outside the scope and sequence of knowledge that adults might think developmentally appropriate.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO THINKING

People often argue that pleasure and

if… we allowed children to make up their own minds about art; what would this achieve? Well, it could cease to be a closed book for a start and could become a series of "what ifs". What if children from a very early age were allowed to explore their own interpretations *before* they were expected to make a decision of good or bad, right or wrong? And what if they were given technical skills to explore and discuss this themselves? What if we treated the gallery as an archaeological site – without answers, just gradually revealed questions and possibilities? An artist's intention is not to reconcile; on the contrary, it provokes. The artwork speaks to us as individuals and adds to what we know: it is not closure. It remains, at best, a perspective, and it is up to us to explore this using the experiences that we have. Even if we're only seven, then that's OK.

THE ART OF SCIENCE, AND GEOGRAPHY, AND HISTORY

If we introduce children, very young children at that, to the arts and by that I don't just mean traditional art, but the ARTS – music, drama, poetry, literature, dance, and drawing – then this feeds a certain fire, one that is difficult to extinguish and burns throughout their lives. One art form leads to another but it's not just that, it also informs and complements academic subjects (and by that I mean science, mathematics, history, geography, the whole lot). Schools that accept this and embrace it are hugely successful academically. This cannot be a coincidence; there must be something there. Looking for Change explores this.

the stirring of the imagination are the fundamental offerings of the visual arts. But pleasure is only a part of art's potential. Instead, it's essential to look at art in terms of children's *intellectual* engagement. Roy's point about the need for "what ifs" is at the heart of children's language and learning. Michael Cole (1996) calls language the "tool of tools" and uses a quote from Luria to explicate this view: "In the absence of words, human beings would have to deal only with those things which they could perceive and manipulate directly. With the help of language, they can deal with things that they have not perceived even indirectly and with things which were part of the experience of earlier generations. Thus, the word adds another dimension to the world of humans" (p. 120). But using words requires practice. Thus, children must be given multiple opportunities to articulate their ideas about art.

INTEGRATION LEADS TO TRANSMEDIATION

We all know the power of integrating curriculum. But why? Because it leads to what Marjorie Siegel (2006) calls transmediation. She argues that moving among alternative sign systems encourages the learner to see the commonalities in different expressive modes, but since the commonalities are not givens, they must be explored and justified, which asks the learner to work at a more metaphorical level. Moving from one sign system to another is deeply engaging work, and this project was designed for exactly that reason. The children in the project are actively *looking* for change in their learning and in their lives.

Gallery workshop, Photo © Tate

Gallery workshop, Photo © Tate

REFERENCES

1 Blake, Q., & Cassidy, J. (1999) *Drawing for the artistically undiscovered.* Palo Alto, CA: Klutz.

2 Bruner, J. (October, 2005). *Aiming for the future: Cultivating a sense of the possible.* Presentation for the annual meeting of the National Academy of Education. New York: Teachers College.

3 Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Robinson, R. E. (1990). *The art of seeing: An interpretation of the aesthetic encounter.* Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum.

4 Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

5 Coles, R. (1989). *The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

6 Donald, M. (2006). Art and cognitive evolution. In M. Turner (Ed.), *The artful mind: Cognitive science and the riddle of human creativity* (pp. 3-20). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7 Enciso, P. (1996). Why engagement in reading matters to Molly. *Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties,* 12, (pp.171-194).

8 Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

9 Grainger, T., Goouch, K., & Lambirth, A. (2005). *Creativity and writing: Developing voice and verve in the classroom.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

10 Hardy, B. (1977). Narrative as a primary act of mind. In M. Meek, A. Warlow, & G. Barton (Eds.), *The cool web: The pattern of children's reading.* London; The BodleyHead.

11 Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with words.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

12 Hetland, L., Winner, E., Veenema, S., and Sheridan, K.M. (2007). *Studio thinking: The real benefits of visual arts education.* London: Teachers College Press.

13 Nodelman, P. (1996). *The pleasures of children's literature.* New York: Longman.

14 Perkins, D. N. (1994). *The intelligent eye: Learning to think by looking at art.* Los Angeles, CA: The J. Paul Getty Trust.

15 Piaget, J. (1972). Development and learning. In M. Gauvain & M. Cole (Eds.), *Readings on the development of children* (pp. 25-33). New York: Scientific American Books.

16 Rosenblatt, L. M. (1994). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

17 Siegel, M. (2006). Rereading the signs: Multimodal transformations in the field of literacy education. *Language Arts, 84*(1), (pp. 65-77).

18 Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

19 Wolf, S. A. (2004). *Interpreting literature with children.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

20 Wolf, S. A. (2009). *From the "mantle" to expertise: The arc of Creative Partnerships.* London: Creative Partnerships.

LOOKING FOR CHANGE?

Placing value on the traditional skills of observation and drawing, *Looking for Change* offers you and your pupils a model for engaging with art, using Discussion, Drawing and Reflection to affect change in how we learn.

Looking for Change was a three year project by Tate Modern with three primary schools in London, developed by lead artist Roy Smith. The project formed the basis of in-depth research by Dr. Shelby Wolf, professor, University of Colorado at Boulder, USA, into learning and teaching methods for primary age children. Out of the project this resource was developed to support both practical outcomes and academic reflection. It is hoped that the resource will encourage teachers' confidence to engage with art through galleries, both for its own sake and as a cross curricular tool.

This printed resource is your portable guide to your visits to the galleries, but also the preparation for and further development of the work you will do there. It offers immediate practical advice, giving you everything you need in one place, as well as an invitation to further resources and study.

'Looking for Change is exactly that – a way to support your children in looking for changes in the world in which they live, as well as a way for teachers to find a change in the way that they teach. A resource that opens everyone's eyes to the fact that learning is no longer transferral of knowledge from one to another, but is a method of exploration.'
Hannah Perkins, Primary School teacher,
Charles Dickens Primary School, London

MODERN TATE

Supported by UBS

SUPPORTED BY LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
WORKING FOR THE MAYOR OF LONDON