Georgina Barton *Editor*

Literacy in the Arts

Retheorising Learning and Teaching

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I would like to dedicate this book to my grandmother Gweneth Lillian Aitken nee Garrington whose name is like a work of art, who was a fashion designer and had a passion for art and nature; and my friend and colleague Steven Clifford Dillon for always being honest, passionate about music and its healing power, and having a beautiful heart. May they both rest in peace.

Contents

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Glenda Hobdell As a new media artist and visual arts educator, Glenda Hobdell's professional arts practice informs her teaching. In 2013, she presented three significant new media exhibitions, key outcomes of an M.A. in Visual Arts Practice Led Research at QUT. In 2007, as a foundation member of the Arts faculty at the Queensland Academy for Creative Industries, Glenda set up the highly successful Visual Arts department. With a passion for sharing and advancing student outcomes, especially those that integrate technology, Glenda has delivered numerous presentations and workshops to global audiences, with games in learning being a key focus. Outcomes of her own practice were presented at the ISIS Rethinking Intermediality in the Digital Age Conference in Transylvania in 2013.

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Nationale de Marseille (Roland Petit); Tanztheater Darmstadt (Gerhard Bohner); Ballett des Staatstheater Darmstadt (Morley Wiseman and Andris Plucis); Ballett Frankfurt (Fred Howald, Egon Madsen, William Forsythe) and as Ballet Master and assistant to the director, Andris Plucis, Darmstadt. He has also presented at a number of international conferences including the Hong Kong Dance Festival, 2006, *Assessment and Motivation*; with Patrea O'Donoghue, IADMS conference, 2007, *Intrinsic Motivation*; and the World Dance Alliance Global Summit, 2009, *Online Reflective Practice Applications*.

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Part I
Theorizing the Arts and Literacy

Chapter 1
Literacy and the Arts: Interpretation and Expression of Symbolic Form

Georgina Barton

Abstract To consider the arts and literacy is a huge undertaking. Each concept alone could constitute several volumes. The investigation of the arts and literacy is not new, of course. Some literacy research has shown how using the arts and/or creative approaches to learning can enhance and improve literacy skills for children (Albers P, Sanders J, Literacies, the arts and multimodality. National Council of Teachers, Urbana, 2010; Brice-Heath S, Three's not a crowd: plans, roles, and focus in the arts. Educ Res 30(7):10–17, 2001; Caldwell B, Vaughan T, Transforming literacy through the arts. Routledge, London, 2011; Korn R, Solomon R. Guggenheim museum teaching literacy through art: final report. Museum Visitor Studies, Evaluation & Audience Research, Korn and Associates, Alexandria, 2007) and this research often stems from a language arts approach. Although much of this research highlights the importance of the arts in education, it tends to be framed from an English education point of view and therefore is limited in recognising the unique approach that the arts have in terms of literate practice. This chapter aims to introduce the concepts of literacy and literate practice in the arts. It aims to demonstrate how students of the arts are expected to operate and think in order to become arts literate in practice and inquiry, that is, how one may become more proficient or fluent in the discourse of art critique, production and consumption. The chapter argues that the arts are inherently multimodal and concern themselves with the communication of ideas and feelings through multiple symbolic forms. Therefore an advanced definition of literacy as interpretive and expressive fluency through symbolic form, whether aural/sonic, embodied, textual, visual, written or a combination of these within the context of a particular art form is offered. This distinction is important because it moves beyond the established view of arts literacy as an extension of English literacy and more accurately conveys the proprietary processes and practices evident in the way students learn their craft and ultimately emerge as arts practitioners.

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Introduction

To consider the arts and literacy is a huge undertaking. Each concept alone could constitute several volumes. Our aim here is to clearly articulate the way in which literacy and literate practice is evident in the arts. The investigation of the arts and literacy is not new, of course. Through critical analysis of paintings, music scores, scripts, movies, and writing genres such as narratives and persuasion, many researchers (e.g., Piazza, 1999; Zoss, 2009) have examined how students read and write in the arts. This research has often been a response to inquiry into content area literacy with the hope of answering the question of why some children still struggle at school (Alvermann, 2002; Moje et al., 2004) or advocacy-driven research in order to show the instrumental value of learning in any of the arts. Consequently, some literacy research has shown how using the arts and/or creative approaches to learning can enhance and improve literacy skills for children (Albers & Sanders, 2010; Brice-Heath, 2001; Caldwell & Vaughan, 2011; Korn, 2007) and this research often stems from a language arts approach. Although much of this research highlights the importance of the arts in education, it tends to be framed from an English education point of view and therefore is limited in recognising the unique approach that the arts have in terms of literate practice. It is hoped, however, that this book will provide a much deeper understanding of literacy and literate practice in each of the major art forms, including dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts and also children's literature. It aims to demonstrate how students of the arts are expected to operate and think in order to become arts literate in practice and inquiry, that is, how one may become more proficient or fluent in the discourse of art critique, production and consumption. Further, we argue that the arts are distinctly multimodal in nature and concern themselves with the communication of ideas and feelings through multiple symbolic forms. We therefore define literacy as interpretive and expressive fluency through symbolic form, whether aural/sonic, embodied, textual, visual, written or a combination of these within the context of a particular art form. This distinction is important because it moves beyond the established view of arts literacy as an extension of English literacy and more accurately conveys the proprietary processes and practices evident in the way students learn their craft and ultimately emerge as arts practitioners.

In the arts, literate practice is focused on how people experience and express their thoughts and feelings through artistic practice. This usually occurs through the production, consumption and critique of art – art products and/or artefacts. As such, literate practices in the arts are extremely diverse as they draw on a wide spectrum of different art forms of multiple modes; have many social, cultural and personal meanings; and use various discourses and communicative devices, perhaps more than any other discipline area. This chapter will explore literacy in the arts by way

of unpacking the types of perceptual and realised action that takes place in the arts through symbolic form. Before this can happen, however, we must answer two questions. What is art? And what are art experiences?

Art as Experience: The Perceiver

There is a large body of literature written on what exactly constitutes art, and, if you were to embark on a research journey of the arts it would not take you long to realise that the notions of aesthetics and creative expression pervade this work. In contrast, while other discipline areas may also touch on these concepts, it is the arts that offer unique opportunities to merge the two. Though there are often qualitative judgments on whether or not an artwork is good or not (Reimer, 1989; Shusterman, 1992, 2001; Stiny & Gips, 1972; Walker, 1990), it is the aesthetic expression of the work and the way in which it is perceived that enables it to be considered art or an art experience.

In his seminal work *Art as Experience*, John Dewey (1934) clearly illustrates that artistic experiences can be distinguished from ordinary everyday events. An experience of arts thinking, according to Dewey:

> has its own [a]esthetic quality. It differs from those experiences that are acknowledged to be [a]esthetic, but only in its materials. The material of the fine arts consists of qualities; that of experience having intellectual conclusion are signs or symbols having no intrinsic quality of their own, but standing for things that may in another experience be qualitatively experienced (p. 39).

Similarly, Suzanne Langer's work (1953) explores the concept of 'aesthetic emotion' in that the making of an artwork embodies this idea from conception (p. 258), and in that artistic meaning "belongs to the sensuous construct as such; this alone is beautiful, and contains all that contributes to its beauty" (p. 208). In this sense aesthetic emotion becomes not so much about the product than the effect that product has on the observer, and that the "relation between doing and undergoing enables us to understand the connection that art as production and perception and appreciation as enjoyment sustain each other" (Dewey, 1934, p. 48). Exploring the process of perceiving art introduces the question: If, for example, I was to observe a reproduced image of what is considered one of the world's first paintings (around 40,000 years ago) is it indeed art?[1]

The image features a large red disk and handprints produced by blowing the medium used onto the cave walls (McGuirk, 2012). When I look at the impression my mind naturally refers to what I may already know about similar images, such as the Australian Aboriginal cave art. I ask: What exactly is the medium chosen by the 'artist/s'? What techniques did they employ to create the work? I continue this flow of thought by wondering: How has this medium lasted as long as it has? But then my inquiry turns to the creator/s themselves. Who were they? What type of lifestyle

[1] The image can be viewed at http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/06/120614-neanderthal-cave-paintings-spain-science-pike/

did they endure or enjoy? What was the purpose of the image – to represent power or control? When were they created (morning, day or evening)? Does it play a smaller part in a larger ritualistic occurrence? Is it an early form of literacy? Is its purpose to communicate something and/or maintain certain knowledge? Or as my husband so eloquently put it: Were the painters simply occupying their time as it was raining heavily outside, the mediums were readily available, and there was nothing else to do but wait out the storm? We can only guess as to the work's purpose back then, but we can engage the work now as an aesthetic object, and experience how we respond emotionally to it.

In another location, Altamira, Spain, other cave art was discovered in the early 1900s. The images depict the forms of bison (see http://museodealtamira.mcu.es/). This image moves me more emotionally than the first. Although I wonder whose hands lay on the cave's wall, and I would imagine viewing it in person would have a different effect, I feel that this second image moves me more in that I admire the precision of the artists' interpretation of an animal that I assume was symbolically meaningful or contributed to these people's survival and existence. In this sense the work could represent a certain kind of worship. The colours, the shapes, the form, the blending of the medium etc. show me the creator in the production of this image, carefully constructed and refined, possibly with an awareness of the selection of artistic elements. According to Maxine Greene (1991), my interpretations of these works have brought them 'into being':

> It is an object or event that can be brought into being as a work of art if those who attend to it are capable of a special sort of noticing, of apprehending, of personal grasping. The object or event is a selection from the world as perceived, the shaped and colored and sounding world in which we live our lives. It is the kind of selection that must be located in what we have called aesthetic space, in part created by the intensity of the qualities of the medium involved (p. 154).

In this regard I, as a discerning arts educator, am able to perceive qualitative and aesthetic aspects of the works in question. You may agree or disagree with my perceptions, qualitative judgments and conclusions about the two works presented above. The first image might mean much more to you than to me or we may both be moved by the second work but for different reasons. It is this difference of perception, criteria and understanding that constitutes the key elements of artistic and aesthetic literacy. Maxine Greene (1991) so astutely discusses this idea of aesthetic literacy. Her discussion also begins with whether or not 'art' can ever actually be defined. And the point here is that perhaps it never can, but it is how people perceive or are moved by an artwork that matters. Freebody (2007) contends that literacy is an 'open-textured' concept; so too is art (Weitz as cited in Greene, 1991). It is this that makes the arts distinct from other disciplines and correspond with emerging theories of literacy, multiliteracies and modalities (Albers & Sanders, 2010; Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Lemke, 2002), coupled with aesthetics and creativity.

Both Langer (1953) and Greene (1991) consider the idea that art is art only when it is realised as such. That is indeed why I began this chapter with the cave art examples. When and who decided that each of these images was in fact art? We can assume that the 'namer' of the images as 'art' was in fact moved by the images

enough to have had some kind of emotive response. According to Greene, "directly or indirectly, percipients are brought in touch with the artist's emotive lives; or they come to understand "the form of feeling" by attending to their works" (p. 149). Similarly, Langer (1953), in her book *Feeling and Form*, discusses the idea of the 'Living Work' by drawing on the example of musical compositions being given up to the world to be heard. If one were to read a music score in solitude, or, conversely, see a performance of the same piece, can we call these imaginary or real hearings? Langer continues her exposition on the work of the performer/s (pp. 133–135). For the arts, the realisation and, equally, the consumption of the artwork are just as important as the creation of them. This "liv[ing] up to certain norms of perceiving [are essential] if works are to exist…as aesthetic objects" (Greene, p. 155).

Research on artistic inquiry and thinking and the study of aesthetics show the importance of understanding key vocabulary and concepts associated with each art form. According to Smith and Simpson (1991), aesthetics is a "branch of philosophical activities which involves the critical reflection on our experiences and evaluation of art" (p. 20). The development of skills to critique, evaluate and apply this knowledge to not only one's own practice but others is critical for arts students. Being able to describe an artwork's form using terminology such as "unity, balance, harmony, rhythm, theme and variation, development and tension" (Smith & Simpson, p. 23) is an essential building block for literacy acquisition in the arts. More specifically, to be literate in these concepts requires students to be familiar with not only what these concepts mean conceptually, but also how they manifest aesthetically in an artwork's form and how they substantively compare/contrast with the normative aesthetic standards imbued within a particular art discipline.

If we accept that one of the central tenets of creating art is to capture thoughts and feelings aesthetically and communicate these using various agreed symbols with others (particularly an audience), then the intent of that communication is central to how it is considered, understood and defined. Being able to describe, justify and conclude about an artist's intent is an important component of this inquiry, whether established through direct interaction with the artist or through explorations of their work and life post facto using historical records.

Similar to the concepts proposed in New Literacy Studies (Gee, 2004; Street, 2003) it is important to consider the social, economic, cultural, political and environmental influences on arts practice. Investigating aesthetics enables the discussion around art to consider not only the physicality, visuality and/or aurality of the art, but also how an artwork may move us or meaningfully engage us (Dillon, 2007), and, moreover, how accurately our perceptions and understandings of the work and its meaning correspond to the artist's intent in creating it.

Being literate in the 'aesthetic' discourse of each arts area is not only meaningful but essential for arts students if they are to progress to more sophisticated levels of understanding and application. Aldrich and Beardsley (1963) present a number of levels of aesthetic expression in relation to how one talks about art: a. They either like it or not, or b. "When someone says of the artwork that it is dynamic, or unified, or delicate, or warm, or formal, or economical, then obviously some sort of characterisation of the work is going on, and this takes a certain perceptiveness, a noticing

of something in the composition" (p. 6). Dewey (1934) also observes that there are certain levels of 'appreciation' of artworks. If, he states, one is too lazy and idle, then their appreciation "will be a mixture of scraps of learning with conformity to norms of conventional admiration" (p. 54). To be arts literate one must be able to perceive and interpret art by being skilfully adept at the discourses of art whether in dance, music or so on.

Considering arts literacy is important in contemporary times, as "there exists a powerful synergy of technological, economic, and social dynamics driving the proliferation of everyday aesthetic experiences and, moreover, the significance of this synergy to cultural life is set to increase" (Duncum, 1999, p. 296). Duncum argues that increasingly we are participating in arts experiences every day. The arts are indeed pervasive. We constantly are faced with new media in the form of television, movies, other entertainment, the internet, and social media interfaces. Many of these experiences draw on visual image and sound as central mechanisms for engaging users and are often presented in complex multimodal ways. Instagram and Pinterest, for example, two of the latest and fastest-trending social media sites, are for the most part visual media for the storage, sharing, and exchange of images, and, to a lesser extent, similar levels of aesthetic prevail on Facebook and YouTube. Design thinking underpins every facet of our society from paperclips to architecture.

There is, however, a seeming disjuncture between how the arts pervades daily life for most people and the extent to which it is represented and valued in formal education settings and institutions (Barton, Baguley, & MacDonald, 2013). Increasing competition with other curriculum areas, diminishing investment in arts teachers and relevant teaching resources, and an explicit valuing of English literacy as evidenced by focus on literacy improvement via traditional channels of English instruction are, over time, influencing arts education provision and in turn arts literacy. In many countries the practice of standardised tests, including the NAPLAN tests in Australia, PCAPs in Canada, and SATs in the UK, to measure educational outcomes has become common. Much research has noted that these tests have a strong impact on pedagogical practice and, in many cases, an adverse effect on other curriculum areas such as the arts (Adams, 2011; Barton et al., 2013). The perception that these tests and subsequent focus on improving literacy and numeracy can improve learning outcomes is fraught with problems (Ewing, 2010). Despite the explicit focus on outcomes, literacy and numeracy are not improving commensurate with the significant time, effort and investment being made. Further, this concerted intervention has often been at the expense of other curriculum areas such as the arts.

Greene comprehensively explains that the purposeful work of an arts teacher aims to provide students with a "range of experiences in perceiving and noticing" (p. 155). She argues that if students are not educated in this way then they are unlikely "to be in a position to be challenged by what they see or hear; and one of the great powers associated with the arts is the power to challenge expectations, to break stereotypes, to change the ways in which persons apprehend the world" (pp. 155–156). In many ways, this is in keeping with contemporary views of literacy being a socially situated practice (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000) and being viewed from a critical perspective, in addition to involving competent and aware perception of art.

Art as Expression: The Creator

Experiencing art and expressing art go hand in hand. It is acknowledged that engaging in creative practice may also occur without reference to the 'perceived'. Perception and interpretation and creation may all occur simultaneously. However, a typical approach to learning in the arts follows a sequence of learning how to participate in the discourse of describing and critiquing art using relevant vocabulary or identifying its 'qualitative' features (Dewey, 1934); the process of applying this knowledge in creating artworks is often considered a related and sequential step.

To be creative "is the process of generating ideas that are novel and bringing into existence a product that is appropriate and of high quality" (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995, as cited in Wright, 2010, p. 3). Despite some conjecture regarding the criteria and standards for appropriateness and quality, the act of manifesting a physical representation of an idea is an inherently creative act. Willis (1990) also argues that this process is something that is a necessary part of everyday life. He states that it is "not extra but essential to ensure the daily production and reproduction of human existence. It is this which actually guarantees and locks in the relevance of symbolic creativity. It is this which underlies claims that the real roots of art lie in the everyday" (p. 9).

Many ideas, concepts and feelings are portrayed through various symbol systems in the arts. Through art products or artefacts we can communicate about ourselves and the world. Wright (2012) states that "through the arts, people of all ages make an object at their own contemplation" and that the "arts give shape to formless ideas – they are a vehicle by which we can express our growing awareness of ourselves and the worlds in which we live" (p. 2).

In any of the arts, expression can be represented in a multitude of ways using various symbolic forms and discipline-specific modalities and technique as through the written word; visually through images and use of colour, shape, shade and form; via movement and the use of the body; or through the manipulation of sound natural or synthesised. The arts are unique in the way that they accept these impressions while at the same time encouraging artists and audiences to question ideals and abstract aspects of our existence. This is consistent with Langer's (1953) view that a "symbol is any device whereby we are enabled to make an abstraction" (p. xi) and "is understood when we [as observers] conceive the idea it presents" (p. 26). Indeed, all art is abstract in nature – simultaneously distinct yet connected to the emotional intent of the artist.

The technical proficiency of an artist to intellectually and conceptually engage a subject matter, their maturity to delineate its underlying emotive essence and then abstract that feeling aesthetically using symbolic form and convey it through an end artefact of production is the essence of what all art is about. The congruency between what the artist experiences, knows and shares through an art form and our perception, processing, understanding and experience as an audience is at the heart of art's unique expressive quality and is perhaps the basis for what can be considered 'great' art. The more we understand the dialogue of an artwork, the greater the artist; the more we are moved by the work emotionally, the greater the work. As Dewey notes,

"expression, like construction, signifies both an action and its result…the object that is expressive, that says something to us" (1934, p. 85).

There is, of course, a fine line between expression and understanding. An artwork must have an aspect of universality for the emotion it represents – an experience common to those that aids its appeal and the process of our understanding. An artwork may be so unique as to describe an emotion, experience or idea that few audience members have an experiential and emotional reference point against which to place the work. Further, aesthetic symbolism used by the artist may be so abstract that few of us understand the connection between experience and expression. The work may be beautiful but mean little to us.

Teachers play a critical role in teaching their students to not only express emotion through their work, but also derive meaning from art. Drawing on theories of aesthetic education and modes of expression, Greene (1991) highlights that to achieve aesthetic literacy teachers in particular may "uncouple certain phenomena from the context of ordinariness" (p. 153) and encourage their students to view things in uncustomary ways. Further, teachers utilise a core set of symbols (devices) which are common and represent the building blocks of aesthetic standards and agreed understanding about what is beautiful, good and right within an art form. Teaching students to notice and isolate these symbolic forms and their treatment in the work of others, particularly the masters, is a key goal of all arts teaching practice.

Teaching creativity presents teachers and students with a conundrum in that producing works of high expressive and aesthetic quality means adhering to certain conventions and standards. On one level, the more creative a work is, the more likely it is to challenge these same conventions and standards. The teacher and student are left with few options – to say something new using the standard vocabulary or to say something that has been said before but in a new way and possibly counter to convention. The first option is the standard approach, according to Dewey (1934). The second option is revolutionary and few artists seek to take it; to both say something new and say it in a new way may be too challenging and too abstract for contemporary critics and audiences to appreciate or understand. This is perhaps the domain of the geniuses we remember retrospectively and posthumously, like Van Gogh, Da Vinci and Bach. The role of the artist-creator, according to Grenfell (1993), is to communicate and structure feelings through different media and technical processes.

> In the process of creating, artworks are stabilised, that is, images and ideas are inscribed in a material that gives them a semi-permanence (Albers & Harste, 2007, p. 10).

Not only are the arts a vehicle by which we express ourselves, but they are also used as a form of communication and a means by which to maintain tradition and culture. Art can also be expressed without the purpose of being experienced by others. For example, when writing this chapter I found myself regularly playing the piano, violin or guitar to relax and find inspiration but also to procrastinate. I admit it was a bit of both. But these performances were for me and me alone, not for the purpose of others to listen to. However, communicating certain ideas, concepts and feelings to an audience is ultimately the purpose of art creation, and to receive this

communique, it has been argued, one must possess the ability to perceive or interpret the event as an arts experience. This ability enables eloquent discussion on the 'qualitative' features of the observed (Dewey, 1934).

Dewey (1934) shows how expression has two meanings – an act of creation, as well as a consequence – and impacting on these meanings are the social and cultural contexts in which this dual operation occurs. Green (1988) describes this as inherent and delineated meaning, particularly in the area of music. A delineated meaning is often intended for the viewer, listener or learner and can be detached from social or cultural purpose where the art or artefact can be viewed objectively (Barton, 2004). Inherent meaning, however, occurs in the temporal world where creative experience has personal meaning (Green, p. 25). Further, when describing meaning in music, Dillon (2001) asks: Where is meaning located? He explains that all creative work has its own unique purpose or intent, and to identify what this actually is one must look at the context in which it is created. When we locate this purpose we are able to articulate its meaning.

The 'intended' or 'actual' purpose of an artwork, however, may differ (Eisner 2002). This difference often depends on both the social and cultural contexts in which the work is created, and also the context in which it is performed or exhibited. A work may have a very different meaning where it originates compared to where it is shared. The arts as a language are not universal, however, there are common elements that can be understood or communicated. Additionally, it is the 'conscious motives' and 'unconscious needs' (Beardsley, 1965) that are customary exploits in the creation of art. When describing creative process, Dewey (1934) suggests that:

> The artist finds where he is going because of what he has previously done; that is, the original excitation and stir of some contact with the world undergo successive transformation. That state of the matter he has arrived at sets demands to be fulfilled and it institutes a framework that limits further operations. As the experience of transforming subject-matter into the very substance of the work of art proceeds, incidents and scenes that figured at first may drop out and others take their place, being drawn in by the suction of the qualitative material that aroused the original excitement. (p. 116)

We see here that Dewey acknowledges the movement between what is conscious and unconscious, known and unknown, real or imaginary. The shifting between these spaces is what is important in understanding arts practice. The merging of art as experience and art as expression allows us to be interpretatively and expressively articulate or become literate in the arts.

Being Literate in the Arts

Barton et al. (2000) note that literacy events "are observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them" (p. 45) In the arts, these practices, or literate practices, have at their core interpretative and creative expression with the purpose of making meaning for those that experience or witness such events. Like literacy events, they often exist in distinct social and cultural contexts and aim to induce particular responses from others.

Understanding and having fluency in arts discourse is integral to being arts literate. To be a fluent perceiver and creator involves knowing what influences you, knowing how you master technique, knowing the medium and mode with which you work intimately, and understanding the social and cultural practices in which art is made or observed. Having a command of the various discourses of the arts enables the artist to not only express themselves but also find a strong sense of identity throughout the process. Both experiencing and creating art is necessary within the arts-literacy nexus.

Of course engaging in arts practice occurs through the use of multiple modes and multiple literacies or symbolic representations. For Eisner (2002) there are three ways that artists use forms of representation in order to create meaning. The first mode of treatment is mimetic, the second creation of expressive form and the third is through the use of conventional signs (pp. 15–19). Mimetic treatments involve particular "forms that look or sound like what they are intended to represent" (p. 15). The arts however, can also depict what is felt through expressive form. Eisner argues that representation of feeling can be achieved in a variety of ways in the arts. He states that "by manipulating form, artists manipulate experience" and "different backgrounds lead to different experiences of the same work" (p. 17). We saw earlier in this chapter that the notion of perception is influenced by the ways in which we have experienced the world; how we have been taught by our parents and/or teachers whether in schools or other environments. Eisner believes that our perception of art and expressive meaning is "brought under the intelligent control of experience and technique" (p. 18). This is when we become arts literate and are able to articulate this meaning – whether through language, visuality or sound or through the third mode of treatment – conventional signs or symbolic representation. These are "socially agree-upon symbols that refer to ideas, objects, or events" (p. 18). Therefore, multimodality can work on two planes, that of distinct action and the other is related to the purpose or meaning of this action. Understanding these processes is important when exploring the arts-literacy nexus. Without acknowledging this we fail to value these as valid forms of communication for artists.

The idea that literate practice is complexly multimodal has infiltrated research about literacy including various modes of communication such as language-verbal, mathematical-symbolic, visual-graphical, gestural-kinaesthetic, material-operational (Jewitt, 2006; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006; Lemke, 2000, 2005). According to Bezemer and Kress (2008) a "mode is a socially and culturally shaped resource for making meaning" (p. 171) and there are organised sets of modes that act as semiotic resources (Jewitt). Kress and van Leeuwen for example, highlight how "perspectives on literacy is the basic assumption that meanings are made (as well as distributed, interpreted and remade) through many representational and communicational resources, of which language is one" (as cited in Jewitt, p. 246). However, language (including written and oral forms of communication), is still privileged over other modes in educational institutions such as schools (Handerhan, 1993; Lemke, 2002). We need to ask why? Teachers may be more familiar or feel safe with attending to the transmission of knowledge through language however, recognising that non-institutionalised learning often rely on other modes and some literacies "have

histories that go back several centuries" (Wagner, 1999, p. 286) is incredibly important. Chapter 15 on storytelling explains that all communication is in fact a story and that to discount this way of learning for Indigenous students will continue to disadvantage them in institutional settings. Similarly, continuing to ignore the prevalence of wide and varied types of text will stall practice in the classroom environment.

Much discussion on modalities and literacy, in more recent times, has tended to focus on the growth of digital texts and particularly investigates the use of visual images, colour, light and so forth with limited attention given to other modes such as aural and embodied meaning (Barton & Unsworth, 2014; Chan & Unsworth, 2011; Duncum, 2004). In educational settings, though there has been an attempt to recognise various modes this has not impacted on teaching practice (Handerhan, 1993). The arts naturally draw on multiple ways to represent and express knowledge (Wright, 2012). Modes such as visual – use of line, shape, form, colour and texture; embodied – gestural, other movement, facial expressions; aural – various sound sources and silence; textural – physical features and composition; written – diverse symbol systems including language, notational forms, graphics; are all executed. Artistic knowledge, expression and communication can be conveyed through just one mode or in combination with others, an ensemble, and while the arts share this feature they also can be defined in their own distinct ways.

Bezemer and Kress (2008) explain that when meaning shifts from one mode to another or between ensembles of modes, knowledge may be lost or gained and that potentials or alternatively constraints for making meaning present themselves. They note that particular social perspectives and indeed cultural ones illuminate how certain discourses originate but also transform over time. In the arts this occurs in a cyclic and organic manner as we draw on others' work, create our own, and participate in spontaneous and cumulative reflection throughout the artistic process and experience. Bezemer and Kress call when we move semiotic material from one mode to another, transduction. Therefore, in order to understand this meaning in the arts we must realise it can be conveyed in many ways through the use of multiple modes. It is this distinctiveness that needs to be considered and further understood about the arts. We can make a similar claim as Lemke's (2002) when he discusses the multimodal ways in which our learning, our knowledge gaining happens in today's world.

> Within a semiotic modality, presentational, orientational and organisational meanings are not by any means totally independent of one another. The possible combinations do not all occur with equal probability and functionally each one helps us to interpret the others, especially in short ambiguous or unfamiliar texts or images. Human semiotic interpretation is both gestalt and iterative (p. 305).

In this sense certain meanings are not privileged over others but rather are recognised and utilised in fluid and intrinsic ways. Through expressive communicative devices such as embodiment, movement, sound, visuality and more, artists create meaning and share this meaning. In dance, having an awareness and understanding of one's body – it's potential and limitations; is necessary in the journey to becoming a dancer. Similarly, in drama knowing one's body and where it can take you in a staged context, communicating with others, but also drawing on others' past and

present work is vitally important to theatrical experience and knowledge. The media arts enable students to become analytical thinkers in today's world of mass media, film and entertainment. Being able to critically question the social, cultural and political ideologies in which media is created, allows entry into the creative class of the twenty-first century (Florida, 2002; McWilliam & Haukka, 2008). In the same way, music permits access to contemporary practice in working with, and critiquing the various uses and organisation of sound. Having a command of musical vocabulary and knowledge of a range of social and cultural contexts engages students and invites them into a diverse set of aurality to perform and compose. And finally, in visual arts through the use and exploration of colour, line, form, and texture, students can express who they are and what they feel about the world around them through the creation of artworks.

Knowing that the arts involve a distinct body of knowledge, and unique ways of learning and expressing this knowledge, is important in education generally. If we fail to recognise this value then the teaching of literacy and initiation and engagement in literate practice will continue to privilege more concrete and essentially measurable conceptions, methods, and skills through assessment such as standardized tests in educational settings. It has been shown that artistic practice and research can enable one to see, hear, and experience in powerfully transformational ways. If we deprive children of these experiences there is potential for teaching and learning to be extremely detrimental to general well-being and impact on a holistic approach to education.

Part I of this book posits a number of theories in relation to the arts and literacy. In Chap. 2 Felicity McArdle and Susan Wright explore the concept of creativity from the early years of life. They argue that art and play are in fact human being's first language. Their chapter addresses how children's creation, manipulation and meaning-making through engaged interaction with art materials are precursors to learning to read and write and, as first languages, should not be undervalued as essential elements of learning. Joanna Barbousas in Chap. 3 investigates the notion of visuality by acknowledging that the concept of visual literacy has been increasingly explored in the research literature. She shares data on the interest in this area noting a number of differing perspectives. Barbousas argues the importance of acknowledging the impact of visual image in thinking, practice and communication and argues for links between theory and practice. In Chap. 4 Len Unsworth discusses the relationship between language and image in representing meaning in children's literature. The importance of aesthetic-artistic qualities in this meaning cannot be understated. Unsworth provides a number of examples of literary works by comparing text and multimodal versions of the same story, arguing for a re-conceptualised approach to literacy and literacy pedagogy that extends meaning beyond words to include multiple semiotic systems. Finally, in Part I, Mary Ryan highlights the importance of reflective practice in the arts in Chap. 5. Ryan shows how the arts are rooted in human experience and that part of this experience is reflective. Reflection is this sense involves two key elements including making sense of an experience in regard to oneself, and then reimagining or reconstructing potential future and new experience through a reflective process.

Part II presents the ways in which distinct arts disciplines – dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts work with, and work up knowledge in teaching and learning. Peter Freebody and I firstly, present data from classroom practice in a number of arts classrooms in Chap. 6. We show how knowledge is built in the arts by drawing on examples of dance, drama and visual arts. In dance we highlight how students are encouraged to discuss a particular dance style and then explore this style by learning particular dance steps. The students are embodying the knowledge and literacy of dance. Similarly, in drama, students are studying a set play but asked to express the intended meaning of the play through the process of physical theatre and in visual arts students are completing self-portraits. In this example the teacher is highlighting the importance of reflection and knowledge of the particular medium of which the students have chosen to express themselves.

The proceeding Chaps. 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 each show the importance of becoming fluent in the interpretation and expression of the particular art form. In dance, Evan Jones explores the notion of dance literacy as an embodied phenomenon. Jones explains that being articulate in body and mind allows one to be able to 'read' dance – whether directly involved or as an audience member interpreting choreography, or a movement sequence. In drama, Madonna Stinson illustrates how a number of scenarios demand a variety of literate practices. Stinson shows how these skills increase in the scope and intensity of what is required of students across the school years. The study of media arts has a long history with the concept of critical literacy via the use of technical communications media. Michael Dezuanni and Annette Woods present examples from a research project in a school where primary students engage with a range of technical and operational skills in developing their literacy in media arts learning. They clearly show that students' capacity to communicate stories through the use of media relies on the extent to which they utilize technology in their everyday lives. Music in contemporary times is clearly a diverse art form. With the rapid growth in digital technologies the ways in which musicians compose and perform is exponential. Robert Davidson presents a personal journey as a music educator and musician working with students in a higher education context. He begins by illustrating his own personal experience in learning South Indian music and how it is necessary to understand the cultural nuances reflected in music in order to be literate in that particular music culture. And in visual arts, Glenda Hobdell illustrates how it is necessary for students to be confronted and challenged by their arts practice in order to move closer towards becoming an artist. Hobdell presents a number of case studies of secondary students undertaking the International Baccalaureate, completing work in the visual arts program. Acknowledging that many of the students enter the program with high level arts skills, Hobdell argues that experience of, and in a variety of art media, is essential in order for students to attend to their own personal epistemology.

The final section of the book Part III, presents chapters that explore unique stories of the arts-literacy relationship. Tanya Vaughan and Brian Caldwell in Chap. 12, both with science backgrounds, found themselves involved in measuring the impact that the arts has on children's education and well-being. They show undoubtedly that the arts have a powerful and transformational impact on

educational results of children. In their study of *The Song Room* in schools they found that students' results in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, in Australia, were significantly higher in schools that ran this program as compared to those that did not. They present strong evidence that participation in arts programs improve academic results generally. In Chap. 13 Gary Woolley shows how the use of visualization enhances reading comprehension, particularly for students with learning needs. Through a variety of arts-based approaches such as illustration, manipulation, acting, role playing and linking verbal and visual, Woolley shows that these strategies, when applied in an interactive collaborative context, make reading engagement more likely. Stewart Riddle presents data in Chap. 14 from a study of young adolescents and how their engagement with music encouraged a more fruitful relationship with their study of English. He shows how music has a powerful impact on young people and can connect their emotional experience to literacy learning. Through a narrative approach, Riddle explores his work as an English teacher in a secondary school, showing how young people's relationship with music can assist their expression and literacies learning needs. Similarly, Robert Barton, myself and our family – all artists – show how it is important to recognise the role that culture plays in literacy and literate practice in context. Chapter 15 is a story – a story about the importance of recognizing storytelling in Indigenous Australia, and arts practice more generally. Along with Robert's mother Delmae, a singer and poet and his brother William, a world-renowned didgeridoo performer we illustrate the differences that Indigenous peoples view as being literate in their arts practice and this very much connects with their culture, their land and their people. As such, we note the importance but also the validity of oral traditions as powerful forms of communication. Chapter 16 continues the arts-literacy dialogue with Peter Freebody exploring an area of passion – J.S. Bach. Peter as a literacy educator shows how the relationship between the arts and literacy has the potential to inform a new approach to literacy learning in institutionalized settings. Using the case of J.S. Bach Freebody explains that advancements in the conceptualization of literacy has enabled new forms of social order. Rather than approaching literacy learning as "a rush to teaching" (McDermott, 2005, p. 123) Freebody illustrates how literacy has shaped us individually and collectively and can be used as a powerful tool to further this journey.

In my conclusive chapter I offer a call to action – one that can enable, rather than inhibit, functional and holistic approaches to learning in schools. In this sense, a contemporary approach to learning is one that is multimodal in its conception, design, delivery and assessment; and draws more substantially on the source of creative, aesthetic and expressive nuances and meanings that the arts comprise. I argue the importance of acknowledging the arts as multimodal practice and art as literacy and offer the need for more productive dialogues to occur between the arts and literacy. Without such an approach, education will continue to seek quick fixes to poor literacy levels, based on accountability and measurable skills, rather than provide meaningfully engaging and creative approaches to learning and teaching.

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Chapter 2
First Literacies: Art, Creativity, Play, Constructive Meaning-Making

Felicity McArdle and Susan Kay Wright

Abstract In this chapter art and play are considered children's 'first languages', and therefore are placed at the centre of a curriculum for young children. Through art and play, children represent thought and action, which underpins their later understanding of the 'second languages' of reading, writing and numbering. Key issues such as image-making, graphic action, imagination, narrative, empathetic engagement and internalised thought are analysed as evidence of children's construction of knowledge through art and play. Symbol making is the essence of being human. In children's art and play, their symbol use captures their sensory modes in emotional and embodied ways, as children know their worlds and their place. The chapter addresses how children's creation, manipulation and meaning making through engaged interaction with art materials are precursors to learning to read and write and, as first languages, should not be discarded nor replaced. The notion of creativity is explored in relation to pedagogical approaches. In a climate of testing regimes that emphasise 'academic' achievements, teachers are encouraged to not lose sight of imagination, pretence, constructive meaning making, holistic teaching and being a co-player and co-artist.

Keywords Art • Literacy • Creativity • Creative pedagogies • Play • Meaning-making

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Introduction

> Painting is just another way of keeping a diary… For those who know how to read, I have painted my autobiography
>
> -Pablo Picasso, 1965

> Once I started to incorporate the patterning and design work from my area, well, that made me feel whole as a Gunnai person, as a Gippsland person. And that's what art will do to you. […] we've all got different styles of work and […] if you can learn a little bit about Aboriginal art you'll be able to tell where some people come from because of the different styles… Sort of like reading a map.
>
> -Ray Thomas, 2009

When Picasso invites us to read his painted autobiography, he challenges the reader to interpret images—to receive and relate to the visual signs he has used to express meaningful messages. When Australian Indigenous artist Ray Thomas invites us to read his painting to understand where he comes from, he asks us to pay attention to his way of expressing. He connects his style of communication with other Indigenous artists. He explains that, in order to understand their meaning, the viewer needs fluency in interpretation—to understand that when Indigenous artists paint their country they capture and map more than the naked eye can see.

Likewise, when young children create art, they can be expressing astonishing conceptual understanding and imagination, well beyond what they can communicate through language, even language in narrative form, and much earlier than can be communicated by them through written language (Brooks, 2005; Kress, 1997; Matthews, 2004; Wright, 2010). This way of seeing children and their communication undermines the more traditionally accepted ways of seeing young children as 'deficit' or 'not yet', on a continuous path of progress, developing as they grow. It is presumed that as they get older, children acquire more knowledge and skills, and at increasingly sophisticated levels. In opposition to these views, this chapter will focus on very young children's existing, sophisticated capacities for literacies and their interpretive and expressive fluency using symbolic forms. It will feature how the arts are central to a curriculum for young children.

This ideology is particularly relevant given the current trend where the curriculum appears to be shrinking while, at the same time, it is becoming more and more crowded. Calls for getting 'back to the basics' generally relegate the arts to the sidelines as a 'frill' or an add-on to the 'real work' of learning, or something to be set aside until after the more 'academic' content has been covered. Indeed, placing the arts at the centre of the curriculum is anathema to views of curriculum that separate and hierarchically rank different types of knowledge. It challenges the notion that young children's learning must begin with the simple and progress to the more complex. Rather, the arts might more appropriately be regarded as children's 'first languages'—their primary ways of seeing and knowing the self and the world, and the means to interpret and express meaning. To be denied one's first language is not without its consequences. Most significantly, ignoring the first languages of children blinds us to the complex, abstract and sophisticated thoughts and feelings of children as they

work with 'first-order' signs or symbolism (Vygotsky, 1978, 1934/1987, 1997) such as picturing, storying, dancing, dramatizing, and making music.

Art is one of the oldest and most fundamental forms of human expression and communication. At its core, art is embodied experience through action, which is a form of intelligence that underpins all other forms of reasoning. Through art, young children demonstrate foundational ways of understanding symbols, systems, and connections, and their fluidity in using these for expression and communication is fundamental to their ways of being. More than a frill or a means for 'enriching' learning, the arts are a distinct way of thinking. Because of the play-oriented, compositional characteristics of art making (and this is meant in a broad sense to include composing in any art form), the arts are essentially the literacy par excellence of the early years of child development (Wright, 2007).

Very young children, who have not yet learned to read and write and are still developing their ability to speak, can use art forms in very accomplished ways. As many have noted (cf. Anning & Ring, 2004; Kress, 1997; Matthews, 2004), infants and very young children generally draw prior to acquiring skills of reading and writing text (i.e., letters, words, phrases, sentences). They use first-order symbolism fluidly, across modes, and indeed 'the act of representing thought and action while drawing actually strengthens children's later understanding of literacy and numeracy' (Wright, 2010, p. 7).

One way of thinking about the arts is as a language—a means for communicating, expressing. In this sense, the arts are loosely analogous to reading and writing, however the processes are based on different symbol systems. Reading and writing—using alphabetic notation—are the visual representation of the verbal system. Vygotsky (1978) described reading and writing as a 'second-order' symbol system that serves as a handmaiden to the 'first-order' symbol systems of drawing and speaking (Adoniou, 2013. There is an increasing evidence base that confirms that most children use the 'first-order' symbol systems with great skill in their early years, but these systems often become deemphasised in favour of the 'serious business' of learning the second-order symbol systems. Yet, the arts must not be left behind as 'child's play'. As children progress up the education system, their 'core learning experiences' of painting, drawing, dance and song should be given a central position within the curriculum, alongside reading, writing and 'rithmetic. This is because the arts and the '3 Rs' offer different affordances of learning (i.e., differing potentials for representation and communication of different kinds of meaning) (Dyson, 2013; Kress, 1997), all of which are of equal importance. Indeed, the first-order symbol systems enrich and inform learning in the second-order symbol systems.

This chapter makes links between art, creativity and young children's first literacies. It is the magic and mystery that surrounds the arts and creativity that interests us in this chapter, and we focus particularly on how young children's capacities and creativity are surfaced and encouraged through the act of meaning making in artistic domains. As Wright (2010) describes this:

> In a sense, every instance of representation through art is new and creative. Although drawing involves a 'set of rules', children never just mechanically apply rules when they make an artwork…This is why composing through art is such an important and fundamental form of creativity. (pp. 2–3)

Yet art not only provides children with creative opportunities to express and communicate their thoughts and feelings; more fundamentally, art provides a significant avenue for children's constructive thinking. This essential link to overall academic performance undermines the legitimacy of the current regimes of testing that ignore the arts, and yet are impacting so significantly on curriculum in schools and before-school settings.

This chapter also questions some of the contradictions inherent in education 'systems'. There are currently policies and curriculum documents that pay lip service to 'creativity' while at the same time making very little time or space for explicit teaching of skills or processes for creativity. The weak link between the schooling process, creativity and knowledge/skills in the arts can be illustrated by a brief example drawn from Unit X, a subject offered in art education to first-year university students. One student, who had completed 12 years of schooling, did not know that the colour pink is produced by mixing white with a little red (see McArdle, 2012). If we adhere to the arguments presented above, which suggest that students should have access to a range of 'affordances of learning', one could say that schooling has failed this student. Even if one were to believe that the most basic/pragmatic reason for education is be to prepare students who are job ready, without a basic arts/creativity education they are under-prepared for work—as teachers, architects, IT programmers, engineers, and almost any career or profession, now or in the future. This lack of preparation for career prospects raises concerns surrounding fairness and equity within a system of education that should aim for success for all students across a diverse range of learning proclivities.

The importance of embodied and empathetic learning through play in the curriculum is also addressed in this chapter. The argument here is that play is so fundamental to learning, that to take play away from young children is to rob them of their 'first language' for communication and meaning making. By replacing play with an academically oriented curriculum that breaks communication down into singular and simple stages (e.g., alphabet drill), we underestimate the intellectual capacities of young children. The connection between creativity, art and play is most visible in the early years, but should not cease to be important as children get older. This fluidity and crossing over between modes continues throughout our lifetime.

The chapter also includes some thoughts on the role of the teacher in supporting children's development in the arts. The role of the teacher makes the difference in talking back to the testing regimes and advocating for the important place for play in the learning and teaching of children, well into the early primary years of schooling. Playful teachers and creative teaching will not only encourage development and mastery in the arts and creativity, but will actually teach for creativity with intent, purpose and measurable outcomes.

Creativity and Creative Pedagogies

The trouble with creativity is that it is difficult to describe, making it also difficult to assess. It might be said that it is easier to determine the absence of creativity. What some call creativity in young children, others see as play, freedom, purposeless

mucking around (Banaji, 2011, p. 37). This binary logic sets creativity in opposition to 'real' learning, the latter of which often is viewed as academic progression within a sanctioned tradition (p. 37).

One 'solution' to some of the complexities involved in defining creativity is to distinguish between 'high', or 'Big C' Creativity, and other activity which is considered 'low' or 'little c' creativity (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Big C Creatives are the 'greats' (e.g., Picasso, Einstein, Beethoven), and this creativity is special and absolute. Little c creativity is more to do with the everyday, and everyone can be creative—in their choice of clothing, cooking a meal, gardening. Little c creativity can be fostered, increased and measured (Craft, 2000).

Yet others argue that we cannot collapse creativity into the everyday and the mundane (Negus & Pickering, 2004); rather, creativity is only certain things (to be judged according to agreed-upon criteria for creativity) and certain times (an idea at the right time in the right place) (pp. 44–45). More recently, creativity has come to be framed as an intellectual attribute (Pink, 2006), and has been linked directly with economic discourses. Creativity, for instance, is perceived as value adding (Florida, 2002), as when employers advertise for 'creatives' to work in their office/team/organisation to give them the edge in business, bids and tenders, design, and problem solving. Architects, engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs, teachers, hairdressers—all are required to be creative. These versions of creativity are variously product oriented, or involve combinations of personality traits.

By contrast, a more 'Eastern' concept of creativity is less focussed on innovative product creativity (Weiner, 2000). Instead, creativity is seen as a state of personal fulfilment, the expression of an inner essence (Lubart, 1999, p. 340). Japanese *kata-based* learning underlines the mastering and perfecting of unchanging sets of techniques and skills and principles, all at once. Kata learning puts a premium on the richness of the inner experience rather than the uniqueness of the external performance (Matsunobu, 2011, p. 45). This creativity of imitation seems to be in direct contrast with the Western notion of creativity through innovation and divergent thinking.

The inherent divides in attempts to define creativity might be sidestepped if we are open to the idea that all of these possibilities, and more, can be contemplated as ways of teaching for creativity. Russ (2003) argues that young children's play 'has been found to facilitate insight, ability and divergent thinking' (p. 291). The creative act can require both cognitive and affective processes, at once. The ways in which young children play with language, toys, roles and objects require that they cross divisions, invent new combinations of ideas and objects, try out solutions without certainties, and sometimes practise and practise.

Even though definitions and understandings of creativity may differ, it is possible to trace commonalities in pedagogical approaches that nurture creativity. A sequential approach will break down complex tasks into stages, where learning builds bit by bit or piece by piece. In contrast, it seems that, across a range of contexts, holistic teaching and learning is commonly understood to be conducive to creative thought and production. The following three examples illustrate the possibilities enabled by a holistic approach. *Kata*-based learning leads to creativity through the learning of

form and mastery of models (Matsunobu, 2007). This creativity of imitation is taught holistically, not through a step-by-step sequenced process of learning (Matsunobu, 2007; Murao, 2003, cited in Matsunobu, 2011). In learning a *karate* kata, students experience the whole sequence of fighting moves from the beginning, utilising their entire bodies. They do not first learn one section, perfecting that before progressing to the next section of the sequence. The first piece they learn may be as difficult as the last piece (Matsunobu, 2011, p. 49).

Similarly, Guy Claxton (2002) urges teachers in the UK to stop explaining, and build learning power in children by expecting that they will work out solutions, after being provided with a picture of the whole task. In a project where an artist worked with recently arrived refugee children, assisting them in English-language acquisition, researchers noted that the artist did not break down the task into simple linear steps but, rather, demonstrated the whole task (digital portrait) to the students, before they dispersed to work on their own (see McArdle & Tan, 2012). Such examples contradict the traditional school curriculum, in which content often is organised in a sequential manner, from easy to difficult.

Whether the focus of creativity is understood as product or the more 'interior' goals for the self, from an educational perspective, the shape of the curriculum will have an influence on creativity. Child-centred approaches to learning and teaching celebrate creativity as part of progressive and activity-based learning experiences. A holistic approach to pedagogy will cross divisions between art and mathematics, physical activity, numeracy, languages and music, philosophy and poetry.

However, the hierarchy of disciplines/subjects in traditional schooling structures and systems has historically diminished the importance of the arts in the curriculum. This marginalisation of the arts can be a problem but, ironically, it also can be seen as an advantage (McArdle, 2008). The advantage is that arts educators can choose a holistic approach to their pedagogical practices, while interpreting the mandated curriculum, with its expectations, standards, and measures. Although this might be tolerated in arts education, in literacy education it seems that the stakes are higher, and with this comes requirements for more controls, more measures, and a more staged understanding of teaching and learning. The next section of this paper zooms in on the relationships between the arts and literacy, particularly for young children.

Literacy and Art

Even though the arts are not commonly coupled with literacy in policies, curriculum frameworks or timetables, some see English classes as the place in school to engage with questions of imagination, creativity and innovation (see Kress, 2011, p. 212). The dominant medium now, according to Kress, is the screen (computer, phone, video, games console), where once it was the page (book, newspaper, magazine, pamphlet, newsletter). To continue to teach unbending adherence to norms (e.g., forms of writing, modes of reading, dissemination or publication) seems of little use in periods of rapid change (Kress, p. 214). There is now a choice between sending

a message by text, speech or image when using a phone. How are those choices made? What is the appropriate content for Facebook postings? Who is the imagined audience? As Kress points out, most messages now make use of more and other modes of representation and communication than those of speech or writing—they have become multimodal.

Yet young children have been using multimodal forms of communication since long before Facebook and mobile phones existed; and early childhood educators have long seen the arts and play as the modes for these first languages. The arts and play should not be positioned as old fashioned or outmoded. Rather, they must be given a central place within the early childhood curriculum as they embody constructive thinking in action.

Through drawing, for instance, there is a reciprocal relationship between children's image making, graphic action, imagination and language. Through their depictions on paper, children simulate actions, bodily sensations and feelings through a kind of empathetic engagement (Freedberg & Gallese, 2007) with the drawn characters and the events that unfold. In this way, drawing is foundational to children's internalised thought. Children construct knowledge through enacted forms of being, meaning and communicating while engaging with art making. This is similar to what Picasso meant when he said that he painted his autobiography. Through drawing, young children make marks that capture their thinking, feelings, imagination, and actions.

Such symbol making is the essence of being human. Drawing, as a graphic symbolic system, is an important vehicle for children's communication and comprehension of complex meaning. Art educators, such as Wilson (2007), have long recognised that children draw to know—to create and express complex meanings about themselves and their worlds. Symbol making captures children's sensory modes in emotional and embodied ways. As Goodman (1969) reminds us, 'what we know is felt in our bones and nerves and muscles as well as grasped in our minds [through] the invention and interpretation of symbols' (quoted in Buckham, 1994, p. 140). Ray Thomas (2009), the Australian Indigenous painter quoted at the beginning of this chapter, alludes to this when he explains that the painting makes him "feel whole as a Gunnai person", at the same time as it maps the place where he comes from. Such emotional engagement between artists and their art seems strongly linked to the embodied nature of the art-making process itself and the relationship this has with understanding self and world.

Such intersections are described by a number of theorists. Merleau-Ponty (2002), for instance, argues that perception and representation are structured by the acting body—the embodied agent—in its purposeful engagement with the world. Similarly, Vygotsky (1999) describes how the practical activity of drawing develops the 'mind'. This is because drawing is a volitional, goal-directed, sign-and-tool-mediated action—in other words, the creator of art chooses the content and form of the work and the drawing materials are used to generate signs that have meaning to others. Drawing provides a very important medium for engagement and a means for children to depict and, thus, come to know the world and their place within it.

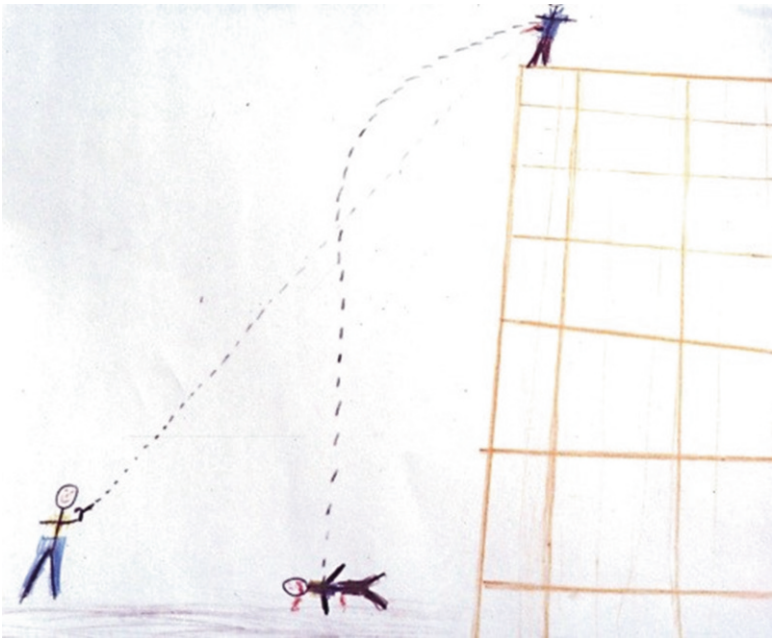

Fig. 2.1 Shooting a Criminal (boy, 7.8) (By permission of the artist)

Langland-Hassan (2011), in a similar vein, conceives visualisation as a form of sensorimotor reasoning. Through art, for instance, motoric thought and feeling are projected onto the page through the use of signs that stand for objects and events. This notion of 'drawing of imagery and movement' is also found in the cognitive linguistics literature, which defines perceptually grounded concepts in terms of image schemas. One such example is the Source-Path-Goal schema (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). This schema is illustrated in Fig. 2.1, where the gun (source) yields a bullet that makes a dotted line (path) to the criminal (goal) on the roof who, in turn, leaves a visual schema of his fall through space toward the ground.

Embodied cognition and schema theory are significantly relevant foci in the fields of early childhood and art education. These theories are grounded on the view that concepts are built in children's minds and are based on the conclusions children draw from their experiences. An example of children learning from experience is how they learn about gravity and distance by repeatedly tossing an object onto the floor from their cribs or high chairs and, in so doing, exploring vertical trajectories—how far an object drops, how long it takes, and what happens on the point of impact.

Similar concepts of gravity and distance are illustrated in Fig. 2.1, and reflect the young artist's awareness that the jump/fall of the criminal should be represented as an arc-shaped pathway, similar to how one dives off a high cliff. Schema-oriented researchers, such as Arnold (2010), have investigated similar patterns in children's spontaneous play and activities, which are mostly patterns of action, but which also

Fig. 2.2 Trampolining (girl, 5.0) (By permission of the artist)

include visual patterns. One such pattern, or schema, is Transporting, where an infant might carry a pile of toys back and forth between her parents, who are sitting at opposite ends of the room, and then represent this action by drawing horizontal, back-and-forth marks on the page (Athey, 1990).

Other types of schema of young children, which extend to mark making on paper or on other surfaces, include: separating, connecting, containing, enveloping, vertical/horizontal/diagonal and going through. Matthews, in particular, has applied such schema in his study of the art of infancy (2004) and the movie-making development of children aged 2–3 years (2006). A diagonal schema is illustrated in Fig. 2.2 where a 5-year-old girl represents herself in a suspended state while jumping on a trampoline. Such diagonal positioning is a relatively common scheme used by children to illustrate a part-way-up/part-way-down state, as when being suspended in the air or when falling down.

In a large study with children aged 5–8 years, Wright (see Wright, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2014) has explored similar schema-based theoretical threads. Her close scrutiny and analysis of children's drawings and their processes has illustrated that topological and dynamic aspects of children's drawings are represented through spatial-temporal schema such as front/behind, close/distant, above/below, inside/outside, connected/disconnected, vertical/horizontal, proximal, surrounded, and trajectory/point of arrival. From this research stem three key principles that feature aspects of multimodal literacy and the symbiotic relationship between graphic, embodied and narrative forms of meaning making, namely:

1. Children graphically assemble actions to represent (a) the physical/spatial location and structure of events, (b) the flow of time, (c) relationships between

characters or objects in specific contexts, and (d) the classification of things in relation to other things. Such meaning is embedded in the children's use of indexical terms in relation to these action assemblies, namely: (a) location ('this, that, here, there'/'near, far'), (b) time ('before, after, now, then'), (c) identification ('I, you, he, she, they'/'it, this, that'/'the one, the other') and (d) organisation ('these, those, they').

2. Children enact meaning with the body through the use of: (a) gesture, small-scale motor actions of the fingers, facial expression, (b) descriptive action (e.g., pointing at a drawn object and moving the hand across the page to indicate its action or relocation) and (c) dramatization (e.g., enacting the drawn figure's movement, such as moving fingers upon the page to 'walk' up drawn stairs),
3. Children expressively narrate their 'live' meaning making through: (a) vocalisms (e.g., emphases through change in pitch, volume or tempo of speech), (b) onomatopoeia, often with accompanying actions, (c) figures of speech (e.g., 'heavy sky') and (d) repeated words for emphasis ('long long long hair') or to accompany a graphic action (e.g., 'colour, colour, colour'—as a verb).

Wright's research is evidence that children communicate using a number of different signs and symbol systems. For those who know how to see, careful attention to young children's drawings can show traces of identities, agency, drawing to know, changes of mind, self, and representation.

Through their drawing, children sometimes combine everyday experiences with imagination in a projective-reflective state. This type of thinking and feeling involves representation using signs that 'stand in for specific features or states of affairs' (Clark, 1996, p. 43). For instance, when children draw themselves as other characters, including animals or fantasy creatures, they are not just pretending to be another, but are acting 'as if' they have imagined characteristics, agency and a range of identities. The capacity to play with ideas like this is highly significant for children's exploration of possible selves and identities (Edmiston, 2008; Sutton-Smith, 1997). As they draw and play, children empathetically position themselves in relation to others and manipulate the feelings, moods and mind states of their drawn characters—real or fictional (Wood & Hall, 2011). These capacities are highly relevant to literacy development. Stemming from children's first symbol systems, these ways of seeing and thinking and feeling can help children come to apply sophisticated ideas to the second-order symbol systems of literacy and numeracy. The next section focuses on how teachers can nurture empathetic, embodied representation and reasoning in children through a focus on art.

Teachers' Work: Teaching Art/Literacy/Creativity

What is art? Historically, art has always been contingent and contentious, and today, with new technologies, the answer to the question of what is art is fluid and changing. Nevertheless, for most of the twentieth century, learning through art (e.g., learning history through drama) was seen as a fit with most progressivists. The emphasis was

on the experience of the learner, rather than the product, and self-expression and creativity were seen as means of enhancing personal growth (Abbs, 2003). These ideas dominated arts education at that time (Flemming, 2011, p. 181).

Faced with the long history of ambivalence over the importance of the arts in schooling, advocates for the arts have made many cases for quality arts education programs. According to Flemming (2011), general educational benefits of engaging with the arts are fairly widely acknowledged, although empirical research to date has not provided conclusive findings (Comerford Boyes & Reid, 2005; Eisner, 1998; Harland et al., 2000; Winner & Hetland, 2000, cited in Flemming, 2011, p. 181). Consequently, another curriculum 'solution' for those who struggle to have the arts take its place in the curriculum, not on the edges, is to dissolve art into creativity and culture. While currently enjoying 'capital' in the curriculum, creativity and culture can be put to work adding value to the arts. The problem here is that creativity and culture do not add up to all that is entailed within the arts. For others, art needs no justification in terms of anything else (Goodman, 1984, p. 157 in Kerlan, 2011, p. 121), and they insist that the worth of art is in art itself.

The problem with learning through the arts is that this too undersells the arts, narrowing and distorting its nature and its process, relegating it to a means for acquiring other (more important) knowledges. This chapter is not an argument for learning literacy through art, or vice versa. Rather, art and literacy are complementary—they enrich and inform each other and should be comprehended and applied as 'a package' (i.e., as parallel, symbolic forms of learning and knowing). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the arts are loosely analogous to reading and writing, however the processes are based on different symbol systems. In the last decade or so, there has been a strong recognition of this and a gradual paradigm shift toward multiliteracy research which addresses the different semiotic affordances offered through different semiotic materials (i.e., differing potentials for representation and communication and how particular properties lend themselves to representing different kinds of meaning) (Dyson, 2013; Kress, 1997).

Nonetheless, current Australian policies and structural systems in education continue to reflect the older paradigm leading to dominance of reading and writing as goals of education (Lankshear & Knoble, 2003). This narrow approach is supported by the measurement of literacy and numeracy through 'On Entry' and NAPLAN[1] assessments of children. These testing regimes extend to cross-national competitive scoring and, according to these measures, Australian children's learning 'lags behind' their counterparts in other countries. Ironically, Finland, one of the 'top-scoring countries', has recognised the importance of the arts and play—and has achieved successful TIMSS and PIRLS results.[2] The two are not antithetical. We argue that one explanation for Australia's poor performance could be that insufficient emphasis is given to first-order symbol systems at a critical period in children's development when children also are required to engage with 'second-order' systems.

[1] On Entry assessment – identifying essential literacy and numeracy skills; NAPLAN – National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy.

[2] International results in Mathematics and Reading. For more on this, see http://timss.bc.edu/

A recommended new approach to early childhood pedagogy would emphasise children's embodied experience through drawing. This would include a focus on children's creation, manipulation, and changing of meaning through engaged interaction with art materials (Dourish, 2001, p. 126), through physical, emotional and social immersion (Anderson, 2003). While art is a precursor to learning to read and write (Kress, 1997), it should not be abandoned when reading and writing become available. Rather, art should be regarded as a foundational way for children to understand and use symbols, systems, connections and ways of being.

Such a perspective will require an epistemological shift toward a deep appreciation and understanding of play and playfulness and the significance of these in relation to embodied, empathetic literacy learning. Vygotsky (1931/1994), for instance, suggests that creativity requires patience and an appreciation of the playful, and perhaps the fanciful and the unsubstantial. However, a creative curriculum is not a 'free for all' where anything goes. Teachers require particular knowledge and skills in order to enable creative processes in themselves and in the children with whom they interact (Banaji, 2011, p. 40). As in all areas of the curriculum, all teachers must have the confidence and professional knowledge to enact all areas of the mandated curriculum, including the arts. A quick search of early years' curriculum frameworks in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Sweden and England shows that, across these diverse contexts, commonalities include the featuring of play, creativity and the arts. The question for teachers is: How do they design and implement a curriculum for young children that makes space for creativity and the arts, particularly if their own education has left them not knowing to mix white with red to make pink?

In a classroom where teachers spend an average of 550 min per week instructing with an emphasis on drill in phonemic awareness, drill in grapheme/phoneme generalisations, alphabetic knowledge and knowledge of basic print conventions (see Luke, 2010), it would seem that opportunities for creative engagement with ideas and processes can be relegated to the sidelines of the curriculum, if featured at all. Yet, what would a classroom look like where young children are becoming literate, retaining their 'first languages', making choices for communicating their ideas and knowledge using multimodal means, and engaging with creative processes and with a range of symbol systems and signs?

This chapter concludes with four 'nudges' for teachers working in a climate of testing regimes that emphasise 'the basics' and ignore the rest of the curriculum; a climate characterised by a timetable with a finite number of hours for delivering instruction; and a climate that celebrates creativity but allocates minimal hours to the arts or creative learning. There are enough existing sets of indicators, benchmarks and 'standards' that currently work to shape teachers' actions and decision making. It is not the purpose of the following list to add to these requirements. Nevertheless, for those who are convinced that creative ways of teaching and learning offer a rich and enjoyable experience of education to any group of learners that will include a wide range of learning styles and capacities, then the ideas in this list might work as useful hints or nudges.

1. Imagination and pretence, fantasy and metaphor. There are many different ways that children play. As well as organised games, and games with rules, children need time to daydream, pretend, and play with ideas. Some children need help with learning how to do this. Others need time to develop their ideas, and try out new ideas, change their minds, share their dreams. In a classroom where all learning is literal and there is no room for imagination, then signs and symbols are difficult to grasp.

A creative curriculum will not simply allow, but will actively support, play and playfulness. The teacher will plan for learning and teaching opportunities for children to be, at once, who they are and who they are not, transforming reality, building narratives, and mastering and manipulating signs and symbol systems.

2. Active menu to meaning making. When young children play and draw, there is a symbiotic relationship between the two–one informs and enriches the other through a process of immersion and a type of improvisational give and take. Clearly, there is more to children's drawing than meets the eye. Indeed, the process of the playful unfolding of content and form is as important as the end artefact of the drawing itself.

Yet not all drawing is for the same purpose (Knight, 2008), similar to how writing is different according to purpose (e.g., shopping list, letter, email, essay, novel). Perhaps one way to understand the many purposes of art is to illustrate features that are applicable across all ages. For instance, contrary to the developmental age/stage schema that relegates 'scribbling' to babies, adults often continue to scribble in the form of doodling. Other contrasts of the purposes of art are illustrated by how Pictionary drawings are different from sketching a landscape; and plans for a house are different from a 'mud map' that provides directions to a new friend's house. What all of these forms of art making feature is the relationship between visualisation and action. In a classroom where children can choose to draw, write, paint or play in the way that suits their purpose and/or mood, literacy learning and arts learning will inform and support each other.

3. Intentional, holistic teaching. The holistic approach urges teachers to 'stop explaining' and avoid breaking all learning down into carefully staged bits and sequences. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the teacher has no role to play. On the contrary, a creative curriculum requires a creative teacher, who understands the creative processes, and purposefully supports learners in their experiences. Intentional teaching does not mean drill and rote learning and, indeed, endless rote learning exercises might indicate the very opposite of intentional teaching. What makes for intentional teaching is thoughtfulness and purpose, and this could occur in such activities as reading a story, adding a prop, drawing children's attention to a spider's web, and playing with rhythm and rhyme. Even the thoughtful and intentional imposing of constraints can lead to creativity.

4. Co-player, co-artist. 'Being' is a key concept that frames the new national Early Years Learning Framework for Australian children aged from birth to 5 years, and reminds educators of the importance of understanding children as current citizens, with capacities and capabilities in the here and now. Sometimes the only way for the teacher to know and appreciate children and what they know is to be

present and in conversation, interacting with the children as they draw. Teachers must try to avoid letting the busy management work of their days take precedence and distract them from the 'being'.

A space for new actions and abilities seems to open when an artist works, as an artist, with children. When MacCrea (2013) shared her artist's collection of found objects with very young children, she created a special interactivity with the children, where she and the children inspired each other, taking risks, trying out creative thinking, and together co-constructing meaning and relationship. When the teacher plays alongside the children in the sandpit, the creativity and learning dialectic enables the teacher to 'nudge', suggest, share thinking and judgments ("I'm going to try to make mine stand up on its own"). The message is that here is a place where it is OK to 'muck around', take risks, be wrong, try things out, loosen up—for the children and for the teacher.

These four 'nudges' are proposed as possibilities for bringing together many of the fundamental issues discussed above. In particular, they are nudges for teachers to make deliberate connections with children's first literacies of art and play. With these four points in mind, teachers can plan a curriculum that supports all children's learning. Such approaches actively encourage the creative, constructive thinking involved in meaning making through these modes, which are fundamental to the parallel development of the second-order symbol systems of reading, writing and numbering. Such symbol making is the essence of being human. In children's art and play, their symbol use captures their sensory modes in emotional and embodied ways, as children know their worlds and their place. Such embodied experience through action is a form of intelligence that underpins all other forms of reasoning. To deny this form of reasoning is to deny children their first language and to underestimate them intellectually.

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Chapter 3
Visual Arts Education and the Formation of Literacies: An Exploration of Visuality

Joanna Barbousas

Abstract This chapter will explore theories of visuality that inform conditions and formations of literacy to understand the impact of the image in thinking, practice and communication in visual arts education. The increase of visual artefacts and the accessibility of production and consumption have implications across a range of disciplines, which blurs the boundaries of knowledge formation. Theoretical constraints locate opportunities for the construction of visual artefacts as objects of knowledge that strengthen the formation of literate activities in education. We are often reminded of the proliferation of images in the world in which we live configured by the constraints of ownership and authorship. Theories of the visual are multidisciplinary and therefore mobilise discourses that are accessed by a value structure that adheres with the field itself. This chapter will outline some theoretical approaches of the imperatives within the field of visuality informed by the arts, more specifically the visual arts, and how these theories devise some of the ways literacy is constructed and manufactured in visual arts education. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the discourses of visual literacy and visual culture to situate the provocation of visuality in art education; and to consider the affordances that a conceptual framework offers to better understand 'literacies' in visual arts education. An exploration of visuality provides opportunities to understand the significance of the arts in situating literacy in relation to the visual as object and practice. Through an investigation of artists' practice, audience intentionality, the artwork as artefact, subject matter as purpose and frameworks that shape and construct pedagogical understandings, this chapter considers literacy practices in visual arts education as immersed in discipline content and ontologically constructed in curriculum formations – where visuality is understood as theory as practice and practice as theory.

Keywords Visual art • Visual literacy • Visuality • Artefacts • Artist

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Theorising the Politics of the Visual and Literacies in Visual Arts Education

Theories of visuality are conceptualised and developed in visual arts education to situate the specificity of the role of the image in art making and art appreciation. These theories are closely linked to conceptual frameworks in understanding the role of the artist, the formation of artistic practice, the intentionality of the art object and the formation of perspectives that impact on differing knowledge of the same object (Greene, 2007, 2013). In this way, visuality as a theorised practice in art education could be positioned as the place in which literacy lives in art education curriculum and pedagogy (Greene, 2007). Literacy as discourse in education has gained momentum with growing statistical data measuring the competency of literate people, nationally and internationally. The consumption of literacy as concept and practice in all school subjects sets up a justification of good practice – we too are dealing with literacy. Similarly, whether in science, music, physical education or visual arts education, to name a few, literacy is embedded as content knowledge, pedagogical practices and curriculum construction. Through an investigation of visual literacy and visual culture as discourse practices in art education, this chapter will situate these debates to better understand the affordances and omission of conceptual frameworks to curriculum formation, which exist in teaching practices, curriculum documents and pedagogical recommendations. A theoretical approach will be the focus of this chapter framing the ways in which visuality can be considered as practice, concept, and political discourse, as object and as audience intentionality.

This chapter will explore literacy formations with direct link to discourses of visual literacy, visual culture, and conceptual developments as discursive practices in visual arts education. Visual literacy has multidisciplinary representation with a clear affiliation with semiotic theory and practice. This chapter will examine how discourses of visual literacy and visual culture shape the discipline configurations in visual arts education. This chapter will also examine how visual literacy and visual culture are situated in visual arts education as literacy practices through conceptual developments. Additionally the chapter will recommend the complexities of visuality that fit within curriculum practices, which mobilise artists' practice, audience intentionality, the artwork as artefact, subject matter as purpose and frameworks that shape and construct pedagogical understandings.

To understand the configurations of 'literacy' in visual arts education it is important to examine the discipline conditions that map the way discourses are configured in curriculum and pedagogy. Disciplines exist by the authorisation of institutions that organise knowledge, driven by language, to constrain and monitor the 'self' (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 2002). Foucault's critical aversion to 'disciplines' is attributed to the 'dangerous' potential of organised knowledge that packages discourse as a familiar promise for betterment (Foucault, 1977, 1994). This promise is confirmed through the validated sources of knowledge as discourse, defended by disciplines (Gutting, 2005; Lotringer, 1989; Rabinow, 1984). Disciplines maintain and

authorise presuppositions through 'unified categories' such as the author, the work, and the institution (Foucault, 1972, 1977). Practices in visual arts education are representative of discourses supported and ordered by disciplines to authorise practices in the field. Disciplines are determined and regulated by statements, seized by language produced as knowledge that is counted 'serious', depending upon who is authorised to speak through the institutions that endorse the 'speech acts' (Foucault, 1972, 1977; Lotringer, 1989; Rabinow, 1984). The issue of discourse endorsement is paramount to understand the practices that are counted in pedagogical and curriculum practices.

Theories of visuality emerge out of an examination of how 'modes of seeing' are subject to knowledge constructions regulated through the 'pictorial turn' (Jay, 1996, p. 3). Superseding the linguistic turn emphasised in twentieth-century philosophical inquiry, the mobilisation of visual images has brought to the foreground 'models of spectatorship and visuality, which refuse to be redescribed in entirely linguistic terms' (Jay, p. 3). Jay contends that 'the pictorial turn' has brought to light visual experiences as assembled through technology, reproduced in a rapid rate and accessed regularly as texts. Jay claims that the expeditious shift from the linguistic to the pictorial has concentrated attention on 'scientifically and technologically generated "techniques of observation"', which has mediated an intellectual inquiry into visual practices that are culturally reliant.

The complexities of vision, visuality, sight, and ocularcentrism in the structures of modern society determined by and associated with concepts and practices of visual objects are theorised as the 'literal visual aspects of culture', and philosophical aspects of 'visual metaphors' provide for theoretical frameworks to assist in textual and conceptual understandings of visuality (Dikovitskaya, 2005). Concepts of the visual are bound within discipline systems and, although the visual is promoted as an interdisciplinary concept and practice, the configurations of its authority are bound to discipline structures and history (Jay, 1996). Therefore, how visual literacy functions and situates itself in visual arts education is often at variance to its formation in the subject of English. The interdisciplinary focus of the visual and visual literacy more broadly coexists in the space of disciplinary practice, ratifying the discourse of the visual. In other words, interdisciplinarity does not assume the dismantling of historically formed discipline distinctions that organise knowledge and authorise discourse. Interdisciplinarity has within it a conditional structure of power, and normalising networks that entomb the institutional conditions of discipline knowledge (Foucault, 2002).

It is not by coincidence that literacy shapes the configurations of practice in all school subjects. The political implications situate the practices in visual arts education, for example, to be defended in relation to 'literacy'. The nomenclature itself and the inclusion of literacies in curriculum documents provides the opportunity to explain and construct practices and theories to build an understanding of the concept and practices of literacies in art making and art appreciation. The formation of visual literacy as a term and subject area takes shape in journal publications after 1990. Previously, the appendage of these two words had little representation in scholarly practices.

Systematic Database Review of Visual Literacy

From the mid-1990s, particularly in North American art education publications, the move towards visual culture and visual literacy arose from the endorsement of technological practices in education more broadly – as technology relocated a space in educational practices and announced a better and newer way to understand learning, the term visual became a political word. To better understand the distribution of the term visual literacy in research a systematic database review utilising Scopus Database (http://www.scopus.com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/home.url) is explored to investigate the ways in which visual literacy has disciplinary distinction. Scopus is a database search engine with the 'world's largest abstract and citation database with peer-reviewed literature with small tools that track, analyze and visualize research'.

The phrase "visual literacy" was inserted in the Scopus search engine. An initial search of literature from 1990 to 2013, in all subject areas including Life Sciences, Health Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences and Humanities, resulted in 265 sources. The search was then limited to the Social Sciences and Humanities subject area only, to further examine education and visual arts more broadly, and this resulted in 183 sources. The following figures report on the number of publications in the area of visual literacy published between 1990 and 2013; the country affiliations of most publications in the area of visual literacy; the cluster of subject areas within the database area of Social Sciences and Humanities; and the representation of journals with multiple publications in the area of visual literacy (Figs. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4).

The figures above provide a snap shot of the discourses of visual literacy as objects of knowledge in scholarly practices. The increase of publications in this area from 1990 to 2013, with excessive increase in the last 5 yeasrs, tells a story about the discipline representation and how this is constructed specifically in education, art education and visual arts more broadly. Figure 3.3 identifies the social sciences

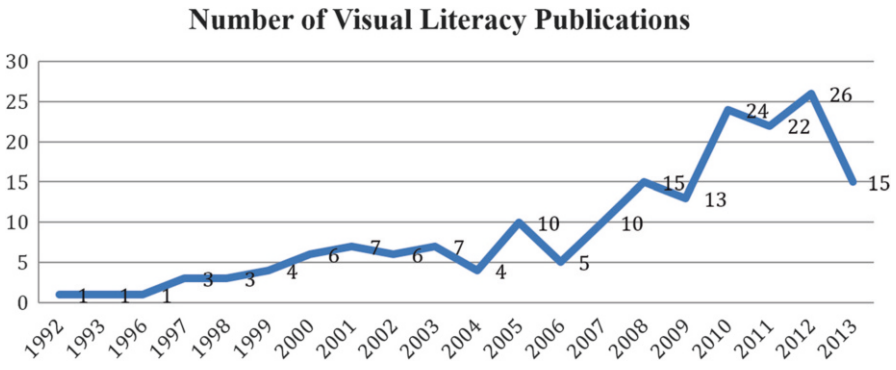

Fig. 3.1 Subject search of 'visual literacy' on Scopus Database (Author's own graph)

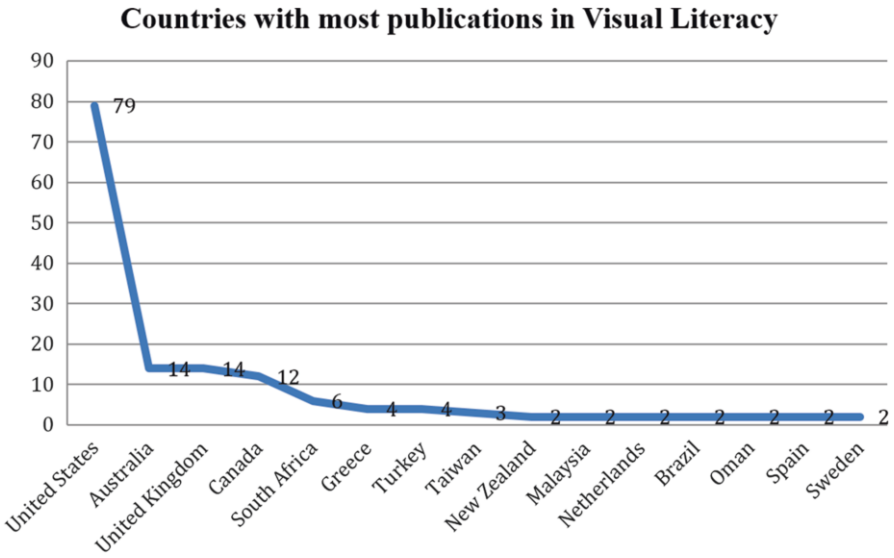

Fig. 3.2 Subject search of 'visual literacy' on Scopus Database. Country affiliations (Author's own graph)

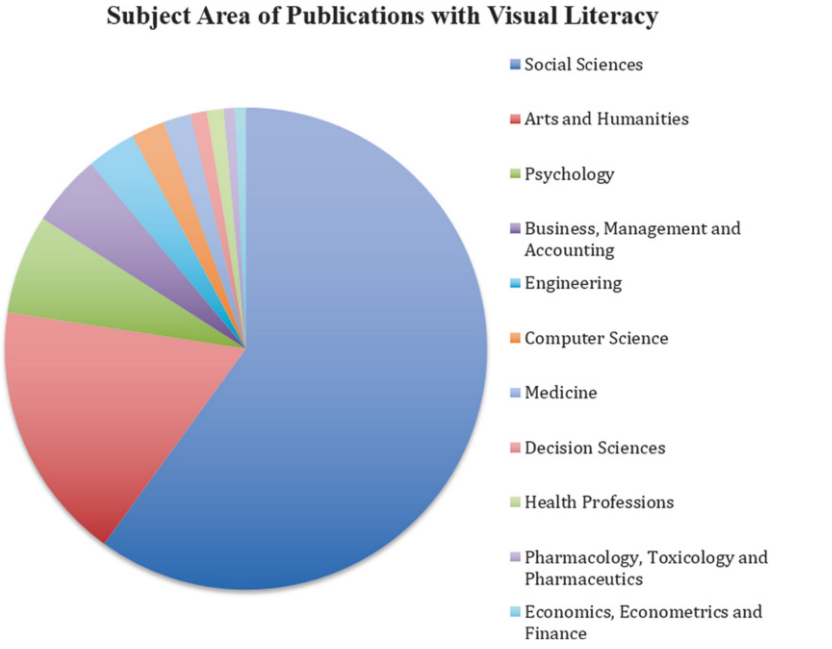

Fig. 3.3 Subject search of 'visual literacy' on Scopus Database. Subject area clusters (Author's own graph)

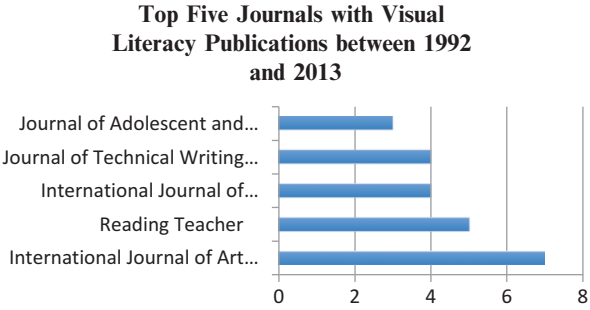

Fig. 3.4 Subject search of 'visual literacy' on Scopus Database. Journal affiliations (Author's own graph)

and arts and humanities as the two largest areas for publications in visual literacy, with psychology as the third largest area with increased publications in the area of visual literacy. The country affiliations indicate that most publications come from North America, Australia and United Kingdom. This systemic review is a snapshot of the lay of the land in the area of visual literacy publications and the distribution in the scholarly domain in the social sciences.

Visual Literacy and the Discourses of Visual Culture in Visual Arts Education

Similar to visual literacy, visual culture as a field of study is an interdisciplinary domain of knowledge that emerged 'in the late 1980s after the disciplines of art history, anthropology, film studies, linguistics, and comparative literature encountered poststructuralist theory and cultural studies' (Dikovitskaya, 2005, p. 57). Visual culture is a domain of knowledge that arises through research and impacts on curriculum construction to focus on the visual image as the impetus through which meaning is made in a 'cultural context' (Dikovitskaya, p. 1). Visual culture in art education is largely theorised through the Visual Culture Reader edited by Nicholas Mirzoeff (2009). Mirzoeff notes that 'Visual culture is concerned with visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology' (p. 27). The idea of visual culture as a body of knowledge, along with Mizoeff's condition of 'crisis', suggests that an urgent visual crisis arises as society and education are inundated with an excess of visual artefacts.

Originally restricted to facsimiles of artworks, art education now counts any image/reproduction/simulacrum/spectacle as its own and verified through conceptual practices that are determined as discipline knowledge – artists' practice. The masterpieces of the academy, and the art history that accompanies them, now share the classroom with popular culture, visual culture, postmodernism, and the artworld. Although the role of the image in art education is imperative to an understanding of 'art', the practices in art education are summonsed to respond to excess visuality,

mobilised through visual culture, that changes discourse and practice in the acquisition of knowledge in society. Visual arts education is in the business of matters 'visual' through the promotion of vision, seeing, and engaging with produced and reproduced visual artefacts that function as knowledge. Visual determines the practice of the field that is beholden to technologies that have advanced the reproduction of pictures, images, painting, drawings, and sculptures, to two-dimensional accessible artefacts that compose the discourse of the field. Visual technology magnifies an emergence of progress for art education. In other words, visual in art education is championed by advocates of visual culture for its technological focus that heightens an awareness of the 'contemporary visual world' (Duncum, 1999, p. 23). The explanations and considerations set out by advocates and practitioners of visual culture is a provocation.

Historically, technological inventions and discoveries have sponsored visual as artefact, practice, and knowledge in art education disciplinarity. Technological considerations are not limited to accelerated electronic progress through computer technology and cyber space innovations (Elkins, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2003, 2010). Technologies that have improved the printing press gave rise to reproduction of artworks; cinematic and projection technologies that provided the moving image access into the classroom have provided opportunities for visual to function in art education as a technologically driven artefact, practice, and knowledge. The production of visual knowledge through technological means is a discourse that has permeated the wider educational field through discursive and non-discursive practices since the invention of the printing press (Luke, 1989, 1997). The effect of visual technology through the construction of the educational film has variably impacted on the field of education, and continues to pose possibilities and limitations (Low 1970). The visual technologies of photography, the cinema and the digital electronic image influence art educational practices. 'Technologies are not just "add-ons" to a context, but may have an impact on the structure of perception, the organisation of cognition, and therefore our very definitions of consciousness' (Freedman & Popkewitz, 1984, p. 274).

Visual experiences are determined, measured, and assembled by value systems that characterise human functionality mapped at times by technology. Aesthetic visual experiences are invariably different between fine art and popular art. The value structures that authorise and organise perception in both fine and popular art are socially and culturally legitimated. The examination of perception, aesthetics, and theories of consciousness bound in cultural discourse are regulated by modes of seeing or what Martin Jay describes as 'the enigmas of visual experience evident in a wide variety of fields [which] may well betoken a paradigm shift in cultural imaginary of our age' (Jay, 1996, p. 3) In other words, modes of seeing are manufactured by cultural systems that validate visual experiences at any given epoch. The practices in visual arts education are determined by discourses in education, art, and sciences, for instance. To better understand how artists articulate their practices, and in turn how students can develop an understanding of these practices, we need to reject dichotomies such as teaching and learning (Freedman & Popkewitz, 1984).

Technology and the Role of the Visual as Culture in Art Education

The role of technology or, more specifically, visual technology proposes accessibility to representational realities that communicate the social norms and the regulative practice of human behaviour (Sennett, 1994). Often visual technology is interchangeable with visual aesthetics in discourses of visual culture. Kerry Freedman states:

> Visual technologies are based on visual aesthetics, the power of which is seductive and didactic. They are sensual; they attract and make people want to look at them. Global visual technologies depend on aesthetic strategies that promote perceptual pleasure and teach us how to get more pleasure from them. Through this aesthetic, visual technologies are used in ways that suggest, as well as represent. Using technology, ideas are easily referenced and presented in forms that audiences are meant to interpret personally, but through culturally influenced eyes. Visual technologies easily and quickly enable us to cross conceptual borders, providing connections between people, places, objects, ideas, and even professional disciplines (2003, p. 128).

The interchangeability of 'visual technologies' and 'visual aesthetics' is proposed by Freedman to authorise similar constructions of knowledge that formulate a position of authority, a shared discourse. Freedman considers this similarity to suggest a natural inclusion to art education practice. Discourses of technology and aesthetics are regulated by institutional systems that function with a varying order of control and power. The discourse complexities that assort and adjust the visual manufactured by discipline structures and discursive practices of technology and aesthetics adopt visual concepts in particular ways. Advocates of visual culture argue that the possibilities of visual technology are limitless; all that is visual is to be accessed in art education. Everything goes, unbounded by traditions that limit discipline knowledge; an application of 'all that is visual' is assigned with the intention to broaden the discipline distinctions of art education. It is argued by Freedman that the social universality of digital visual artefacts and the expediency of access blur the boundaries of institutional and discourse specificities, providing connections between people, places, and objects (Freedman, 2007). These connections are not without regulative practices that institute people, places, and objects, for example, to be authorised and normalised to function distinctly based on the discourse advocated by disciplinarity.

The advocacy of visual technology in the form of computer-generated artefacts, television, and films are proposed by discourses of visual culture to be central to the development of curriculum in art education that relates 'content to student knowledge' (Freedman, 1997, p. 51). The fundamental consideration of visual as constructed through the technologies of film, television, and digital media is predominately sociotextual. Theories of visual culture in art education are linked to postmodern theory, trimmed and simplified to fit the advocacy of visual culture through the deployment of visual artefacts that are produced through contemporary technological means. The constructs of visual proposed by the endorsement of technological exemplars activate the function of visual as predominantly technological

(Abbs, 2003). The visual in visual culture becomes the verb: the doing word of culture. It is connected with perceptual intention and constructed as a neutral function. Therefore, visual is mobilised through the intention of sight and governed with the technological verification of visual as artefact to be seen. Freedman (2001), ascribes contemporaneity to attributes of visual. In other words, for the field of art education to be positioned as current and modern, a contemporary focus on practice is imperative. Visual then becomes a tool for emergence of the present, to show a contemporaneous nature of the discipline, new within the context of the changing and evolving world (Freedman, 2007).

Theories of visual culture in art education situate postmodernism forms as the 'new' way to teach art education. The disparities between the intentionalities of postmodern theories and the structural formations of curriculum development are moderated into step-by-step sequences of classroom activities. Rather than situating postmodernism as a theoretical perspective in understanding intentional artifacts as art objects, advocates of visual culture revert postmodern condition to modernist structures in curriculum. However, postmodern theory is more typically articulated through the dismantling of structural norms, such as those that are embedded in Freedman's (2007) explanation of the postmodern exemplars in art education curriculum design. Terry Eagleton (1996), in his work The Illusions of Postmodernism, states that:

> Postmodernism is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity, and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of truth, history, and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities (p. 134).

The postmodern aesthetic is argued by advocates of visual culture to be a key consideration for a new way of knowing in art education. 'Aesthetic experience has changed through the dynamics of image-making and image-viewing in postmodern culture' (Freedman, 2001, p. 34). The use of the culture as a way to define a postmodern intention challenges the discontinuous conditions of postmodernism. Freedman suggests that postmodernism is a culture that 'is rapidly shifting from text-based communications to image saturation and the fragmentation and recycle of visual culture in new combinations' that impact on society as a whole (2001, p. 34). However, postmodern perspectives are imperative to artistic practice in understanding the intention behind a visual artefact. It has within it frameworks that situate practice as subversive and political. Discourses of visual culture utilise visual as concept and practice to highlight the challenges that confront art education as a field. Visual is explained as objects of technology that are ubiquitous and universal. Discussions centre round the survival of art education as a field in this ever-changing technological world. Freedman's (2007) paper *Artmaking/Troublemaking: Creativity, Policy and Leadership in Art Education* emphasises the conditions of visual as problematic objects that are in need of engagement. The distinctive knowledge structures are constructed through visual structures and art education domains

are not determined as distinctive. This characteristic view of visual in visual culture, which in turn mobilises the discursive practices of visual outside the discourses of art education, dismantles the discourses of art that pertain to art education practices (Freedman, 2005).

The cultural emphasis in discourses of visual culture politicises the place of literacy in visual arts education. Paul Duncum champions 'multiliteracy' and 'multimodality' as art education's answer to discipline practice. He states:

> For art education, the concern with multiliteracy and multimodality grows out of the current drive to reconceptualize the focus of art education as visual culture rather than art. The adoption of visual culture is part of a much broader movement within the sciences, social sciences, and humanities to conceptualise the visual as part of a general theory of communications. This movement arises out of a wholly new status given to the visual as a source of knowledge by many and disparate disciplines from astronomy to zoology. It equally arises from an acknowledgement that in a wholly unprecedented way people today derive meaning from all kinds of imagery as part of their everyday experience (Duncum, 2004, p. 254)

Duncum uses the terms multiliteracy and multimodality as a punch line in order to authorise the seriousness of his claims for visual culture in art education. Duncum thus tries to position his proposals of visual culture as power statements, legitimated and made important by replacing the marginal distinction of art education as a field with 'visual culture' as a new and progressive means of assessing and examining the visual. He states: 'What were once minority interests within literacy education have now, like visual culture interests within art education, come to the fore' (Duncum, 2004, p. 255).

Visual Culture and the Eclipse of Visuality

For Duncum, the nexus between VCAE and the 'new art education' is due to visual technological advancements that impact on society. Duncum suggests that visual culture is a 'description of our times', a consortium of all that is visual, pronounced through information and communication technologies and all that is culture, current and specific to the effects of information and communication technologies. Consequently, Duncum (2001) proposes that when considered as a field of study with implications for art education, 'the term visual culture is a reworking in contemporary terms of an earlier art education project described as visual literacy' (p. 17). Duncum discounts the discourse on visual literacy corresponding with research into literacy and learning, ordered and regulated by curriculum developments in English and literacy research. Duncum's efforts to disregard the complex consideration of the discourse of visual literacy in education as a whole and to moderate visual literacy as essential to art education is a misjudgement of the complex practices of discourse authority and discipline configurations. With reference to Doug Boughton's (1986) publication *Visual literacy: Implications for cultural understanding through art education*, Duncum's partiality for art education writings in the area of visual literacy promotes an exclusive domain. This exclusivity results in

power through a domain of knowledge that is select and permits only a few to enter. Simultaneously this same exclusive practice may interrupt power/knowledge.

Duncum (2007) makes claims for a paradigmatic shift in art education so that the formalistic principles, which have been hardened by history and embedded in discursive practices, must be dispelled and replaced by concepts of visual culture. The resilience of formalism is not considered in Duncum's (1996, 1999, 2004, 2007) and Freedman's (1997, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007) proposals for visual culture; formalism is rejected as a past practice. The strength of formalism, however, arises from those very same characteristics of formalism that irritate visual culture. It is because teachers perceive formalism as abstract and apolitical that it survives. Therefore the teacher for Duncum and Freedman is the problem or the weakest link. The mobilisation of elements of design brings forth a dedication of visual to assemble methods of constructing visual artefacts, objects, and artworks. Formalism gives students and teachers a simple, easily remembered and portable rule to apply when talking and writing about art. Formalism gives you something to say.

It is beyond the scope of this investigation to suitably explore the complexities of formalism and its impact on art education as a field of practice. However, it is essential to address the constructed duality that exists in Duncum's (1999, 2004, 2007) and Freedman's (2005, 2007) endorsement of visual culture in disallowing the discursive and non-discursive practices of formalism to be represented in art education – as it continues to exist in art classrooms.

Art as a discourse in the past and in the present promotes, challenges and emulates social, political and economic changes. The significant aspect to the Visual Culture debate is around issue of proliferation and accessibility of visual images. The current social climate is inundated with an influx of images, ubiquitous and accessible by all (Mirzoeff, 2009). Terry Smith, a professor of contemporary art, argues that the power of images and the supremacy they command affect all aspects of life by 'promising more and more openness, while at the same time its power to communicate concentrated meaning seems to decline' (Smith, 2001, p. 27). In other words, power is assumed in the accessibility of images however, power is also lost in its abundance due to the multilayered nature of understanding visual images. Advocates of visual culture link all digitised, screen, and photographic images to art education practices. However, the digitised, screen and photographic image as a discursive and non-discursive practice in art education did not follow the technological innovations of visual reproductions. For example, the photographic image was not included in art education practice until the appearance of photography as a distinct practice in the visual arts.

Anne-Marie Willis (1988), in her book *Picturing Australia: A history of photography*, provides a historiography of the photographic image and the activities of photography in the visual arts and art educational institutions. Willis argues that the emergence of the photograph as an artistic form in the 1970s was due to the theoretical disruptions to the dominant theories in art of the 1950s and 1960s. The critical debates of Clement Greenberg's (1966) theories, which emphasise the attributes of a medium were to take a shifting turn in the 1970s. Willis (1988) states:

> Clement Greenberg, the influential art critic, argued that each medium should rid itself of what was extraneous and get down to its essential nature: painting should reject all

> non-painterly aspects, should not try to appear as three dimensional like sculpture or illusionistic like theatre, that is should reject representation and be concerned with flatness and colour (1988, p. 218).

Mirroring Greenberg's (1966) glorification of the medium, the photographic images as argued by Willis (1988) were promoted for an aesthetic that was 'based on clear visual description and the acceptance of specific photographic qualities, such as random patterns and juxtapositions, flux, fragments and inconsistencies that the camera can record' (p. 218). The widespread acceptance of the photographic image as an art form was a response to the shift towards conceptual art and the dismissal of Greenberg's approach to painting (Willis, 1988).

Simultaneously, educational institutions began to demonstrate acceptance for 'photography as art' (Willis, 1988, p. 219). Although Willis identifies specific art training institutions and art world agencies, the broad role of art education as a distinctive practice was formulated by the spurts of technological advancements. These developments provided for the practices of photography in the emergence of visual as a condition of the field.

> Where the amateur movement had stimulated art photography during the pictorialist era, it played virtually no role in the 1970s push for recognition of photography as art (Willis, 1988, p. 219).

The late inclusion of the practice of photography was more than an Australian phenomenon. Willis (1988) indicates that the practice of art photography in America was entrenched in social culture since the 1930s, but not until 'the late 1960s and early 1970s did photography gain widespread acceptance in the avant-garde art world' (p. 219).

With this in mind, discourses of the visual may be considered a 'natural' phenomenon for visual arts education, but these discourse are situated and often omitted from education discourse. Therefore, claims made in light of visual culture in art education mobilise a formation of knowledge that is predominantly designed around cultural attentions, which are formulated through practices of criticism. The emphasis is on the effects of culturally bound images. Although important, it is not the only perspective that authenticates an understanding. In other words, building concepts of visuality through curriculum and pedagogical developments where artists' practice is epistemologically and ontologically understood through frames of meaning – cultural, structural, personal and postmodern – sets the agenda for literate practices to be explored (Barbousas & Maras, 2009).

Building Concepts of Visuality to Situate Literacy Practices in Visual Arts Education

The literacy imperatives that situate curriculum and pedagogical practices in education are mobilised in particular ways to adhere with discipline configurations. To inspect the currency and viability of visual literacy in visual arts education, and link

artistic practice and critical understanding, theories of 'scopic regimes', determined by an epoch and regulated by systems that rule a universal concept of visual, can work towards mapping visual practices (Elkins, 2010; Jay, 1996; Smith, 2010).

In Visual Arts Education literacy practices sit within complex relationships between images, intentions, artefacts and discourses that inform particular artefacts and condition its acceptances in art making and art appreciation. Artistic practices are regulated by rules, conventions and intentional dispositions, which are located in artworld relationships. These artworld relationships such as, the role of the artist, the artwork as intentional objects, the audience as a contributor to discursive practices and the world from which intentional objects are represented, disrupted, and culturally and socially constructed. In order to explain an artwork, it is relevant to 'to consider the function of artworks, artists, audiences and the world represented' to better understand theories of visuality in curriculum and pedagogy (Brown, 2001, 2003; Maras, 2009). Within these domains of knowledge 'multimodal' and 'visual literacy' configurations do not adhere with the configurations of the distinctive affordances that these play for the formation of visual literacy in art education. A semiotic 'reading' of visual objects can only go so far to explain the specificity of art making and art appreciation.

Visual artefacts are intentional constructions that are socially mediated, and afforded with meaning through time and space (Elkins, 2010). For the purpose of developing visual literacy skills, situating a conceptual framework where artists' practices are examined as discourses and conditions of the time will better inform students about the subject content and the specificity of literacy in discipline formations – visual arts education. We may take a semiotic view of artefact as text but it may be the suitable theoretical framework to position a structural or postmodern intention. To authentically examine intentional visual artefacts, relevant frames of reference, embedded in discourses, can better assist curriculum and pedagogical developments regarding, cultural, structural, personal and postmodern intentions of visual arts artefacts in art education.

Framing Concepts of Artist, Artwork, Artworld and Subject Matter in the Formation of Literacy

Artworld relationships of artist, artwork, artworld and subject matter are conceptual structures to understand and interrogate practices in the visual arts. These conceptual building blocks develop a literacy in art education that is authorised by the discourse of the field and situates knowledge development through explaining these domains of knowledge.

The role of the viewer and the formation of audience practices are key to the development of critical engagement with visual objects in art education (Barbousas & Maras, 2009). An understanding of audience participation and critical understanding of artworks is fundamental to the development of literate practices. 'To mobilise the knowledge formation that directly contributes to the field of knowledge

within the visual arts, the artist as content is developed in artmaking and art appreciation activities' (Barbousas & Maras, p. 690). Relational connections, which inform the personal, semiotic and structural constraints, situate artists' practice as social commentary with cultural, social and political intent. In this way, an understanding of the concepts and practices of artists' practice situates literacy as paramount in the epistemological investigation of visuality. Engaging with visual objects that situate theories of the personal/psychological, structural, cultural, and postmodern within art appreciation activities enables a critical understanding of practice in visual arts. These frameworks of understanding mobilised a literacy of visuality that is subject to the formations and constraints of visual arts education. The visual object, the artefact, and the artwork function within historical and contemporary discourses of artistic practice. As such, the semiotic, psychological, cultural/social, and postmodern are used as theoretical frames to better understand intentional objects, which are constrained by practice, in the visual arts.

To understand the formation of visual literacy and to examine the suitability within visual arts education, it is imperative to examine the conceptual formations of artwork relationships (Brown, 2003; Elkins, 2010). An artwork as an intentional object and the formations of visuality as theories of seeing and articulating the image world can be configured as practices in artmaking and art criticism in visual arts education.

The formation of visual literacy in visual arts education is embedded in an epistemological investigation of artworld relationships. These fundamentally situate the ways in which art making and art appreciation can be developed in the curriculum to form authentic links to visuality that is philosophically and practically linked to visual arts education discourses. In this way, the role of the visual image is not one to be read as a systematic text but rather interrogated as an intentional object, which has been constructed and baked through history to situate knowledge in specific ways. The role of the artist, the artwork, subject matter, and the audience are knowledge structures that order the formation of literacies, so that the visual image, as an intentional object is mobilised through practices that adhere with artworld relationships.

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Chapter 4
Interfacing Visual and Verbal Narrative Art in Paper and Digital Media: Recontextualising Literature and Literacies

Len Unsworth

Abstract Appreciating the aesthetics of visual and verbal art in picture books, illustrated stories and movie adaptations is a crucial aspect of literacy in the arts, as traditional and new cultural narratives are created and re-created in a variety of artistic forms. This chapter discusses three well-known illustrated literary narratives and animated adaptations, showing how subtle variation in the visual art of different versions of ostensibly the same story can effect significant shifts in interpretive possibilities. The significance of developing aesthetic, interpretive literacies for cultural engagement with such stories, and implications for teaching and researching new forms of multimodal literacies in schooling are addressed.

Keywords Children's picture books • Narrative • Animation • Interpretative possibilities • Multimodality • Aesthetic and interpretative literacies

Introduction

The interface between visual and verbal narrative art in picture books and illustrated stories has a long history and a strong trajectory of ongoing popular fascination and academic study (Anstey & Bull, 2000; Lewis, 2001; Nodelman, 1988). This interface emphasises the complementarity of appreciation of the aesthetics and narrative role of images and the verbal art of the language of storying (Hasan, 1985). There is also a long and strengthening tradition in movie adaptations of highly acclaimed picture books (Street, 1983), but rather more limited attention has been

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given to exploring the nature of the image-language relations in the movies or the relationships between book and movie versions. From the Weston Woods films of books such as Rosie's Walk (Hutchins, 1968) in animated movie format (Deitch, 1970) and Maurice Sendak's (1962) classic picture book of Where the Wild Things Are (Deitch, 1973), movie adaptation has continued with new movie versions of stories like Where the Wild Things Are (Jonze, 2009) and other more contemporary works, such as the movie of The Polar Express (Zemeckis, 2004) from the well-known picture book by Chris Van Allsburg (1985), and movie versions of illustrated novels for children such as Fantastic Mr Fox (Anderson, 2009) from the book by Roald Dahl (1974), and the movie Hugo (Scorsese, 2011) from the Caldecott medal-winning, illustrated story, The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick (2007). These are all movie adaptations from literary narratives constructed though language and image in paper media. In some cases, both the language and images of the movie versions are very different from those in the original books, whether the movie is live action such as Where the Wild Things Are (Jonze) or animation such as Fantastic Mr Fox (Anderson). However, in a significant number of animated movie adaptations the language is identical to, or only minimally different from, the book version and the animated characters are dynamic versions of the original static images. Works such as these afford the opportunity to appreciate how quite subtle changes in visual depiction from static to moving image can effect very significant shifts in the interpretive possibilities of what is ostensibly the same story. This chapter discusses three literary narratives of this kind: the story of The Little Stone Lion, which is a well-known and very short traditional tale from China in book and animated movie formats; the story of The Little Prince (de Saint-Exupery, 2000a), which is a substantial illustrated novel that has been published in many languages, including English in an animated version on compact disk (de Saint-Exupery, 2000b); and the movie version (Ruhemann & Tan, 2010) of the picture book, The Lost Thing (Tan, 2000), which won an Oscar for the best animated short movie at the 2011 Academy Awards in the United States.

The emphasis in this chapter will be on the ways in which the images construct interpersonal relations among characters and an interactive relationship with the viewer in the book and movie versions, 'positioning' the viewer in various ways of seeing what is depicted. The data analyses that inform this discussion draw on social semiotic accounts of the meaning-making resources of images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), especially as applied to research in the area of literature for children (Lewis, 2001; Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013; Unsworth, 2001, 2006). In the next section these informing bases will be briefly outlined. Following this the book and movie versions of each of the stories will be compared and a summary account of the commonalities and differences across these comparative studies will be provided. The significance of such research on multi-version narratives for children in informing curricula and teaching of multi-modal literacies in schooling will be addressed, and possibilities for new directions in such research suggested.

Interpersonal Meanings in Images – A Systemic Functional Social Semiotic Perspective

The analyses of interpersonal meanings in images in this chapter draw on the key concepts from the 'grammar of visual design' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Some recent work has extended the Kress and van Leeuwen frameworks in relation to picture books (Martin, 2008; Painter, 2007, 2008; Painter & Martin, 2011; Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2011; Painter et al., 2013), and here some use will be made of recent accounts of the construction of point of view in visual narratives.

In their description of the construction of interactive relations among represented participants in images and between viewers and image representations, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) proposed a number of systems of visual meaning-making resources. The work here draws on their systems of INVOLVEMENT, CONTACT, and SOCIAL DISTANCE. The system of INVOLVEMENT describes positioning the viewer to feel to a greater or lesser degree part of the social context of the represented participant(s). The degree of involvement is determined by the horizontal angle (Kress & van Leeuwen, pp. 133ff). If the characters face the viewer 'front on', that is, the horizontal frontal plane of the viewer and that of the character are parallel, the sense of viewer involvement with them is maximised. But when characters are depicted at an oblique angle, that is, the frontal plane of the viewer and that of the depicted characters are not parallel, the viewer is positioned as more detached from depicted characters – to see them as 'other'.

In their system of CONTACT, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) refer to images where a depicted character gazes out at the viewer as 'demand' images; images where there is no such gaze are referred to as 'offers'. Painter et al. (2013) maintain this distinction, but take issue with the terminology used by Kress and van Leeuwen. For Painter et al., the gaze of the depicted participant does not actually 'demand' anything, but it does make interpersonal contact with the viewer; hence, they refer to such images as 'contact' images. Where the depicted participants do not make eye contact with the viewer, the interactive role of the viewer is to observe what is in the image and, hence, such images are referred to as 'observe' images. The terminology of 'contact' and 'observe' will be used in this chapter.

The system of SOCIAL DISTANCE (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 124–129) is realised by the 'size of frame'. For example, the depicted characters may appear as head and shoulders only, largely occupying the frame of the image, so that they appear close up to the viewer; or perhaps only their face or part of their face is visible, again largely occupying the frame, which makes them appear to be at a quite intimate social distance from the viewer. On the other hand, if the entire body of the depicted participant is visible, this positions the character as being further away from the viewer, and if the whole-body depiction moves to the background of the image, the depicted character may appear quite remote from the viewer. These extremes are commonly referred to as 'close-ups' or 'long shots', respectively, with 'mid shot' indicating commonly accepted interactive social distance.

In the construction of images, choices are made simultaneously from the systems of INVOLVEMENT, CONTACT, and SOCIAL DISTANCE (in addition to other systems proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) but not discussed here). The various combinations can result in very different interactive relations with the viewer. For example, a close-up contact image with the frontal planes of the depicted character and the viewer parallel can construct a sense of closeness and intimacy, whereas if the parameter of social distance is changed to a 'long shot', the impact of the 'contact' dimension is greatly reduced, and the interactive meaning is more like observe.

Point of view and 'focalization' (Genette, 1980) continue to attract detailed scholarly enquiry (Huhn, Schmid, & Schonert, 2009), but here I will simply draw on the basic distinction between (i) who is telling the story and (ii) from whose point of view, or through whose eyes, we experience the story. Usually the issue of who is telling the story is determined by reference to the verbal text only, but the question of "who sees", or from whose point of view are we experiencing the story, can apply to both the verbal text and the images. Sometimes the points of view constructed by the verbiage and the image are consistent and sometimes they are different. In this paper the emphasis will be on the construction of point of view in images. Images can position the viewer to assume different viewing personas. One option is to position the viewer as an outside observer, but the viewer can also be positioned as if s/he were one of the characters in the story, or as if s/he had a visual perspective that was not identical with, but was nevertheless similar to, that of a character so that the viewer sees "along with" the character (Painter, 2007; Painter et al., 2013; Unsworth, 2006).

There are a number of methods by which viewers can be positioned as if they were one of the characters in the image (Painter, 2007; Painter et al., 2013), such as the depiction of just the part of the body that could be seen by the focalising character (such as the hands or feet out in front of the unseen body). Since the reader can see only that part of the body (such as the hands or feet) that would be visible to the focalising character, the reader is positioned as if s/he were the focalising character – with that character's point of view (see also Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, pp. 143–144)).

It is also possible for the reader to share a character's point of view rather than being positioned as the character. The reader sees part of the character while also seeing what the character sees from that character's perspective. This is achieved by having the reader view what is depicted 'along with' or 'over the shoulder' of the focalising character. The 'over the shoulder' view can be achieved by positioning the reader's point of view as being from slightly to the rear and to one side of the focalising character. This is frequently achieved in the movie of The Lost Thing through a close-up foreground image of the right side and rear of the boy's head and shoulder, constructing our point of view as 'over the shoulder', but can also be achieved through a rear view of the character, provided it is not a very distant view, as will be suggested in the discussion of The Lost Thing movie.

The Little Stone Lion

The Little Stone Lion (Xiong, 2007) is a whimsical tale of a stone-carved lion that continues taking care of generations of people in a small Chinese village, witnesses everything in the town, and embodies and guards the collective memory of the generations of village inhabitants. The story begins with the stone lion, as narrator, announcing his role and status, his size (similar to a cat) and that he is older than everyone. He says that he is loved, and always remembered at the New Year celebrations; that he provides security to children walking alone at night; and that brings nostalgia about childhood to old people who touch his head. He then says that he remembers everyone and everything that has happened, but wonders if the children will forget him when they leave the village. But he says that he will remember all of them and never forget anyone. The story ends with him re-iterating his role and status in the village.

The above summary of the 178 words of the story (which are the same in the voice track of the movie) is complemented by the evocative nature of the images in establishing the significance of the stone lion to the town and the deep affect and commitment he feels toward the generations of villagers. The images commit to some circumstantiation not included in the language, such as limited depiction of the buildings and streets in the village and some indication of weather conditions. They also commit to attributes of the characters not committed to in language, except for the age and size of the stone lion relative to the villagers. The stone lion's memories are depicted as very small images of characters and animals floating past his head, and the memory of an old man's childhood is shown as a very small image of a young boy in the background flying a kite. There is a great deal of convergence in the ideational meaning conveyed by the images and the language. The book and the movie are quite similar in this respect, apart from the gratuitous appearance of a bird on the head of the stone lion at the beginning of the movie, and at the end the little girl appears quite miniscule as she stands on the lion's head, which is quite incongruous with the notion of the small cat-size stone lion in the story proper. The drawings in the book and the movie are precisely the same and there is little actual animation of the drawings in the movie. The little girl shown walking in the night actually perambulates, the cat's tail twitches, the old man's hand moves as he pats the head of the stone lion, snowflakes and raindrops fall, stars twinkle, the stone lion's eyes move and shed a tear, the ox cart and bus move, and the characters of the stone lion's dream actually float around his head. The impact of the images on the interpretive experience of the story in both the book and the movie does not reside principally in the ideational meanings they construct. Rather, the impact is in the nature of the interpersonal engagement the images engender with the reader/viewer. The story is primarily about affect – certainly the feelings of the villagers for the stone lion are made explicit in the language:

> Everyone loves me and remembers me when celebrating the New Year.
> Children walking at night feel at ease when they see me.
> Old folks often caress my head sighing in reminiscence of their childhood.

But the feelings of the stone lion are almost entirely implicit in the language. He says that he remembers everyone, which evokes affect. It is only after he wonders if people will forget him that the one direct expression of his affect occurs in the language:

> Perhaps they will forget me……
> But, I remember them, and miss them.

The depth of the stone lion's affect and the interpersonal empathy with him is constructed through the images in the book and this effect is intensified in the movie.

Empathy with the Stone Lion: Interaction and Affect in Images

In the first double-page spread when we encounter the stone lion, we see him alone in the foreground, apparently quite large, and the text says: "I am the guardian angel of a small town." On the subsequent page we see an extreme close up of part of the face of the stone lion with his gaze directly at the viewer. Here the text reads: "I am the only stone lion in this small town." On the subsequent page, as shown in Fig. 4.1, we have an even more extreme close up of part of the stone lion's face accompanied by the text: "The only patron god." The same effect is repeated in the last two pages of the book. The story is framed, then, by two extreme close-up images where the social distance between the viewer and the stone lion is very intimate. In fact, the eyes of the stone lion gaze directly at the viewer in 13 of the 17 images in which he is depicted in the book. This sets up a pseudo interpersonal contact between the viewer and the stone lion so that the viewer is engaged with him. In 10 of these 13 contact images the frontal plane of the stone lion is parallel with the frontal plane of the viewer. These frontal images establish maximum involvement between the

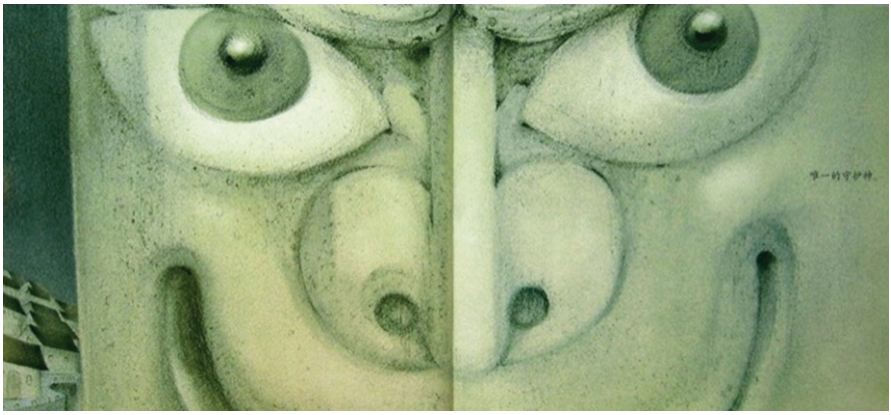

Fig. 4.1 The only patron god (Xiong, 2007) (Reprinted with permission from the author)

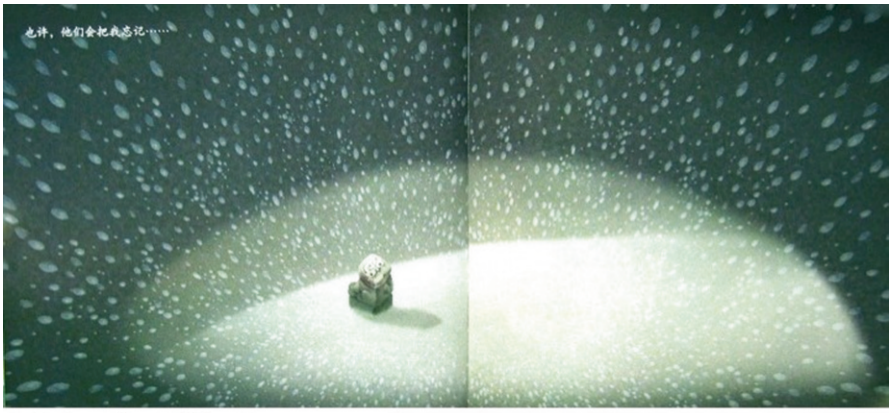

Fig. 4.2 Perhaps they will forget me (Xiong, 2007) (Reprinted with permission from the author)

viewer and the represented participant so that the viewer feels that s/he is part of the world of the represented participant. In ten of the images where the stone lion gazes directly at the viewer his body or part of his body takes up most of the page, so the interpersonal space is quite close.

Thus, for the majority of images of the stone lion we have the combination of direct eye contact with the viewer, parallel frontal angle indicating high involvement, and close social distance, setting up an intimacy between the character and the viewer. This is enhanced by the changes in the depiction of the eyes and mouth of the stone lion from image to image in order to convey different facial expressions of affect. This is most obvious in the joyous satisfaction shown by the closed eyes and upturned smiling mouth in the image where he remembers everything, including each person who has lived in the town and everything that has happened. Intimacy between the character and the viewer is also obvious in the image showing tears in his eyes when he says he remembers and misses each person who has gone from the town.

The movie maintains and intensifies the interaction with the viewer, most significantly through the affordance of dynamic change in social distance. This occurs poignantly when the stone lion says that he remembers everything. In the movie at this point the image of the stone lion is closer and at a more intimate social distance than in the book. Also, in the movie the eyes are initially open, gazing directly at the viewer, and then as the camera zooms out the eyes close. The intensification of interaction through dynamic manipulation of social distance in the movie occurs when the stone lion is wondering whether the town inhabitants who move away will forget him. In the book the visual depiction of this is an extreme long shot of the stone lion in the snow (Fig. 4.2), but in the movie the initial depiction is of an extreme close up (Fig. 4.3) and then the camera zooms out and rotates with the stone lion's eyes continuously looking at the viewer. Eventually the image is similar to that depicted in the book, but not quite as far from the viewer. The other dynamic

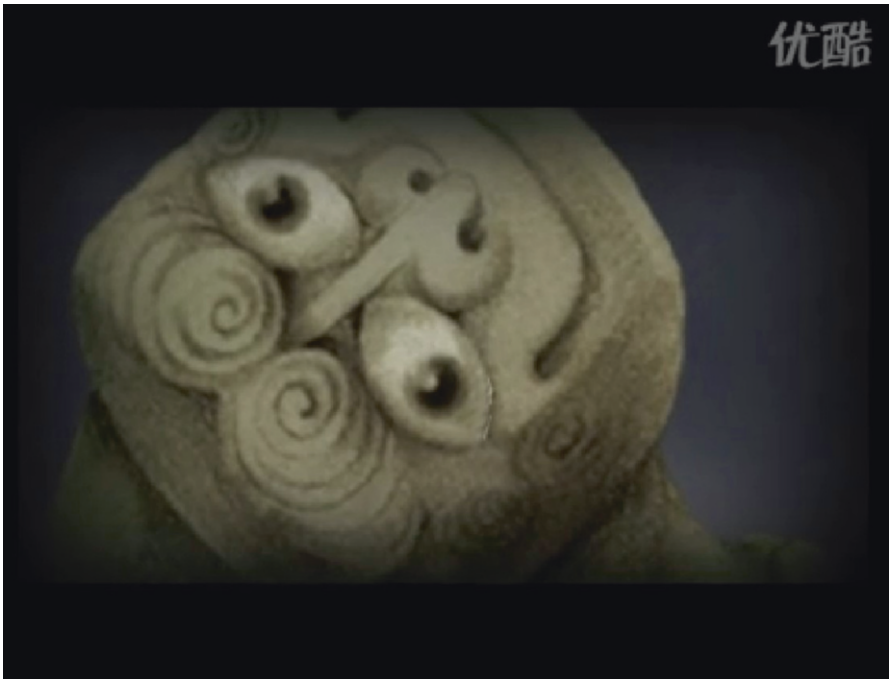

Fig. 4.3 Perhaps they will forget me – initial movie image (Reprinted with permission from the author)

technique intensifying interaction in the movie is the movement of the stone lion's pupil as his eye seems to follow the young girl walking past him, and the blinking of his eyes as the old man is leaning on him.

In the story of The Little Stone Lion, then, the image-language relations in the book and the movie are very similar. The visual depiction of the images is also the same and there is consistency in the visual techniques depicting affect and constructing interpersonal interaction between the stone lion and the reader/viewer, with the dynamic shifting between social and more intimate interpersonal distance in the movie intensifying the construction of empathy with the main character.

The Little Prince

The Little Prince was first published in 1943 and has been republished many times in different book formats and in many different languages. In 2000 a compact disk (CD) version with hyperlinked animations of the original images was published by Tivola/Gallimard (Gallimard, 2000), and more recently the story was retold as a 52-episode animated television series (http://www.thelittleprince.com/tv-serie/). In this section I compare one brief segment of one chapter of the story in the book and animated CD versions.

In this story the narrator, a famous aviator, has mechanical trouble with his plane and is forced to land in the Sahara Desert. A young boy approaches him and asks him to draw a sheep. Page by page, the pilot learns of the past of the Little Prince. The Little Prince lived on a small asteroid named B-612. The asteroid was so small that the Little Prince could see 44 sunsets simply by moving a few steps every couple of minutes. He longed to explore, and describes his journey from planet to planet, each tiny world populated by a single adult. The author pokes fun at a king, a businessman, a geographer, and a lamplighter, all of whom signify some futile aspect of adult existence, until the Little Prince is carried by a flock of birds to Earth. The Little Prince is like a parable or a fable, addressing deep philosophical issues beyond its simple plot. There are thoughts in this book on love, relationships, the emptiness of a life without either, death, spirituality, capitalism, and, in general, the soulless existence of the adult world. There are 46 illustrations in the book – some coloured and some black and white. All are more schematic representations of the participants and circumstances rather than realistic or naturalistic representations. The animations in the CD maintain the features of the original images.

The discussion here deals with chapter XV only, focusing on one aspect of the encounter of the Little Prince with the geographer on his planet. The geographer explains that he is not an explorer and hence does not actually know about whether his planet has oceans, mountains, cities, rivers or deserts. Geographers simply record what explorers tell them if the explorer can be shown to have a good moral character and can furnish evidence of what s/he has discovered. The geographer believes the Little Prince to be an explorer and is keen to record what the Little Prince can tell about his planet. The Little Prince mentions his volcanoes and his single flower, but the geographer will not record the flower because it is ephemeral. This arouses feelings of regret in the Little Prince at having left his flower all alone, but nevertheless he plucks up his courage and, on the geographer's advice, sets off to visit the planet Earth.

In the book there is only one image in chapter fifteen – a drawing of the geographer. This shows an elderly, white bearded man sitting behind a large desk, looking at a large open book and holding a magnifying glass in his left hand. The old man and his desk are located on the top of an arc, which represents his planet. This is an 'observe' image (Painter et al., 2013, p. 29) as the geographer looks at his book and does not make eye contact with the viewer. It is a medium to long view, showing the entire desk and the upper body of the geographer behind it, so, although not remote, the viewer is socially distanced from the geographer. The frontal plane of the desk is parallel with that of the viewer so there is optimal involvement between the viewer and the geographer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), although this is somewhat mitigated since the geographer seems to be sitting at a slightly oblique angle behind the desk. The vertical angle is somewhat elevated as the viewer looks slightly down on the geographer.

The chapter is very largely dialogic and hence the spoken text of the CD animation is almost identical to the written text of the book version. But the animation, of course, is a continuous portrayal of images, which are dynamic versions of the original static images. The animation images construct varying points of view visually, which are very different from the unmediated observe view in the single image in chapter XV in the book. Here I will demonstrate this briefly through an analysis of

Table 4.1 Discussion with the geographer in chapter 15 (CD ROM version) of The Little Prince

Segments	Synopses
1.	The geographer prompts Little Prince to describe his planet. Little Prince does so and ends by indicating his planet has a single flower
2.	The geographer indicates that geographers do not take note of flowers despite their beauty because flowers are ephemeral
3.	The Little Prince asks what 'ephemeral' means. The geographer indicates that eternal things like mountains and oceans rarely change. The Little Prince notes that volcanoes come back to life and asks again what 'ephemeral' means
4.	The geographer replies that what is important to him is the mountain that does not change rather than its being a volcano that might. The Little Prince again asks what 'ephemeral' means and the geographer replies "which is threatened by impending death"
5.	Little Prince notes that his flower is threatened with impending death, which the geographer confirms. Little Prince regrets leaving her alone with only four thorns to defend herself
6.	Little Prince asks the geographer where he should visit next and the geographer recommends Earth. The Little Prince leaves, thinking of his flower

the discussion between the geographer and the little prince about the ephemeral quality of the prince's flower. The segments of this part of the discussion are summarised in Table 4.1.

In the discussion of the meaning of 'ephemeral' not only do all of the images occupy the full screen, but also these are all contact images, where one of the characters is looking directly at the viewer. In segments 1, 3 and 5, it is the Little Prince who is looking at the viewer, 'demanding' our interaction. So, in these images we are positioned as having the point of view of the geographer looking over the desk, and the enormous geography book, at the Little Prince. These images are also elevated, so from the geographer's viewpoint, we, as viewers, are looking down on the Little Prince from a position of relative power. In segments 2 and 4, however, the geographer is looking at us and we are positioned as having the point of view of the Little Prince. Here it is interesting to note that the vertical angle is much closer to eye level, so that from the point of view of the Little Prince, the geographer is not accorded greater power.

In all of the images in segments 1–5 the social distance is medium with the upper body and head of the characters visible. The frontal plane of the characters is also parallel with that of the viewer, indicating maximal inclusion. Thus, in the discussion of 'ephemeral', in great contrast to the book version, the viewer of the animated version is positioned by the images to engage with the represented participants much more, and more intimately, and also from changing points of view.

With the exception of segment 3, the character who is the principal speaker is the character depicted on the screen and is seen from the point of view of his interlocutor. This can be seen in Table 4.2, which shows the speakers and the number of words spoken in each scene, with the principal speaker indicated in bold font. Segment 3 is the only occasion when the listener, the Little Prince, is depicted on screen. How is he depicted during the geographer's speech? The geographer is expounding on the virtues of geography books never going out of date because they record eternal things like the position of mountains. The Little Prince is seen from a high angle

Table 4.2 Interactive features of images in the chapter fifteen animation of The Little Prince

Segment	Character(s) on screen	Social distance	Observe/ contact	Vertical angle	Horizontal angle	Who speaks	Point of view
1.	Little Prince	Medium	Contact	Elevated	Parallel	**Little Prince 34** Geographer 4	Geographer
2.	Geographer	Medium	Contact	Eye Level	Parallel	Little Prince 7 **Geographer 11**	Prince
3.	Little Prince	Medium	Contact	Elevated	Parallel	Little Prince 16 **Geographer 43**	Geographer
4.	Geographer	Medium	Contact	Eye Level	Parallel	Little Prince 5 **Geographer 29**	Prince
5.	Little Prince	Medium	Contact	Elevated	Parallel	**Little Prince 33** Geographer 1	Geographer

respectfully fingering the edge of the geography book on the geographer's desk and looking up at the viewer who is positioned as the geographer. In this way, the visual construction of this encounter accords somewhat more humility to the Little Prince than is the case in the book and linear text version.

The Lost Thing

In 2011 Shaun Tan and Andrew Ruhemann received an Oscar at the Academy Awards in the United States for the best animated short film, for *The Lost Thing* (Ruhemann & Tan, 2010) from the original picture book by Shaun Tan (2000). The book and movie versions are, of course, the same story, with the content being almost identical and with only very modest changes in the verbal narration. Both versions use essentially the same minimalist depiction style of drawing characters – minimalist in the sense of not being realistic or naturalistic drawing but using simple dots and circles for eyes and not having correctly proportioned head size or body parts – and the characters look very much the same in the book and the movie. What is strikingly different is the deployment of the interpersonal aspects of the images constructing the interactive relationship between the represented participants and the viewer – particularly the social distance and the nature of the contact achieved by the gaze of the eyes of the characters directly at the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), as well as the difference in point of view (Painter, 2007; Painter et al., 2013; Unsworth, 2014).

The Lost Thing (Tan, 2000) is a humorous story about a boy who discovers a bizarre-looking creature while out collecting bottle-tops at a beach. Having guessed that it is lost, he tries to find out who owns it or where it belongs, but the problem is met with indifference by everyone else, who barely notice its presence. Each is unhelpful; strangers and parents are unwilling to entertain this uninvited interruption to day-to-day life. Even the boy's friend is unable to help, despite some interest. The boy feels sorry for this hapless creature, and attempts to find out where it belongs.

The first-person narration constructs reader alignment with the point of view of the character of the boy as narrator. But in the book the images create a tension with this alignment. There are no images that construct a point of view for the reader that is along with, or as, the main character – or any character in the story. The visual focalisation in the book is hence created through consistently 'unmediated observe' images (Painter et al., 2013). All of the images are observe images since there are no contact images where the represented participant gazes directly at the viewer. There are also no close-up images of the represented participants. The images in the book therefore position the reader as a detached, quite distant, outside observer. The tension between alignment of the reader and the character of the boy as the first-person narrator, and the distancing of the images, reflect the treatment of the relationship between the boy and the lost thing in the book where the boy believes he should be concerned about the abandonment of the lost thing by society, but does not establish any interpersonal closeness with it. In the movie the images construct a pseudo-social relationship with the viewers that is very different from the relationship constructed by the book. There are many more mid-distance and close-up views of the characters; sometimes the main character of the boy looks directly out at the audience; and the viewer is very frequently positioned to have a point of view along with one of the characters, and on a number of occasions as if s/he were one of the characters. While the story events are almost exactly equivalent in both versions and the narration varies only moderately, the visual depiction in the movie significantly affects the interpretive possibilities.

The second two-page spread of *The Lost Thing*, shown in Fig. 4.4, represents the boy's meeting the lost thing. The point of view is unmediated – not 'as' or 'along with' the character. All the images are 'observe' images, as no gaze is directed to the reader. The large image is a longish mid view of the boy, showing more than half of his body but in profile and at a slightly oblique angle. The small images on the right-hand column are also mostly long shots or longish mid views and the social distancing is accentuated by the smallness of the images. The smallness of these images also means that no facial affect is discernible, although curiosity is indicated by posture and gesture. Overall, the reader relationship with the characters is quite remote and detached. In each of the four small images in a column on the right-hand side, the lost thing is prominent, and all of these images, with the single line of text under each, appear to be labelled. The first three of these, each in turn, add a label of negative judgment about the lost thing:

> sure didn't do much.
> It just sat there,
> looking out of place.

The positioning of these negative judgments like labels underneath the three small images of the lost thing on the right-hand side in the location of 'new' information (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), and the social distancing of the reader from the characters, tend to give more emphasis to the unappealing incongruity of the lost thing than to the curiosity of the boy.

In the movie there is no explicit verbal comment on the boy's curiosity about the lost thing, but curiosity, surprise and puzzlement are evoked through facial expression and gesture and the 17 s of silent walking around and looking at the lost thing before any utterance of judgment is made. The point of view is unmediated for those

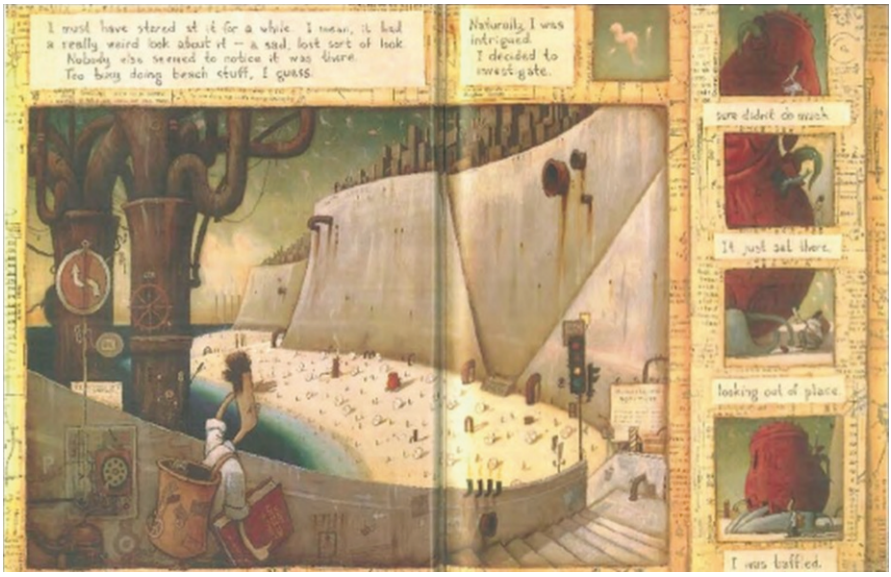

Fig. 4.4 Meeting the lost thing (Reprinted with permission from the author)

Fig. 4.5 It just sat there (Ruhemann & Tan, 2010) (Published with kind permission of © Passion Pictures Australia Pty Ltd. 2010. All Rights Reserved. It is not permitted to download or copy this image separately)

17 s, but when the boy stands still in front of the lost thing, the camera shifts to a close-up foreground view of the back and right side of the boy's head and his right shoulder, positioning us along with the boy's point of view as he looks up at the lost thing, as indicated in Fig. 4.5. The lost thing does not have eyes but the aperture at the top, behind which is what appears to be a fan, creates the impression of its

Fig. 4.6 …with a really weird look about it (Ruhemann & Tan, 2010) (Published with kind permission of © Passion Pictures Australia Pty Ltd. 2010. All Rights Reserved. It is not permitted to download or copy this image separately)

having eyes. This means that the immediately subsequent shot (Fig. 4.6), which is a 'contact' image because the gaze of the boy is upward towards us as the viewers, can be inferred as from the point of view of the lost thing. Hence we are being positioned as the lost thing. The closer social distance, inclusion of 'contact', and shifts in point of view mean that the viewer is positioned much more within the story world experience than is the case with the corresponding segment in the book.

The narrative judgment statements about the lost thing are astutely synchronised with shots in the movie. "It just sat there" is synchronised with the image shown in Fig. 4.5, which could just as much show the lost thing contemplating the boy as the boy contemplating the lost thing. When we hear the continuation of the narrative "with a really weird look about it", what we are actually looking at is the image of the boy shown in Fig. 4.6. Thus, the synchronizing of the narration of "really weird look" with the image of the boy 'unsettles' the taken-for-granted notion that it is the lost thing only that has "a really weird look about it". And then the narration of "You know, a sad, lost sort of look" is synchronized with the bird's-eye-view image of the lost thing and the boy apparently wandering away from it, so the boy appears somewhat lost from this perspective, again unsettling the idea that it is the lost thing only that is 'lost'. It is as if the image-language interaction in the movie is problematising the negative judgment of the lost thing, whereas in the book these judgments appear to be quite unequivocal. What is clear is that differences in the image-reader/viewer relations, point of view and the interaction of these with the language of the narration construct different orientations to interpretation in the book and movie versions of the story.

As the story moves to its conclusion in the book, the parting of the boy and the lost thing is shown in one image, which is a long-distance, observe view of the boy and the

Fig. 4.7 …as good a time as any to say goodbye (Tan, 2000) (Reprinted with permission from the author)

lost thing in profile facing each other – the boy with his hands stretched forward and the lost thing with its tentacles extended forward in a farewell gesture (Fig. 4.7). The text on this page represents the parting as emotionally neutral and inconsequential:

> It seemed as good a time as any to say goodbye to each other. So we did.
> …
> Then I went home to classify my bottle-top collection.

Fig. 4.8 Before the departure (Ruhemann & Tan, 2010) (Published with kind permission of © Passion Pictures Australia Pty Ltd. 2010. All Rights Reserved. It is not permitted to download or copy this image separately)

In the movie, this narration accompanying the "departure" image is omitted and the entire departure segment is conveyed through the images and music only. It begins with close-up contact images of the boy looking straight out at the viewer as the door of the strange creatures' sanctuary opens. After these, there are two long-distance observe images showing the boy and the lost thing beside each other, facing out towards the viewer. These suggest collaborative companionship between the two characters. Subsequently the boy turns to look up at the lost thing. His mouth opens to a half smile in profile view. The view then shifts to a more social-distance view of the boy's upper body and head in profile – but with the just discernible smile sustained and still looking at the lost thing (Fig. 4.8).

While the book image shows only the boy and the lost thing gesturing goodbye, in the movie there is greater visual commitment to the depiction of the actions that occurred immediately prior and subsequent to this common gesturing scene. This is where we see the full rear view of the boy parallel to the frontal plane of the viewer, with the boy facing the door of the sanctuary as the lost thing departs through it (Fig. 4.9). The camera lingers on this rear view of the boy for several seconds, and, as the sanctuary door closes, the boy's head is tilted to one side so that he can maintain his view through the remaining opening (Fig. 4.10).

For most of the departure segment in the movie the point of view is 'unmediated' (Painter et al., 2013); the viewer is positioned as external to the story context and the point of view is not aligned with any of the represented participants and does not become that of any of the represented participants. However, the point of view shifts significantly when the camera moves to show this full rear view of the boy parallel to the frontal plane of the viewer. In this case, although it is a long-distance view,

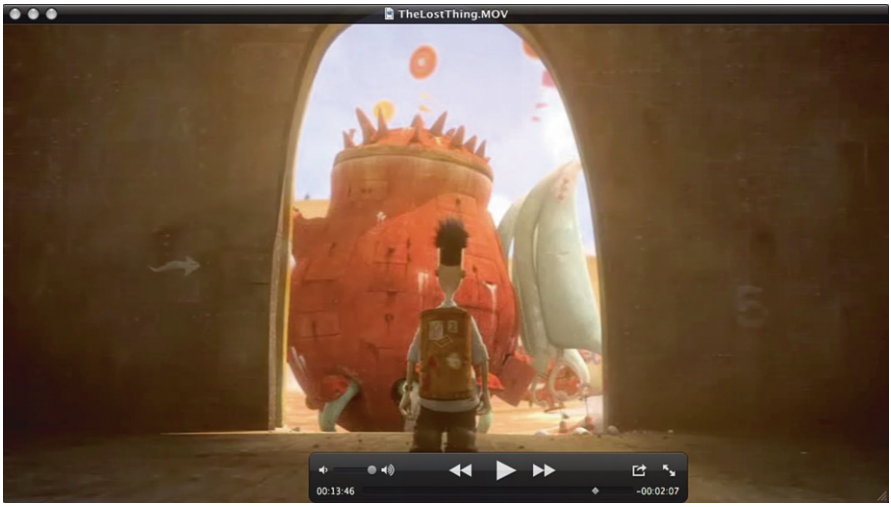

Fig. 4.9 Departing in the movie (Ruhemann & Tan, 2010) (Published with kind permission of © Passion Pictures Australia Pty Ltd. 2010. All Rights Reserved. It is not permitted to download or copy this image separately)

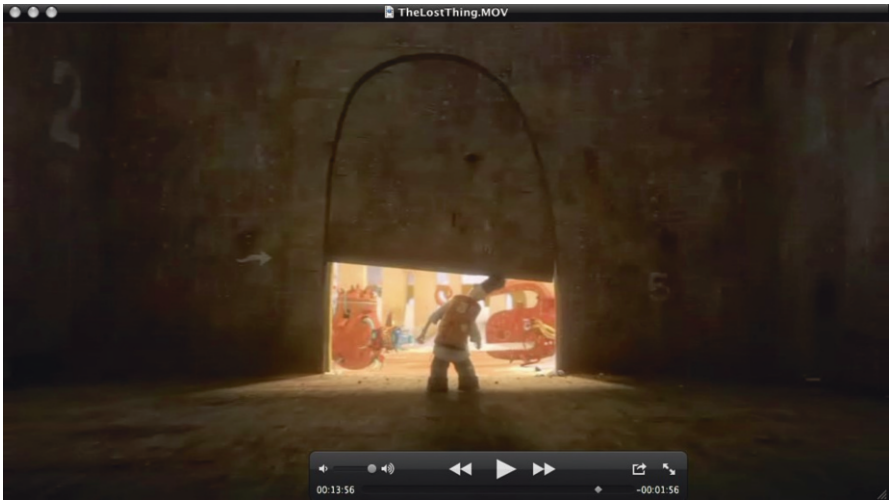

Fig. 4.10 A final glimpse goodbye (Ruhemann & Tan, 2010) (Published with kind permission of © Passion Pictures Australia Pty Ltd. 2010. All Rights Reserved. It is not permitted to download or copy this image separately)

the rear-view image does indeed position the audience view along with that of the boy. Collectively these movie images strongly imply a significant affective bond of companionship between the boy and the lost thing. In contrast to the book, the movie constructs views of the character of the boy as interactive with the viewer

and, if not actually standing in his shoes, the viewer is positioned to adopt a point of view closely aligned with that of the boy.

While the parting of the boy and the lost thing is ostensibly similar in the book and movie versions of the story, the difference in the visual and verbal commitment to affect privilege very different interpretive possibilities in the experience of this segment of the story in the book and in the movie.

Enhancing Empathy from Page to Screen: Implications for Narrative Re-interpretation

The image depiction style in the book versions of the stories discussed could be described as 'minimalist' as opposed to 'generic' or 'realist' (Painter et al., 2013; Welch, 2005). In broad terms, the minimalist style for a human character is one that uses circles or ovals for people's heads, with dots or small circles for eyes, and does not need to maintain accurate facial or body proportions. In all cases the characters look very much the same in the book and the movie. Apart from the capacity to show movement in the movies, such as the appearance of a tear and the movement of the pupils in the eyes of the Little Stone Lion, and the dynamic appearance of a smile in The Lost Thing, the affordances for the depiction of affect were similar in book and movie versions. Difference in the visual creation of interpersonal meaning was therefore principally achieved through the parameters of involvement, social distance, contact and focalisation. The greater prominence of facial affect in the movie of The Lost Thing was due to the increased frequency of images of closer social distance.

The language of the books and the movies were either identical or only minimally different. There was negligible variation in the ideational meanings in the images of the book and movie versions of The Stone Lion. Similarly, in chapter XV of The Little Prince, the additional depictions in the animated version were of the characters of the geographer and the Little Prince only. While the activity sequences did not differ in the book and movie versions of The Lost Thing, in some cases, detail of actions within some events not committed to visually or verbally in the book augmented the depiction of common events with significant interpretive influence. While these augmented details of activity sequences are quite limited, they are nonetheless significant, such as the visual depiction in the movie of the facilitative role of the Lost Thing in the boy's finding out what it liked to eat, which changes the view of the Lost Thing in the book version as being quite passive. However, such instances in The Lost Thing are very limited, and, in all three stories it is the variation in the interpersonal meaning of the images that has both a subtler, and more extensive, potential impact on variation in the interpretive possibilities of the book and movie versions.

Common across the three stories is that in the movie versions there is more involvement, more contact, closer social distance, and, with the exception of

The Little Stone Lion, more alignment of point of view with the main character(s). In The Little Stone Lion, focalisation is 'unmediated observe' in the book and the movie, and rather than any shift in interpersonal meaning in the images, the involvement, close social distance and contact of the book is intensified in the movie through the dynamic manipulation of social distance especially, resulting in close-up images appearing even more intimate. The interpretive possibilities of the book version of the story are maintained in the movie, while the interpersonal dimension is given greater poignancy. In the case of The Little Prince, as well as experiencing the greater visual involvement, contact and closer social distance, the movie viewer is alternately positioned to have the point of view of the geographer and the Little Prince. For the most part the verbal point of view of the character speaking, who is shown on screen gazing directly at the viewer, is complemented by the viewer being so positioned visually to have the point of the view of the other character. The significant departure from this pattern is where the Little Prince is on screen as the listener, so the verbal and visual points of view converge as those of the geographer, and the Little Prince is also viewed from a slightly elevated position. This high-angle view looking down on the Little Prince suggests a moment of relative humility in the portrayal of the character, which is not apparent in the book version, so it is possible to see how subtle variation in the interpersonal aspects of the images has the potential to effect a shift in interpretive possibilities. But it is in the animation of The Lost Thing that we see the greatest shift in interpretive possibilities from those constructed by the book version. And while it has been shown that ideational variation in the movie images from those in the book are concerned with greater commitment to the portrayal of the detail of activity sequences, which do have some significant interpretive impacts, it is overwhelmingly the contrast between the consistent distant, observe views in the book and the involvement, contact and close social distance views in the movie as well as the positioning of the viewer to have the a point of view along with that of the boy and the positioning of the viewer as the boy and as the lost thing, that creates the distinctively different interpretive possibilities of the movie. This kind of substantial thematic recontextualisation mainly through the interpersonal meaning potential of images is not confined to recent movie adaptations of contemporary picture books. For example, another well-known traditional Chinese tale, Pangsao, has also been adapted to an animated puppet movie in which the shifting visual point of view to align with the characters and the closer social distance, and greater contact and involvement, contrasts with the consistently distant, observe views in the book version.

Progressing a Dialogic Research and Pedagogy Agenda…

The longstanding tradition of filmic re-versioning of literary narrative for young readers is now becoming so pervasive that a large proportion of young people routinely experience established and new literary narratives in multiple and cross-media

versions (Mackey, 1994, 1999, 2002). This corresponds to the growing recognition, and now wide acceptance, of the need to reconceptualise literacy and literacy pedagogy as extending beyond words to embrace multiple semiotic systems – and images in particular (Andrews, 2004; Dresang, 1999; Kress, 2003; Luke, 2003; Russell, 2000; Unsworth, 2008, 2010). Such a view of literacy is now increasingly officially recognised in government-mandated school curricula such as the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA, 2012), which includes specific content descriptions referring to cross-media narratives. In the early years of secondary school, for example, Australian students are required to be able to recognise the similarities and differences between a complex picture book and a film "… in order to understand how different combinations of words and images lead readers to interpret visual texts in particular ways" (ACARA, ACELT1628). As part of their text creation, the curriculum expectation is that students will be "transforming familiar print narratives into short video or film narratives, drawing on knowledge of the type of text and possible adaptations necessary to a new mode" (ACARA, ACELT1805).

Developing students' explicit understanding of visual narrative art is key to their effective interpretive and creative engagement with this cross-media 're-versioning' of narratives. The interpretive possibilities of multimodal literary texts are constructed though visual and verbal art as well as at the intersection of the visual and the verbal. In the re-versioning of literary narratives it is often the inclusion and/or the changing of the visual art against the maintenance of the verbal art across versions that reconstructs the interpretive possibilities of the narrative at the visual/verbal interface (Unsworth, 2006). However, recent transformations of literary narratives into various video game formats require new accounts of the nature of visual narrative art and its intersection with verbal art (Burn, 2004). These aspects of multimodal narrative art are an essential aspect of the new literacies that need to augment traditional literacies for critical cultural engagement in the multimedia world of the twenty-first century.

In order for such new literacies to be tractable in pedagogic terms, new theories of multi-semiotic cooperation need to explicate how the meaning-making resources of image and language collaborate in the construction of multimodal narrative art. However, such theories also need to be able to be mediated through teacher education to enable a metalanguage of multimodal meaning making (New London Group, 2000) to be used to explicitly inform students' interpretive and creative experience with image and language in the contexts of established and innovative narrative forms. Current theorising of image-language relations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Painter & Martin, 2011; Painter et al., 2013) drawing on the social semiotic foundations of Halliday and his colleagues (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) can contribute to a transdisciplinary basis for developing an educational semiotics that can inform the reconceptualisation of literacies across language and visual arts and music. What is required to optimise this work is an ongoing enhanced dialogue with deep exchange of expertise across a range of disciplinary studies, including literary studies, visual arts, music, film and English and literacy pedagogy.

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Chapter 5
Reflective Practice in the Arts

Mary Elizabeth Ryan

Abstract In creative disciplines, reflective practice is an integral and cumulative form of learning. Reflective learning generates knowledge that is specific to oneself and is a form of evidence upon which to analyse and change one's practice. Critical reflection requires a deep knowledge of the discipline and an awareness of one's positioning within that discipline and in relation to one's creative performance. Meaning making through performative expression allows for personal transformation through acute awareness of and reflection on one's own beliefs, knowledges and values through the process of creating artistic work. Self-awareness and identity are significant both in the study of the arts and in becoming an artist, as aesthetic inquiry and performance are constituted by subjective self-expression in relation to objective conditions. Reflection can be expressed using symbols or semiotic systems other than language. Depending on the disciplinary context, particular modes or forms of expression will be privileged, including material forms of practice, still and moving images, music and sound, live action and digital code. This chapter explores the problematics of what counts as reflection in the arts and how reflection is represented, expressed and performed in discursive and non-discursive ways in becoming arts literate.

Keywords Reflection • Reflective practice • The arts • Disciplinarity • Aesthetic inquiry • Performance • Symbolic and semiotic systems

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Introduction

The arts are rooted in human experience and feeling. It is impossible to consider an art work without acknowledgement of the human conditions under which it was brought into being and the human consequences it provokes in real-life experience (Dewey, 1934). These human conditions and experiences are the catalysts for self-awareness and identity building, both in the perception of aesthetic works and through the expression of creative performance. Reflection is an integral and cumulative form of learning in and through the arts. It can form the basis for powerful dialogues between the arts and literacy as we strive for interpretive and expressive fluency across modes. It is through deep reflection that we interpret and express feelings and emotions, and, concurrently, make aspects of our world and our experiences more perceivable (Langer, 1950).

Reflection is an intensely personal undertaking, yet a conscious awareness can prompt deep learning about our relationship with the world and the people around us. Reflection is thus both an individual and a social process (Moon, 2004) as one responds to experiences and feelings always in relation to the context in which the response was prompted. Reflection has been variously defined from different perspectives (e.g., critical theory or professional practice) and disciplines (see Boud, 1999), but, at the broad level, the definition used here includes two key elements: (1) making sense of experience in relation to self, others and contextual conditions; and importantly, (2) reimagining and/or planning future experience for personal and social benefit. This definition reflects the belief that reflection can operate at a number of levels, and suggests that to achieve the second element (reimagining), one must reach the higher, more abstract levels of critical or transformative reflection as outlined below.

Deep reflective learning can lead to personal transformation, new ideas (Dewey, 1933) and new forms of practice (Ryan & Ryan, 2013). Through the arts, we can make visible new forms of reflective expression and modalities that recontextualise our social meanings and engender new understandings of self in relation to the world. The arts are powerful spaces to interrogate how our own subjective understandings are mediated by the objective conditions of the curriculum and by hegemonic views of the world – important considerations in becoming literate in a rapidly changing, globalised world.

Reflection can be expressed through different modes, defined as socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning (Bezemer & Kress, 2008). In the arts, these modes can include material forms of practice and symbols or semiotic systems other than language, including still and moving images, music and sound, live action and digital code. The social and cultural functions of art work in context help to shape the semiotic elements and life experiences that are foregrounded by the creator and by the perceiver of art. In order to truly understand art, we must not divorce it from these human experiences (Dewey, 1934). Indeed, Moje (2008) argues that students should learn how to enact particular identities in different disciplines, including in the arts. She suggests that teachers

need to provide opportunities for students to develop meta-discursive skills, whereby they not only engage in the different discourse communities of the different disciplines, but also know how and why they are engaging and what those engagements mean for them and others in terms of social positioning and power relations.

These social meanings, according to Bezemer and Kress (2008), are recontextualised (after Bernstein, 2000) when meaning material is moved from one social context with its particular organisation of participants and modal ensembles, to another social context with different organisations of participants and modal ensembles. It is in this recontextualisation of real-life experience and emotion through new modes in the arts that reflective learning and transformation can occur. Bezemer and Kress (2008) outline four rhetorical/semiotic principles in operation during multimodal recontextualisation: selection, arrangement, foregrounding and social repositioning. These principles align with Langer's "perceivability theory" (Bufford, 1972; Langer, 1950) which holds that it is the task of works of art to make perceivable or more perceivable to us aspects of our own experience or of the world around us. Langer argues that each art has a primary illusion, which is created with the first brush stroke or movement or chord. This illusion is the move from the real world to the world of illusion or abstracted image.

Selection, arrangement and foregrounding of meaning materials and modes are dependent upon the discipline and the context (Bufford, 1972; Langer, 1950). For example, in the plastic arts, space is the primary illusion. Painting and drawing thus create a virtual scene through the selection of shades, strokes and colours to foreground space. Sculpture creates a virtual kinetic volume through the selection of materials that are manipulated in space. In music, time is the illusion made audible in its form and continuity. Music spreads time out by letting our hearing organise and shape it in its voluminous complexity and variability. Dance makes visible the illusion of forces – physical, psychical, mythical and magical – and the power that surrounds them. The choice of movement and proxemics denote the gathering, driving and spreading of forces in our lives – darkness, military power, birth, death, marriage, puberty and love. In the literary and mass media arts, human experience is foregrounded and made imaginable: destiny is presented in drama through tension, action and passion. The media arts portray the image of our pervasive interest in contemporary society through the arrangement of space and interrelationship between modes and media.

In all of these arts, social relations exist and are repositioned between the creator and the perceiver of the art. The primary illusions abstract our experiences and emotions to make them more visible to us and enable us to reflect on our relationship with the world and the people around us. Archer's (1995, 2007) theory of reflexivity is useful to explain how powerful transformations can occur through such reflection, as we mediate our subjective conditions with the objective conditions of the arts discipline and the social and cultural expectations of our world. This chapter will first explain Archer's theory of reflexivity, and then it will apply these ideas to three

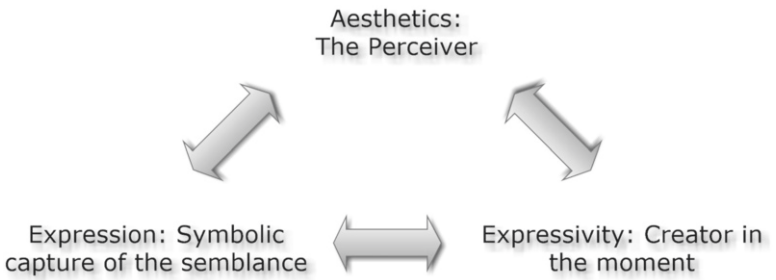

Fig. 5.1 Interrelated sites of reflection in the arts

interrelated and cyclical sites (See Fig. 5.1) in which reflection and reflexivity can be a productive learning process in the arts:

1. Aesthetics – reflection of the perceiver of art
2. Expressivity – reflecting as performer to improve/change in the moment
3. Expression through symbolic capture – learning about yourself and expressing this learning through the semblance

Reflection and Reflexivity: Becoming Arts Literate

Critical reflection is considered now in relation to Margaret Archer's (1995, 2007) theory of reflexivity. Archer provides a useful framework which characterises reflexivity as mental and self-referential 'bending back' upon oneself of some idea or thought such that one considers associated factors and influences and decides whether and how to respond or act in any given situation. In studying the arts, reflection can be undertaken in response to an artefact, a performance or an idea, and can trigger action at a later time. In artistic performance, however, reflection is also bound up in the immediacy of reflexivity as the artist weighs up the conditions of the moment and self-consciously (through internal conversation) alters their artistic (re)presentation. An understanding of this often subconscious reflexive process is a key way of knowing and working in the arts, thus it is important to explore the role of critical reflection and reflexivity in becoming "arts literate".

Reflexivity and Mediation of Subjective and Objective Conditions

Archer's (1995, 2007) morphogenetic approach to realist social theory helps us to understand the ways in which creators and perceivers of art can mediate their subjective understandings (values, beliefs, experiences, emotions, priorities) and

the objective conditions (accepted ways of being, doing and knowing) of the discipline and the social context. Archer argues that social structures or contextual forms are always transformable but always constrained as they take shape from, and are formed by, people. For Archer (2007), the interplay and interconnection between individuals and social structures is crucial to understand courses of action and/or response produced by subjects through reflexive deliberation. In this way, individuals are seen as active agents who mediate their subjective concerns and considerations and their objective circumstances to respond and act in certain ways. Whilst agential powers and actions are conditioned by social structures, these structures are not considered by Archer to be 'forces', but rather as 'reasons for acting in particular ways' (Archer, 1995, p. 209). These actions can be transformative (morphogenetic), in that they transform the social structures or cultural systems within which they operate, or they can be reproductive (morphostatic), as they maintain structural and cultural forms. The 'morpho' variable in Archer's work acknowledges that 'society has no preset form or preferred state' (p. 5); so even though some ways of being become normalised, they are always shaped rather than predetermined.

The responses or actions of creators and perceivers of art are thus a result of their reflexive deliberations about their emotional investment, life experiences, knowledge and/or skills, and ontological positions in relation to the processes of creation and primary illusions of art works. Deliberation is concerned with 'exploring the implications of endorsing a particular cluster of concerns from those pre-selected as desirable to the subject during the first moment' (Archer, 2007). The first moment (discernment) occurs when internal dialogue compares and contrasts reflective, retrospective and prospective considerations. The reflexive cycle continues as the subject moves through the moment of dedication, deciding not only on worthwhile responses or courses of action, but also whether or not s/he is capable of undertaking them, of living such a life that they may entail, and what priority they might have (Archer, 2007, 2010).

Different people will move through these moments in different ways. Archer (2012) suggests that we tend to develop and practice a particular mode of reflexivity, which may change at different times in our lives, but often stem from our experiences growing up. These modes are (1) communicative reflexive, (2) autonomous reflexive, (3) meta-reflexive, and (4) fractured reflexive. For communicative reflexives, internal conversations and decisions need to be confirmed and completed by others before they lead to action. Autonomous reflexives, on the other hand, are clear about their pathway and goal and their deliberations lead to direct action. Meta-reflexives tend to critically analyse past deliberations and actions in society to make decisions that will best serve the common good. Fractured reflexives, however, cannot use their internal conversations to lead to purposeful action. Deliberation only serves to distress and disorient them, and they can't work out how to put things right or make effective decisions. Each of us can adopt all of these modes at some point and in some contexts, but Archer argues that we generally have a dominant mode. Understanding our mode of reflexivity is a crucial step in becoming self-aware.

In examining and articulating their internal conversations and modes of reflexive deliberation, creators and perceivers of art can identify their motivations and potential for taking different courses of action for improved outcomes in their art or in their lives. Reflexivity is thus a powerful learning process in and through the arts. The next section explores reflection in terms of aesthetics, or in relation to perceivers of art.

Aesthetics: Perceiving and Reflecting

Aesthetic education has as its aim the development of a disposition to appreciate the capacity of art works to intensify and enlarge the scope of human awareness (Smith, 2006). Part of this capacity of art relates to an evaluation of artwork, however more importantly for my purposes here, it also involves a reflection on our experiences of art. Dillon (2007) concurs, in suggesting that it is not enough to consider the physicality, visuality or aurality of art, but that we also must consider how we may be moved or meaningfully engaged by artwork. Perception of art can provide a new outlook on the world, can help us to see familiar things in unfamiliar ways, and can enable us to perceive new connections between things, all of which can prompt us to organise and reorganise our experiences of reality (Smith). Images can be both expressive and interpretive and seek not to portray predetermined sets of knowledge, but rather to invite multiple responses to dilemmas within (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Grushka & Donnelly, 2010).

Aesthetics can offer insight into human existence and social nature, which derive from the highest levels of self-consciousness – awareness of self and a detached understanding of human aims and undertakings (Gotshalk, 2001). It is through art that we can develop a form of reflective self-awareness that is not found in life, the detachment and abstraction of experience and emotion engendered by Langer's (1950) primary illusions of art. Now, more than ever, a demand for human understanding is necessary. The emergence of self-culture and the resultant lack of social structures mean that we are faced with situational contexts for which there is no road-map and for which we need novel responses and actions (Archer, 2012). Exploring and articulating the distinctive and purposive structures of human activities in all areas places us not just in a physical/social context, but in a reflectively human context (Gotshalk). Thus the development of critical (transformative) reflection and reflexivity in a study of the arts can help us to navigate our way through an uncertain and ever-changing world.

Art works, then, can prompt Archer's (2007) three significant 'moments' of internal conversation as we reflexively respond to them. The first moment is discernment, whereby we start to notice and highlight potential and actual areas of concern in our lives, experiences and emotions that are abstracted and foregrounded in the artwork. Of course the concerns that are foregrounded by one person are necessarily different to those of another, given the differences in our experiences, worldviews, and the time and space in which we are engaging with the art.

Knowledge of aesthetic inquiry techniques can provide an extra dimension to our response. For example, the way line or form or proxemics or layout or tempo are used to denote relationships or human desires can enable us to perform a detached assessment of abstracted human activity. However, it is in the reflective awareness of self in relation to this abstracted human activity that we begin the inner dialogue of clarifying our prominent satisfactions or dissatisfactions with our current way of life. We can notice in ourselves similar desires or characteristics or fears or attitudes and start to weigh up whether these are worth hanging on to or need to be changed or examined.

The second moment is deliberation (Archer, 2007), which is dialogic and involves the exploration of particular concerns that we discerned in the first moment. Deliberation is performed as we weigh up and compare the merits and consequences of embracing particular concerns. It can often involve visual projection of scenarios or self-spectatorship (Bolton, 2000) as we imagine the way of life that might ensue if we address a particular concern, whilst listening to our emotional commentary that is provoked or evoked when imagining that way of life. In this second moment we draw on our subjective understandings and mediate them with the objective conditions or social structures that influence our lives. For example, we might see in a moving image the depiction of revenge. We might consider the ways in which we empathise with the characters in wanting the 'evil nemesis' to pay for bad deeds because we believe that it is fair and just and we are rooting for the 'good' character. We might also start to think about the social norms of 'good' and 'evil' and how they are determined and enacted in different contexts. We can then start to apply this abstraction of revenge to our own lives and how we approach relationships with those with whom we differ in worldviews and priorities. Are there different ways I could mediate such relationships? Could I be assuming too much about their priorities or beliefs? Have they made poor decisions in this instance (as we all do at times) and am I not giving them the benefit of the doubt? These internal deliberations can be powerful reflexive moments of self-awareness.

The third moment, dedication (Archer, 2007), signifies the crucial moment of experimentation between thought and feeling from the previous two moments. In it, we decide whether a particular way of life or course of action is worthwhile, whether we are capable of undertaking it, and whether or not it is a priority. The accentuation of a particular life issue or concern is simultaneously the downgrading of others. This moment is the ultimate dialogic struggle as we endorse our proposed practices and responses and resign ourselves to letting go of other possible ways forward. It is in this final moment that we can do, be or become what we care about most in society. For example, do we change the way we respond to a certain person in our lives or do we decide that it is too hard to change? Do we consider how certain social actions are deemed acceptable or not, and decide to actively and publicly question such norms? Do we see hope and joy in a painting and decide to take a more positive aspect on our lives and appreciate what we have? The next section explores how deep reflection can be utilised by creators of art in the moment of expressivity.

Expressivity: Reflecting as Performer/Creator in the Moment

Dewey (1934) argues that acts of expression and art become such only when raw materials (emotions, paint, marble, notes, movements and so on) are consciously entertained as media and are reflectively interpreted by an observer (even if it is oneself). In this way, expressivity that constitutes art is a construction in time, rather than an instantaneous act of discharge. This expression of the self in and through a medium is 'a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions, a process in which both of them acquire a form and order they did not at first possess' (Dewey, pp. 67–8). Elements from prior experience (emotions, feelings, experiences, ideas) are inspirations that are stirred into action in fresh desires, impulsions and images as they find the objective fuel on which to nourish. Expressivity does not take forward an inspiration already complete, but rather the inspiration is inchoate and is carried forward through the mediation of the subjective with the objective. Dewey's theory of expression has much in common with Archer's (2007) theory of reflexivity, in the negotiation of both the subjective and objective in the expression of concerns, responses and actions.

The stirring up of attitudes and meanings from prior experience renders them conscious as thoughts, emotions and images ready for action. Dewey's (1934) view is that if people have no art of expressive action at their command, they can become tortured and full of turmoil. This suggests that the arts provide this outlet, whereby inspiration comes to fruition and useful responses to emotions and feelings can become intense and clear, ready for action. Looking at Archer's (2012) modalities of reflexivity – communicative, autonomous, meta-reflexive and fractured – I suggest that the arts can potentially provide an expressive outlet for the internal conversation, and enable a clearer deliberation process for action.

Each of the reflexive modalities can learn about deliberation and decision making through the arts. For communicative reflexives, expression through art can enable one to gauge audience reaction and response to one's proposals – in a more abstract way than simple confirmation of courses of action. This means the communicative reflexive takes more responsibility for abstracting their ideas and interpreting others' reactions, and they start to learn about making decisions with less reliance on specific advice from others. For autonomous reflexives, the single course of action can be tempered by considering other novel alternatives as new ways to respond to issues. In today's society, the single-minded approach is almost untenable as we are much less able to predict outcomes in ever-changing contexts. Thus expression through art can provide the catalyst for new ways of imagining and being. For meta-reflexives, expression through art provides the fodder for analysis of different possibilities, particularly in relation to the objective conditions and the interactions with the observer of the art. Analysing the potential effects of the art on people and places can engender powerful deliberations for action that will serve the common good. Fractured reflexives, most of all, can benefit from expression through art. Expressivity through the arts can make emotions more intense, can help to abstract the core issue and feeling from the fractured context and make appropriate

action clearer. One mediates prior experience, new emotions and new conditions for fresh inspiration and images about how things can be.

In creative disciplines, then, reflection plays a large part in the learning journey of both student and teacher (Garner, 2000; Kolb & Kolb, 2005), both about themselves and about their performance. Movement embodies cultural and social meanings, along with somatic identity (experience of one's physicality) (Albright, 1997; Sklar, 1994). The body as a site of knowledge can enact a system of meaningful movements to communicate ideas about the world, yet it can also be a locus of discovery and self-reflection (Cancienne & Snowber, 2003). In regard to dance, for example, Stock (2004) notes that reflection impacts practice by providing students 'a learning environment in the studio where students can consciously, actively and effectively apply anatomical knowledge, reflective/motivational skills and theoretical understandings to their dancing' (pp. 5–6). In this sense the students are displaying active engagement through movement of the body as well as reflective thinking by consciously improving practice in situ.

Embodied reflection involves temporal and rhythmic/gestural elements in creation of the semblance of meaning, which elaborates the medium in its potential to express any content or idea (Aldrich, 1963). Forms of embodied reflection are embedded in dance, expressive or calculated movement, mime or drama. The temporal element of embodied reflection can be likened to a helix, whereupon each successive movement builds on what came before (Ryan, 2012). The helix metaphor highlights the reflexive nature of movement as discovery and reflection. The performer relates to self and professional practice through appearance and manipulated cultural and social movements, and can utilise contagious movement to relate to the audience (Cancienne & Snowber, 2003). Symbolism and metaphor can indicate deliberation and may invite multiple responses from the audience. Props can be used as boundaries for movement to signify constraint in the lifeworld. Space can be utilised as a symbol of freedom or breaking away from hegemonic norms to express re-constructive ideas about self in relation to the world. Voice, breathing, and facial expression convey emotion, and the gaze can summon the audience in, or invite scrutiny. In drama, this embodied reflection involves holding two worlds at once, or METAXIS (Burnard, 2006), with engagement as fictional character and as performer. Social, cultural, political and historical meanings are conveyed through bodily movements, which ultimately demonstrate new understandings and innovative (re)creations.

In music, performers can use both musicological and semiotic analytical tools in their reflective discourse and can work through a process of deconstruction and then reconstruction, moving from an ontological to an epistemological focus (Barton & Ryan, 2013). The performer explores the rhythm, tempo and beat and notices the response of the audience to the spreading out of time, to the volume and complexity of time abstracted through the music. They mediate and alter their performance in the moment as perceiver and creator come together in response to the primary illusion of time. These audio and corporeal triggers denote the reflexive prompts for in-the-moment deliberation and potential transformation.

In the plastic and media arts, the use of raw materials becomes an expression of art only when the materials are employed as media. Everything depends on the ways in

which the materials are put together by the artist as a medium to express imaginative human experience such as social status, dignity, honour, rage, humour, love and so on. The artist employs the techniques of form, colour, space, layout, shot and angle in different media with different objective boundaries to express different ideas and feelings. For example, the boundaries of a painted canvas are different from the boundaries of a fashion garment or a moving picture. Not only are the physical boundaries in the artwork itself different, but so too are the boundaries of the context in which it is produced and displayed. It is in this reflective mediation of the inspiration from within, with the possibilities afforded by the medium and the objective boundary of the discipline and of the social context, that expressivity is made possible. Langer (1953) also suggests that the making of the 'semblance' or the articulate manipulation of particular materials in specific ways constitutes expression. The semblance is not solely concerned with aesthetics, but about logical expression of dynamic patterns of feelings and ideas. Langer draws from Dewey's (1934) philosophical ideas about the importance of form in carrying the experience. Thus, the choice of expressive form is as important as the content being conveyed. Indeed, the choice of form adds an additional layer of meaning to strategic expressivity. Thus, reflection on performance 'in-the-moment' is always tied up with reflection on self and inspiration, on context, and on the perceivers of the art. One transforms their performance through the mediation of the subjective and the objective. The next section is concerned with reflective expression through the final artwork.

Expression: Reflection Through the Semblance

The making of the semblance is both purposeful and expressive (Langer, 1953), and as some knowledge cannot be rendered discursively, it must be expressed in non-discursive forms. Different semiotic systems are used to portray knowledge, action, interaction and/or reaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) as the reflective designer disrupts norms and demonstrates new ways of seeing self in relation to values and conduct (Ryan, 2012). Within the different realms of art, semiotic systems and materials are constantly being remade and recontextualised (Bernstein, 2000) by artists to achieve various social and cultural purposes. Even though the materials and the signs are already there, are already known, the artist assimilates them through feeling, emotion and experience in a distinctive way to reissue them to the world in the creation of a new object.

As discussed in the previous section, reflexive expressivity in the moment can change the creation or performance and simultaneously has the potential to change one's ideas and life concerns. However, it is in the reflection on the semblance or the artwork rendered that Archer's (2007) self-referential 'bending back' on oneself of ideas, concerns and beliefs to deliberate about new courses of life action, can occur. For the artist, the cycle of reflection presented in Fig. 5.1 is brought back full circle. The creator of art now becomes the perceiver of the art, yet with an intensely

personal perspective on the art, different from that of other perceivers. This bringing into existence a creative product through purposeful expression is akin to abstracting a piece of self and holding it out for scrutiny. This self-scrutiny constitutes the highest level of self-consciousness, that is, an awareness of one's own human aims and undertakings (Gotshalk, 2001). The performative expression is one that conceptualises individualised aspects of reality and communicates ideas to others (Haseman, 2006). Thus, when the artist steps back to reflectively analyse these aspects of reality that they have expressed, it is a means for personal transformation about one's relationship with their art, with the world and with others.

Both the medium and the context in which the semblance is shared or expressed can stimulate different responses and representations of knowledge. The artist's 'motor dispositions' previously formed (Dewey, 1934), or their skill in the manipulation of the media, render their perception more acute, with meaningful depth. Aesthetically, they know what to look for and how to see it, and they have the additional experience of living through the manipulation and creation process. However, once the artwork is viewed in a context removed from the context of creation, that is, when it is viewed from outside rather than from within, it can be inspected from all angles. The artist may well see new meanings which were unintended by them, but which now stare them in the face. Further, if the semblance is perceived in a different physical setting from that in which it was created, for example, in a gallery, on a café wall, on film or a digital recording, the visual, audio and/or gestural cues can engender new connections of ideas, new focal points and intertextual references. The artist's witnessing of the interaction of others with their work adds another layer of meaning and can prompt deeper reflection on the original purpose and the development of the performance and the self over time.

Each of these interrelated sites of reflection in the arts – aesthetics, expressivity and expression – can provide the means and the substance for teaching reflection in arts education. Reflective skills can become self-conscious and can be abstracted, refined and reapplied in context to improve literate practice in the arts. If reflection becomes an end in itself, a private or solitary pursuit, we lose the capacity to subject our purposes to scrutiny (Kushner, 2006). Making reflection visible in its multi-layered dimensions transforms it into a rigorous space for learning and action.

Developing Reflective Perception and Creation in the Arts

By its very nature, work in the arts is formed and informed by cerebral dialogues with self and others that question and discuss the world, and form part of the creative process (Hilton, 2006). In each of the sites of reflection (aesthetic, expressivity, expression), we can intervene as teachers to enable self-scrutiny and potentially deep learning about art and about self in relation to the world. In arts education we can develop aesthetic inquiry skills and knowledge, but we must also teach students to apply these skills and knowledge in a way that relates back to self – what feelings and emotions do they evoke in me? What aspects of humanity do they cause

me to question about my own life? Making students self-conscious about those aspects of self that influence their deliberations, and exploring other ways of seeing and experiencing the world, can lead to transformation of some of those world views, beliefs and knowledges. Similarly, making students aware of the social structures and accepted ways of knowing and doing within the discipline that provide reasons for acting the way we do, can prompt action to problematise or question these accepted ways of being, and can even lead to social change (Kushner, 2006).

Teachers can provide scenarios through role play or virtual worlds and help students to map out and weigh the consequences of different responses and actions on those around us – making their internal conversations audible and open to scrutiny. While there are differences between creative disciplines, multi-modal triggers are employed by creative artists and teachers who enable more rigorous and critical reflective practice. Self-conscious awareness of these prompts can aid the in-time reflective transformation of the performance as it develops and draws the audience along for the ride. In music, teaching students to notice their own emotive and bodily response and the audience response can help them to harness such triggers in the moment to improve performance. Similarly, the interrelationship of visual, corporeal and spatial modalities in the design arts, while a garment is modelled live, can trigger a disciplinary reflection related to size, fit and fluidity, enabling a reconstructive learning experience. In dance, the simultaneous spatial, visual, audio and corporeal modalities can trigger a self-conscious reconstruction of technical and aesthetic disciplinary practice. These triggers are essential components of reflective practice in these disciplines (Barton & Ryan, 2013) as they enable the sub-conscious to become conscious, or the invisible to become visible – opening them to informed disciplinary critique and enabling improvement with clear self-awareness.

We can ask students to reflect on their own or others' artwork using scaffolded prompts for deep reflection. For example, the 4Rs framework provided by Bain, Ballantyne, Mills and Lester (2002), and adapted by Ryan and Ryan (2013), is useful in education contexts as it guides the teacher in scaffolding students' reflections along a depth continuum (see Table 5.1). It involves four elements which are progressively more abstract and complex: (1) Reporting and responding, (2) Relating, (3) Reasoning and (4) Reconstructing.

These prompts can help to articulate the internal conversation so that it can be analysed and practised in new ways for transformed learning.

Human conditions and experiences form the basis of artistic expression and aesthetic inquiry. They are also the catalysts for self-awareness and identity building. Critical reflection and reflexivity are the means by which we can bring together this knowledge of the abstracted human condition and a self-consciousness of one's relationship with the world and the people and things within it. The arts provide a powerful teaching platform for making visible and audible our internal deliberations about life concerns and actions as we mediate our subjective understandings with the objective conditions of society and the disciplines. This reflexivity forms the basis of all learning in the arts, and underpins the dialogues between the arts and literacy.

Table 5.1 Prompts for the reflective scale in the arts

Level	Questions to get started
Reporting and responding	Identify the primary illusion, the media, and/or the feelings/emotions or experiences that the artwork elicits. Why are these relevant? Respond to the work by making observations, expressing your opinion, sharing experiences or feelings or asking questions
Relating	Relate or make a connection between the illusion, your response and other life or art experiences you may have had. Have you seen or experienced this before? In what ways are the conditions similar or different – for example, the media used, or the expected ways of doing, being or knowing in this context? What does it prompt me to imagine? Identify the primary illusion, the media, and/or the feelings/emotions or experiences that the artwork elicits. Why are these relevant? Respond to the work by making observations, expressing your opinion, sharing experiences or feelings or asking questions
Reasoning	How have the aesthetic elements been creatively manipulated? What meanings do they suggest? Why have you responded in this way? How do others seem to respond? What intertextual meanings are elicited? How are metaphor, symbolism and irony used? What do I know of other works by this artist (even if it is yourself)?
Reconstructing	Reframe your understanding of the art experience. What have you learnt about yourself? How can you apply this new knowledge or understanding to your life? Do you empathise with the artwork in its primary illusion of space or time or human experience? Have you had new ideas or made new connections between ideas in response to this art? What will you change about your approach to art or to life or to people as a result of experiencing this art? Can you make changes to benefit others?

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Part II
Teaching and Learning Literacy in the Arts

Chapter 6
Literacy and Knowledge: Classroom Practice in the Arts

Georgina Barton and Peter Freebody

Abstract This chapter explores how knowledge is built in classroom practice in the setting of arts-based school lessons. It details the ways in which literacy is 'put to work' in everyday arts classrooms. One aim is to show that these arts-based approaches to literacy learning not only support students' content area knowledge, but also impact on the ways in which they can use this knowledge as they participate and create in their learning. Although literacy has become identified with standardised testing and educational competitiveness, this chapter aims to demonstrate how literate practice is as much a set of social practices as it is measurable skill. Teaching and learning in the arts provides a distinct set of such social practices, varying according to which of the arts is explored. Classroom examples from dance, drama and visual arts highlight these attributes in this chapter. We use an ethnomethodological approach to describe the types of literate practices worked up in classroom contexts.

Keywords Literacy • The arts • Classroom practice • Literate practice • Arts-based pedagogy • Knowledge

Introduction

For many educators literacy has become a term that touches on the more irritating symptoms of the current predicament: commercial training programs for children, standardised testing, low-level drills in skills, age-levelled benchmarks, mandated

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pedagogical routines, and invidious public competitiveness among teachers, schools, educational jurisdictions, and nations. At the centre of this book is the idea that, for literacy education to have a serious, demonstrable relationship to the world outside the school, literacy needs to be seen as comprising forms of learning that are not well captured in the administrative regimes that currently claim to embody it.

In this chapter we aim to illustrate how literacy practices are embedded in all curriculum areas, including the arts, and that understanding the particularities of these embeddings more deeply can provide a counter-weight to more formulaic, lock-step approaches to literacy teaching and learning in schools. It is clear that the standard approach to improving the literacy skills of students is minimalist – introduce quick fixes to teaching and learning in order to improve highly constrained test results with, at best, shadowy relationships to the curricular learning of students. An alternative is to draw from observation of classroom practice to see how teachers put everyday literacy to work in learning across the various content domains around which schooling is organised.

Here we provide illustrations of arts classroom practice. We see how teachers consistently work with, and work up, students' content area knowledge to support their personal development and their understanding of the ways in which people think and work in the arts. We show how a version of the arts-literacy relationship is present in the everyday work of teachers of the arts.

Students of the arts face "an increasingly distinctive set of materials, language, images, and interpretive practices that in turn present them with an increasingly distinctive set of demands" (Freebody, Chan, & Barton, 2013), and these demands relate directly to how well learners can "create, communicate, and evaluate knowledge" (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, p. 54). Thus, it is important that these processes are understood at a level of detail that makes the art-literacy relationship amenable to improvement in pedagogy and policy.

Building Knowledge in the Classroom

From classroom to classroom diverse literate practices occur every day. Much current work in literacy education addresses the idea that each discipline has its own take on literacy (Deng & Luke, 2008; Freebody, Maton, & Martin, 2008; Muspratt & Freebody, 2013).

Moje, Young, Readence and Moore (2000) indicated that "discourses, and texts throughout a single day in a secondary school require sophisticated uses of language and literacy by teachers and students" (p. 38). Generated from literacy practices in specific discipline areas are the ways in which knowledge is built up through teaching and learning. The difference between taking a discipline-specific approach to learning and taking a generic or cross-disciplinary approach is that, through a discipline-specific approach, students gain an understanding and appreciation of particular forms of evidence and truth and, in a sense, assist in providing increasingly powerful, profound and distinctive answers to recurring questions about human

experience. Freebody and Muspratt (2007) argued that disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning enable students to value "what counts as evidence, about how an enquirer moves from experience of a phenomenon to a set of speculations to knowledge, and about what it is, what it is, intellectually and socially, that the enquirer is trying to accomplish" (p. 17). In this sense "disciplines can be understood as social fields of practice comprising both relatively formal structures of knowledge and practices" (Freebody et al., 2008, p. 5).

Classroom Practice in the Arts

In this section we look closely at classroom excerpts collected as part of an ongoing research study on arts education practices in both primary and secondary schools. Here we focus on the secondary data, allowing us to focus in on the shift that occurs in pedagogy from learning fundamental generic skills, such as reading and writing in the primary years, toward learning that is structured around specific curriculum knowledge. Culican, Emmitt and Oakley (2001) acknowledge that the learning in the middle to secondary years of schooling requires students:

> to develop control of the literacy demands and learning expectations of increasingly sophisticated and specialised areas of knowledge represented in the curriculum. As knowledge becomes more specialised within these areas, so too the literacies associated with the ways this knowledge is constructed and represented become more complex (p. 4).

In the arts, specialist teachers focus on the development of students' skills in knowing, becoming and being artists by the end of their study. We take a classroom interaction analysis approach whereby we draw on how particular categories of this practice – learning, literacy and knowledge – are presented, defined and built in the classroom setting.[1]

A Dance Classroom

Excerpt 1 shows a Year 9 dance class for students aged between 13 and 14 years. In this example the teacher starts the class by providing the students some background knowledge on 1960s dance. The students have already watched the film *Hairspray* and the teacher refers to what they might have seen in this film to connect the 'known' to the 'new' (Duke & Purcell-Gates, 2003; Pearson & Johnson, 1978).

[1] For the purpose of the anonymity pseudonyms have been used for all names in the transcripts. All participants in the images have provided image release consent. See Appendix A for all transcription conventions used.

Transcript Excerpt 1

T ALRIGHT; hands up; what do you>remember about<the nineteen sixties; so we've seen the film *Hairspray*? and it's an over exaggeration of what the nineteen sixties i:s, but there was a lot of good stuff in terms of history knowledge, dance styles; so hands up throw me something; about the nineteen sixties; Michael?

Michael a:hm they had the tee vee: shows? (.) with the teenagers on it,

T cool; so: I'm gonna call that American bandstand, but yes you are right, (4) so dancing on tee vee:, (2) an; you're right that's a big turning point; cause that happened in the nineteen fifties; so dancing became like this popular a:hm; it was e:vrywhere; mainstream tee: vee:; newspapers ("everything"); (.) Ja:ames?

James a:hm black n white people wouldn't mix? (0.2)

T oka:y; so African Americans, so we're talking about; (1) a:::hm; (0.9) we'll call that segregation, (4) yep, what e:lse; what um, in terms of maybe dance style; (2 ye:p?

G1 there was a lot of swinging and (percussive movement),

T great?, (4) swinging; (1) a:nd percussive movements?, (1) what else dyou know about the ninetee:n sixties; maybe something you've heard; (2) anything e:lse? (1) alright? well then that's okay because we are learning about the nineteen sixties today; so:; we are learning to: examine and understand the dance crazes of the nineteen sixties; so[we have]// (teacher talks to other student at door) (3)

//taken you through the nineteen hundreds, nineteen twenties, nineteen thirties, nineteen .hh forties nineteen fifties, we're now moving on to the nineteen sixties; (6) oka:y, and; (.) the biggest o:ne started in nineteen sixty one; does>anyone wanna have<a guess what the first dance craze of the nineteen sixty o:ne was? (1) I'll give you a hint;

((2) teacher demonstrates the twist dance move))

Ss twist;

T oka:y; so we're gonna be lookin at the twist, (8) the monkey, (2.5) the pony step, (2.5) another famous dance step's called the swim,

We see:

- Teacher (T) leading conversation by asking questions of the students about 1960s dance styles, based on their viewing of the movie *Hairspray* (2007) directed by Adam Shankman
- T asks students what they remember about the history of dance styles, and assesses their knowledge of dance styles (1–5)
- There is a recognisable three-part cycle or extended cycle whereby
  - The T asks what they know about 1960s (5)
  - A student recalls TV shows with teenagers dancing on them (6)
  - The T responds using name of TV show "I'm gonna call that American Bandstand" and continues to offer more information on media impacting on popularity of dance (8–12)
  - S comments on social and cultural discriminatory aspect of *Hairspray* (13)
  - T responds "we call that segregation" and reminds students she is wanting information on dance styles (15–17)
  - S offers "swinging and percussive movement"

  - T confirms and then responds asking for more and waits, but moves onto the intent of the lesson as she is not receiving responses (21–24)
  - T then shows students a move to provide an answer she was predicting – the twist (28–30)
  - Ss answer correctly in unison (31)

- T writes all of the steps to be learnt in lesson on the board (33–34)
- T's third turns are either:

  - A confirming repeat (21)
  - An elaboration (15)
  - An acknowledgement with more detailed answer (8)

We see here that the teacher is trying to have students recall the types of dance steps that they saw in the movie *Hairspray*, but rather than talking about the dance moves they remember other aspects of the movie such as the TV show American Bandstand (although the teacher provided the answer here), and discrimination against African Americans, offered up as "black n white people wouldn't mix" by a student. The teacher highlights to students that they have already learnt other period styles and are now moving onto the 1960s. She continues to ask the students what they think was the first 'big dance craze of the 1960s' and has to demonstrate it in order for the students to know what it is. What could be assumed here is that the students actually need to 'do' or 'see' the dance steps in order to remember them. In dance, embodied practice is vital to understanding and developing deep knowledge of the art form (see Jones' chapter).

After the teacher has had a more extended discussion with the students about 1960s dance styles she then has the class stand up in the dance studio in front of a mirror (covering the entire wall) and learn each of the steps slowly and separately. The teacher begins by teaching one simple step and asking the students to repeat this for 8 counts. She then teaches a new step, and again has students repeat this for 8 counts. Once the students have learnt two they are then expected to dance the first step for 8 counts and then the second step for 8 counts. This continues until the teacher has taught the students 9 different steps as well as some variations on these. Once the students have learned all of the steps the teacher has the students perform the entire dance without her demonstrating the steps in front of them.

In Fig. 6.1 the teacher is in front of the students, setting them up to dance what they have just learnt. She models good practice by showing the students how to prepare themselves before they dance. Good posture, readiness and balance are all mentioned before the music begins.

Figure 6.2 shows the teacher standing to the side and watching the students complete the entire dance. She expects the students to do the dance without her scaffolding them as they have now learnt all of the steps required.

When the students have completed each of the steps in a row and 'know that have got it' they all cheer with excitement and laugh; the boys do 'high-fives' with each other.

In dance classes it is clear that literate practice is actually doing the dance and is therefore an embodied practice. Although this class started with a discussion about 1960s dance styles and the socio-cultural implications of this time period, it was the actual enactment of the dance steps (the pony, the swim, the chicken, the twist etc.) that engaged the students. Embodied practice in dance ensures that the

Fig. 6.1 Teacher prepares students to dance – modelling the correct posture (Image release courtesy of the participants)

Fig. 6.2 Teacher standing to the side to watch the students dance (Image release courtesy of the participants)

disciplinary-specific knowledge is fully understood. Using the body in a corporeal and reflective way is how students become literate in dance (Barton & Ryan, 2013).

A Drama Classroom

In drama, Year 10 students have studied the play Hoods by Angela Betzian. The play, which "explores issues of poverty and family violence […] is a suburban tale of survival and solidarity against the odds" (from http://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/media/630244/hoods%20-%20teachers%20notes.pdf).

Fig. 6.3 The teacher is talking to the students about key issues from Hoods (Image release courtesy of the participants)

At the beginning of the lesson the students are reminded about what physical theatre is and participate in a number of activities that reinforce their knowledge. This is then expected to be applied to a short physical theatre excerpt that 'shows the essence' of a word that they have selected as a suitable title as a result of their study of the play.

The teacher asks the students about some of the issues that they identified in studying the work (see Fig. 6.3). They have the following discussion.

Transcript Excerpt 2

T Turning round; (1) gonna start work; now; (1) alright; (1) so:; (1) I'm expecting really really good work from you a:ll; but basically what you a:re doing; … (1) is you're looking at how to transform; (.) the script (.) which is paper, and typed letters; (1) you're transforming that; (.) you're translating it into something else which is amazing; (0.5) that's what we do:; (1) we create; (1) so you guys are doing physical theatre compositions; you're not turning the script into realism; (4) you're trying to create the essence; of what the script is about; (3) now we're doing HOODS; (2) what are somea the themes that you've identified; is in HOODS; (1)

Annie: abuse?

T beautiful; (1) abuse; the mum left the kids in the car; (2)

B? abandonment?

T abandonment; poverty; (3) some really serious issues there; (1) now they're just words you see; (2) how do you show abandonment using physical theatre so the audience really gets it; (2) what does abandonment mean; what does it, think about if you were abandoned; what were your feelings;=

G? =alone; (0.2)

B? [sad(ness);]

S? [( )] (1)

T bloody angry?

Alex: rejection; (wr[eaking re]venge;)

T [yes;] (.)

Alex: rejected;

T rejected;

G? sad;

T sad; yes (.) they're the sorts of things that I expect you to communicate; (0.5) through physical theatre; (1) the essence of what it is now some lovely people came up to me this morning and said "Miss I think we've done the wrong thing;" (1) s'oka:y that's alright; (1) so you guys (.) go back into those groups an really look at, are we showing are we transforming your title?, not into the script, (1)

Alex: into a play; so we're not actually do[ing] the actual (.)=

T [i:n;]

Alex: =play; we're doing; yep ( ); (1.5)

T see? (we get it;);

((2.2s some quiet laughter))

T so:; today I'm looking for a couplea things (1) I need you to commit individually to making sure; that you're creating meaning yourself not, not just letting the group do it, but individually you a:re; a hundred per cent committed to:; the e:ssence of that title; (1) that's when (.) true true: beauty happens on stage that's the magic; (2) I need you to really articulate i:n your groups; (2) choose what you're going to do and stick with it; don't change it halfway through; (1) it will be amazing but you must all have the same (.) a:h understanding of what you wanna show; so make sure that that's clear, articulate; (1) oka:y? (.) keep remembering my (sign) practice violence (.) of articulation, hit exactly what you mean; on the dot an this one here manipulate the viewpoints; I want to:; (1) with that little checklist, I wanna sit there an go: tsah .hh (a:te;) (0.2) topography, (et,) .hh there's gesture, ten times; remember I said gesture ten times;=

T so tens; sh::; focus; don't lose it now; (1) okay from now on we don't talk about anything else but getting this one composition today; (2) to a point where you are really communicating the essence of the word you've chosen to be your title; (2) alright? (1)

We can see the above conservation as:

- T asks students to pay attention after they have done a physical activity in class (1–3)
- T explains what the students will be working on for the rest of the term (4–12)
- T asks students to describe some themes in relation to the play that they have been studying (12–14)
  - S responds (16)
  - T acknowledges and expands answer by providing example from script (17–18)
  - S provides another theme (20)
  - T repeats and expands by explaining they are just words and Ss now need to express them so audience "gets it" (21–25)

- T wants more information on how these themes make the students feel
  - 3 Ss respond with single-word answers (27, 29)
  - T acknowledges through confirmation and waits for more (32, 35, 38)
  - S answers (34, 37)
  - T affirms (35, 38, 42)
- T tells Ss that they need to communicate through physical theatre
- T explains that a group think that they have done the wrong approach – it is not a straight acting out of the play but, rather, an interpretation of the meaning behind the script
- S confirm this
- T talk is about:
  - Commitment individually
  - Creating meaning yourself
  - 100 % commitment – is 'true beauty on stage'
  - Articulating clearly in groups what you are doing – don't change
  - Students have same understanding
  - Practicing "violence of articulation"
  - Physical theatre elements – topography, gestures, manipulate viewpoints
  - Really communicating the essence

The teacher has students remember what the play they have been studying is about: physical theatre. She tells the students that drama scripts are just words on the page and, instead of performing it as 'realism', they need to examine the various themes explored in the play. She asks them what the main themes are. She explains that their answers are just words and they need to be expressed through the body in order for an audience to 'get it' or know what those words mean without language but rather via multimodal means. The teacher is explaining that drama is about being articulate in communicating the essence of a particular word that the students have selected that encapsulates the whole meaning of the play. She states that the students need to 'create meaning' for themselves through 100 % commitment and by using features of physical theatre such as topography, gestures, manipulation of viewpoints, and violence of articulation. In this sense the teacher is building students' understanding and literacy of drama through the process of physical theatre. Through an expansion of the student's vocabulary associated with this approach, but also an application of this knowledge through work with the body, the students are given access to meaning. She believes that if they don't do these things then the performance will not have meaning or 'true beauty on stage'.

Figure 6.4 shows a group enacting their concept. For one of the groups their word or title was Despair. In their performance the students use the physical theatre notion of tempo, whereby four member of the group move very slowly and the fifth member moves fast. The boy at the back of the group is trying to 'break through' a blockage in front of him which is moving slowly and in precision, whereas he is trying desperately to get through. He is unable to do so. This blockage ends up surrounding him, closing him in, making him feel despair.

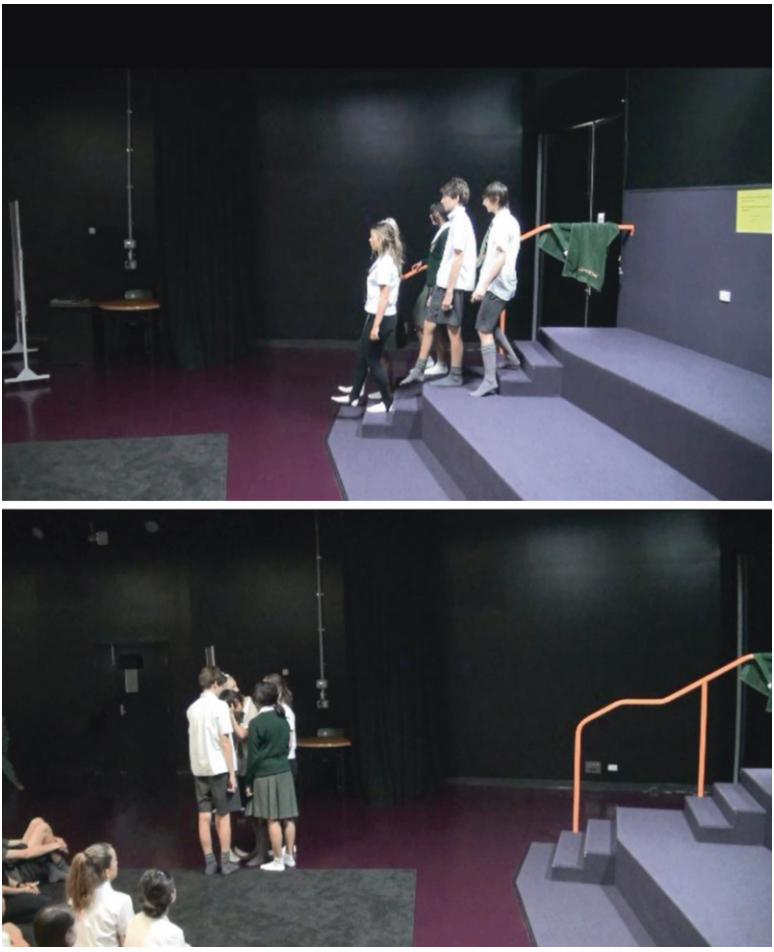

Fig. 6.4 Group 2 enact the term *Despair* (Image release courtesy of the participants)

Similar to dance, drama uses the body as a vessel to understand more concretely certain concepts or actions depicted in meaning. The embodiment and enactment of words that hold full meaning of a play is powerfully revealing and forms part of literate practice of drama students.

A visual arts classroom

A Year 8 extension visual arts class is half way through their self-portraits. The teacher begins the lesson with a reflection activity (a handout the students need to complete). She explains that reflecting on one's artwork is important in order to know which direction you will be heading with the production of the work. She begins with the following conversation:

T Right. (0.5) let's start; (2) now this lesson is divided into two sections. (0.3) one i::s self-reflection, (1) half way mark for your making, so it's really important as artists that

we reflect on what we've done, (1) and what we're doing, (1) an also we need to remember, the changes that we've made to our artwork. (1) hands up now if you can honestly say; that you've made a change to your a:rtwo:rk.

(1) ((some students putting hands up))

T whether it's; Ned what change have you made; (.)

Ned (it's) the whole canvas?,=

T =the whole ca- you're still working on a canvas? (.) but; you've changed the wha:t;=

Ned =the image;=

T =the i:mage, what's another word we can use for i:mage; (1) starts with 'S', (2)

T ((points to student on her right, points to student in front))

G2 (self [refle])

B1 ([space] self-reflection) (0.5) space; (0.4)

T space no, S,U, I'll do the spelling thing; S, U, B, (1)((points to right)) S, U, B, J; (.)

Many s:: s:: subject; ((followed by laughter))

T gah; and then I'm a:rgh; very a:ngry; (0.4) and the last o:hhne; what's the last part that; subject, (0.3) Some matte[r;]

Zane [se]lect[ion]

T [ma:]tter; ((pointing to left)) who said matter; (0.5) good girl; alright? so i:mage, or subject matter; who else put their hand up who made a change;

CUT TO

T remember too in reflection there is no: wrong answer that's what we love about art. (0.5) alright? no wrong answer. (1) be honest, (.) be truthful about your own work, (2) an say as much as you can; (1) about those three areas.

The teacher explains that this lesson will be the last time that the students are able to "think about the changes" they have made and that they need to record these in their art diaries. The teacher then walks around the classroom and speaks to a number of individual students as they continue to work on their self-portrait. She talks to one student who is doing her self-portrait as a clay sculpture (Fig. 6.5).

T my only thing, I'll just throw this, let me be devil's advocate, I'll throw it at you:, (1) I wa- I've been wondering why students ma:ke something outta clay and then they>cover it up<with another medium; (.) when there's an alternative where it could be just say papier mache in there; (1)

G8 yeah;

T an then cover it up, it's lighter, it doesn't have to go through a firing process, you don't have to wait for it to dry: out when you use it so: that's my only thing because clay in itself is a beautiful, (1) material; you know you can scra:tch into it; you can draw into it, you can- you can pri:nt in i:t. () you can stamp into it so:::; (1) I get what you want to do:;=

G8 =cause I kinda wanned to do like photos?=

T =I- I get that?,

Fig. 6.5 (**a** and **b**) The teacher gestures to student where they could place patterns into the clay's surface (Image release courtesy of the participants)

G8 [(on] top,)

T but is there a chance of a compromise; where; >you know< you might have like a panel of images that run;(0.5)>you know;< down the fro:n[t;]

G8 [ye]a:h;=

T =or across your shoulders or something and then other areas you've actually carved in these; (1) characters; or letters; or; you've just made a texture about how you're feeling; or [some]thing

G8 [yeah;]

T I- (.) kinda would love to see how you, you could allow us to see the clay

G8 [like,] ( ) an patterns? (1)

T exactly:; (.) patterns are beautiful; when you look at the glazes that you have; and the colours that are on option, yeah; (1) an you think about your first piece; where is it st[ill]-

G8 [on] the shelf=

T =>oh look<she's beautiful; isn't she, let's- let's have a look at; (10) ((getting artwork from shelf)) so if we look at her; (3) so: if we- if we say this is you:; (3) I jus think (2) we still hafta see: those- those colours; we still get to know it's clay; and we get to see how clever you are; with how you work with such; sometimes, a really unforgiving (.) a:h; material.

(1) ((G8 nods))

T oka:y? so (1) yea:h>you know what I'm<sa:ying?=

G8 =yes

T think about that. I'm not gonna say you can't do what you planned?, (.) I'm just throwing it at you for something else to think about

(1) ((G8 nods))

T It's your self-portrait. You show us what you like; but I'm just saying; you're pretty damn good at clay; (1) yep?;

Here we see that:

- T begins the lesson by explaining what Ss will be doing (1–2)
- The first section is self-reflection on the progress that the Ss have made so far on their self-portrait
- T tells Ss it is important to reflect as artists and asks who has made changes to their artwork (3–8)
  - S responds and says whole canvas (12)
  - T asks for more clarification (13–14)
  - S answers
  - T asks whole class what is another term used for S's answer
  - T spells out the answer until she gets the right one (17–35)
- T asks if other Ss have made any changes [students talk about their work]
- T explains that there are no wrong answers in self-reflection on worksheet (37–41)
  Students complete self-reflection worksheet.
- T reminds Ss to do self-reflection all the time in the form of drawing, writing, recording in some way (46–55)
  Students continue to work on their self-portraits.
- T talks with an individual student about her work (59–112)
  - T questions why student is doing what she is with the particular medium she is using (59–70)
  - T explains the many techniques that you can do with clay (71–73)
  - S responds saying that she wants to also use photos (74)
  - T confirms her response by acknowledging that she understands what the S wants to do with her artwork (75)
  - T further explains other options so that the medium is not compromised (77–87)
  - S responds with an idea (88)
  - T confirms and asks S to show her the last clay piece made by the student (90–93)

- T gestures to particular parts of the piece to explain that the student has not compromised the clay medium despite it being painted (95–102)
- T asks if S understands (104)
- S responds affirmatively
- T explains she does not have to do what she says as it is her self-portrait and that S is good at clay (106–112)

This visual art lesson shows the importance of reflection in the process of creating an artwork, in this case a self-portrait. As shown, the lesson begins with the students completing a self-reflection handout and discussion about any changes that they may have made to their artwork so far. It is shown how the changes made during the process of making art are just as important as the final product. The reflections and enactment of any decisions interact to make meaning of the artist's expression and experience.

The teacher then talks with individual students about their work while they work on their self-portraits. The students have been able to select whatever medium they want in order to do the piece. One student has chosen clay and wants to incorporate photos stuck onto the clay, similar to decoupage. The teacher talks with the student about how she should consider using the clay in a different way, as pasting photographs onto the clay may compromise it as a unique medium. The teacher refers to a previous artwork that the student did in clay and explains that she did a good job in respecting the way in which clay can be manipulated. She suggests that the student experiment with a number of techniques in order to display the natural qualities of clay rather than pasting over it. While the teacher highlights these issues she still informs the student that it is ultimately her decision what she does, as it is her own self-portrait.

Becoming and Being an Artist

Each of these teachers has a distinct approach to the ways in which they present new knowledge to, and develop skills of, their students. At first we see the teachers offering new knowledge in parts – explaining the social movement of the 1960s and how this plays out in dance; applying the method of physical theatre to a drama script about low socioeconomic circumstances; and teaching how the process of making art is reflective and that the changes made have meaning in relation to the artist, their experience and the medium being utilised in the artwork.

The job of the teacher, therefore, is to share their own knowledge of arts practice including appropriate disciplinary techniques and vocabulary. Teachers are not only responsible for encouraging students to read and write critically about artworks, but also guide and scaffold them into the practice of 'becoming artists'. Actually engaging in and embodying arts practice is essential for students to express creatively through symbolic form – whether a particular dance style; the intent of a drama script; or an artistic medium such as clay. In becoming arts literate, students need to communicate clearly how others' artworks influence them; explain the choices that they have made; reflect on whether or not these choices are effective; and how their own artwork moves or engages an audience.

While there is some existing research that explores the relationship between the arts and literacy, it tends to privilege either the arts over literacy or literacy over the arts. What is needed, however, is a meaningful dialogue between the two that enables us to see what literacy looks like in the arts and also what it means to be arts literate. Coupling 'literacy' with some other domain of practice (e.g., 'cyber-literacy', 'scientific literacy') usually amounts to an invitation to transfer some of the resources and strategies we use to 'work with the letter' onto how we navigate through, understand, respond to, appreciate, and assess this other domain. The resources that literacy particularly helps us bring to bear, the special instincts and affordances of the written word, include: deliberate, linear movement through time and space; the careful assembly of sequences, and causes and effects; the construction of potentially complex collections of elements; the creation and maintenance of fine categorical distinctions; the public, analytic interpretation of actual words rather than speaker's intentions; communication at arm's length from the idiosyncratic sounds and settings of the personal voice; and the need to focus on interactions between the whole and all of its parts to make meaning (Halliday, 1983; Lemke, 1998).

> The arts teach students to act and to judge in the absence of rule, to rely on feel, to pay attention to nuance, to act and appraise the consequences of one's choices, and to revise and then to make other choices (Eisner, 2002, p. 9).

Conclusion

With the invention of literacy came the ability of individuals and collectives to keep records, material objects that had a direct, concrete relationship to activities in the here-and-now, things that can stand for meanings elsewhere and in the future. Fischer (2001) defined writing as:

> the sequencing of standardized symbols (characters, signs or sign components) in order to graphically reproduce human speech, thought and other things, in part or whole (Fischer, 2001, p. 12)

Inscription is an almost primordially human activity. Over the millennia humans have made inscriptions via sequences of knots on strings, notches on bones, dents in wet clay, marks on paper, grooves on discs, binary signals on disks, and symbol systems in, on, and through many other media. Similarly, people recover meanings from these inscriptions in many different ways: 'readers' are invited to reconstruct messages by moving; recognising a sound, syllable, or word; talking; singing; gazing; building objects; and all of these, and others, in many combinations (Fischer, 2001; Freebody et al., 2013).

Much of the basic work done by literacy relates to the direct transportability of messages across time and place. Growing around that basic work have been theories of reading that assume the core business to be the processing of 'lower-order' symbols into 'comprehension'. Here 'lower' levels of language (letters, words, and clauses, including both the printed and the vocal renditions of the written symbols,

and the rest) are translated into one basic meaning, a process that, along the way, leaves behind the particular qualities of the lower levels, and does not need to proceed to engage any 'higher levels' of understanding such as the historical and material conditions in which the piece to be read was produced, the aesthetic conventions that crafted its production, the social relations into which the written piece would be projected, and so on.

To see literacy as 'being in the world' is to see how these broader repertoires of resources are a counter-weight to linear, information- driven/information-seeking theories of literacy (Freebody, 2007; Gee, 2004), and opens the way for re-thinking the opportunities and challenges built into the arts-literacy relationship. As we have briefly illustrated here, each art form, in its practical and educational traditions, uses distinctive semiotic resources to capitalise on humans' capacity to make, store, and recover meanings through symbolic inscriptions and recordings. The arts call for unique 'literacy' practices, specific inscriptional and interpretive traditions for connecting thought and feeling, aesthetics and technology. The arts recruit more varied and complex combinations of semiotic resources. Exploring how this happens, and with what effects, informs how we develop other curricular and social resources, but only, our argument goes, if we reassess our current theorisations of literacy and literacy education, and our aspirations for education in the arts.

Appendix A: Transcription Conventions

Temporal/sequential	
[ ]	Overlapping talk
[ ]	
=	Latching – no discernible silence between turns
(0.6)	Silence to the closest tenth of a second
(.)	A 'micropause' – less than 0.2 s
Speech delivery	
.	Strongly falling intonation
;	Continuing intonation – slightly falling
,	Continuing intonation – slightly rising
?,	Moderately rising intonation
?	Strongly rising intonation
::	Lengthening of the sound preceding the colons. More colons for more stretching.
Underlining	Stress or emphasis
°	Markedly soft speech
° °	Even softer speech
CAPS	Markedly loud speech/Reading from a text
-	Speech cut off abruptly
^ˇ	Sharp rise or fall in pitch, placed immediately before the change in pitch

(continued)

(continued)

> <	Compressed or rushed speech
< >	Markedly slowed speech
hhh	Hearable aspiration
.hhh	Hearable inhalation
Other	
(( ))	Transcriber's description of events, e.g. ((students dancing))
( )	Uncertain transcription

Adapted from: Schegloff (2007) and Psathas (1995)

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Chapter 7
Dance Literacy: An Embodied Phenomenon

Evan Jones

Abstract Literacy in dance involves conscious awareness of cognitive, aesthetic and physical activity along with the skills to articulate these activities as required in any given context. Dance literacy, perhaps uniquely, also entails unconscious, tacit, embodied knowledge within the holistic body, a corporeality: knowledge which is physically experienced but only articulated in the dance. The essence of this corporeality has a transcendent quality which contributes to the universality of dance. The degrees to which a dancer's awareness is refined, the physical activity articulated and the embodied knowledge universal, will define the level of development of the dancer's literacy. This literacy can be learned, though not every body and mind has equal capacity for development. If we wish to develop dance literacy, qualitatively encompassing more than dance technique, the art of learning must be carefully cultivated to allow the art of dance to flourish. The pathways of learning dance are individuated; transcendence is realised through the common experience that what we are learning is coming from within.

Keywords Dance • Literacy • Embodiment • Corporeality • Dance technique • Dance curriculum

What Is Dance Literacy?

The association of these two words is a relatively recent phenomenon and therefore interpretations of what is intended by "dance literacy" are still evolving. One of the driving forces in linking the words dance and literacy is the intent to bring the art and practice of dance more securely into the mainstream curricula of primary

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and secondary schools. Another contemporary force combining dance with the field of literacy is the rapidly developing body of literature focussed on dance and resulting from the expanding genre of academic research in dance and dance-connected interdisciplinary studies. A third influence currently working to associate dance with a metaphorically enriched notion of literacy is a movement in the dance teaching community emphasising the clarity, integrity and authenticity of communication and meaning making in both the art and kinesiology of the student-centred learning experience. The confluence of these factors within the zeitgeist of our post-modern, networked society is beginning to precipitate meanings of dance literacy.

Dance itself has manifold meanings and a multitude of manifestations. In the best interests of inclusivity and the theme of this chapter, the following aggregated definition of dance is proposed as:

> consciously organized energy that gives form to feeling…. (1) Dance is an emotionally expressive use of the body ('gives form to feeling') and (2) Dance involves conscious choices made by the dancer regarding what to do, or not to do ('consciously organized energy' – engaging in a process that Erick Hawkins called 'Think-Feel') (Dale, Hyatt, & Hollerman, 2007, p. 90).

This definition appeared in an article titled "The Neuroscience of Dance and the Dance of Neuroscience: Defining a Path of Inquiry" from the Journal of Aesthetic Education. The resonance of this definition of dance, borne through the midwifery of neuroscience, with the definition of literacy used in this book – expressive fluency through symbolic form: visual, sonic, embodied – is also aesthetically appealing.

Elliot Eisner writes, in The Kind of Schools We Need (2002a), that

> different forms of representation develop different forms of thinking, convey different kinds of meaning, and make possible different qualities of life. Literacy should not be restricted to decoding text and number. ….I want to recast the meaning of literacy so that it refers to the process of encoding or decoding meaning in whatever forms are used in the culture to express or convey meaning (p. 581).

This mission, launched in the mid-1980s, signifies a major expansion of the territorial claims of the arts within a logo-centric society. The 2002 salvo came with synchronicity, though not necessarily causality, with Richard Florida's influential book, The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life (2002). Florida writes, "In this new world, it is no longer the organizations we work for, churches, neighborhoods or even family ties that define us. Instead, we do this ourselves, defining our identities along the varied dimensions of our creativity" (p. 7). This underscores the imperative of Eisner's (2002a) call for the idea of literacy to infuse the study and experience of the multiple forms of expression in our culture. If we are not literate in our encoding and de-coding of these popular forms of expression and communication, our society will degenerate because of the murkiness, the illiteracy, of our uninformed self-definitions. The post-modern movement has weaned us from the colonisation and paternalism of establishment structures and belief systems, but for our recently emancipated, self-defined selves to have a fair chance at creating a cohesive, functional society in this transformed world, we must develop our literacy in our various modes of communication.

In 2005, U.S. university dance program director Miriam Giguere wrote, "The question for educators becomes not whether dance involves complex symbol making, and therefore helps to develop the thinking process, but how to connect this experience of making symbols through dance to the mainstream of academic curriculum" (p. 37). Eisner's (1998, 2002a, b) persuasive and powerfully argued case for the recasting of the meaning of literacy provides a secure pathway forward in formulating answers to Giguere's question. Within the context of mainstream school curricula, association with the word 'literacy' provides greater legitimacy for dance. As Ann Dils (2007), a U.S. dance professor writes,

> applying the term 'literacy' to dance dignifies an arts practice that has been traditionally ignored within schools and calls us back to ask questions about its potential contribution as a way of knowing and field of inquiry in general education. ……What Howard Gardner's concept of multiple intelligences did for our recognition that people might be 'dance smart', the idea of literacy does for our recognition of dance as a field of human achievement with established knowledge, practice and literature (pp. 96–97).

Hong (2000) traced critical developments in the evolution and significance of the expression 'dance literacy' through the publications of Giroux (1992), Flood, Heath and Lapp (1996) and Eisner (1998). In her paper, Hong writes,

> Dance education within a literacy model considers dance as part of a web of education that seeks to educate the whole person. Dance, the arts, the sciences, and the other subjects that comprise the school curriculum are not single, independent isolated branches of learning but are inter-connected, and inter-related within an integrated web of learning. The dance literacy model supports the socio-ecological view of education that stresses the importance of the environment and the holistic, non-separatist learning and an emphasis on human interaction.

Serving a useful model function for many like Giguere (2005), The New Zealand Curriculum for years 1–13 states "Students develop literacy in dance as they learn about and develop skills in performing, choreographing, and responding to a variety of genres from a range of historical and contemporary contexts" (http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-documents/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Learning-areas/The-arts).

Applications of dance, making use of expressive fluency through symbolic, embodied form, can be effectively and creatively transferred to the learning contexts of many fields. Some have noted that dance and embodiment is often used in other curriculum areas. Giguere (2005), for example, showed how in the physical sciences the body can be used to help relate the concepts of form and stability. She suggests this can be done by having students investigate stability by testing how symmetrical as compared to asymmetrical positions of the body can be sustained. "In language arts subtle layers of meaning in poetry can be explored through the physicalizing of rhythm or imagery" (Giguere, p. 37). Another example can be seen in this 2011 video (https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/literacy-through-creative-dance) in which two high school teachers use creative dance to explore Edgar Allen Poe's poem, "The Bells". One teacher, Dina, speaks of the importance of the clarity of communication between the dancers and the audience; she states that the intention of the performers should be clearly derived from their source, and that meaning is conveyed through the dance.

In my own teaching, I emphasise the fundamental role of communication in the performing art of dance and the critical functions that clarity of both thought and action play in this mode of expression. Being articulate in both body and mind allows the audience to 'read' the physical expression of the dancer and provides the dancer with the tools to interpret and express the intentions of choreographer. Use of dynamics can be seen as punctuation; precision in shape and form can be seen as clear speech and correct spelling and grammar; diversity of style and body awareness as breadth and accurate use of vocabulary. In a manner comparable to writing and speech, movement sequences create ideas in the observer when they are presented with integrity and internal logic. This physical expression may be narrative, abstract, ambiguous or empty, but the dancer needs training to develop precision tools with which to communicate the intention of the dance.

Literacy About Dance

Exploring, analysing and learning 'who', 'what', 'when' and 'where' in dance develops the intellectual, knowledge-based, logo-centric literacy about dance. This is not the embodied aspect of dance literacy but represents rather the field-informed nature of the dance literate person. Knowing that Margot Fonteyn began life as Margaret Hookham in 1919 or that Der Gruene Tisch had its premiere in 1932 or that a pas de chat is the step of a cat or that L'Après-midi d'un Faune was premiered at the Châtelet Theatre in Paris shows some knowledge about dance, but the relevance of this knowledge will always be contextual. Linkages, lineages and formative influences will be of great interest to the dance historian, researcher and choreographer when delving into the narrative and cultural landscape of dance. Each dance genre and context have their own vocabulary with which one must be familiar if one is to be deemed literate with respect to knowledge about that genre and context. Knowledge of the history of the people and places, productions and purposes of a dance form also contributes to a person's literacy about a dance form and connections between dance forms and other fields. These aspects of developing literacy are of great importance, but they are not specific to the field of dance.

Why Dance?

Another aspect of dance literacy, shared with practitioners in the performing arts and performed rites, is the kind of literacy developed through pursuing 'why'. When we dance, there is always a 'why', although the question may never be explicitly posed. If 'why' is not investigated and consciously valued, this aspect of dance literacy remains nascent. Pursuit of 'why' in dance develops our cognitive understanding of the intention, the communicative meaning making implicit in the dance (often, though not always, devised by a choreographer) and being created by the dancer, a goal

articulated by Dina in the 2011 video. Within the K-12 curriculum of the N.S.W. Department of Education and Training (2013), it is suggested that constructivist strategies can be used to teach the 'why'. This promotes higher-level thinking from the students and enables personal meaning making and situated, contextual learning. Eisner (1998) wrote, "When we include forms of representation such as art, music, dance, poetry and literature in our programs, we not only develop forms of literacy, we also develop particular cognitive potentialities" (p. 16). For a professional dancer, if the 'why' becomes predominantly "because that's what you're paid to do", the dance literacy may be waning, and the director and public are likely to notice a hollow dullness of spirit in performance. A dance artist with high levels of dance literacy conducts ongoing action research cycles, investigating performance after performance the intention of the dance (and often that of the choreographer), her/his purpose within it and the richness of every communication with the public.

As a dance educator I have observed this dullness of spirit descend upon vocational dance students when they lose contact with the 'why', the inspiration which brought them to study dance. The passion for the dance is often tarnished and sometimes even extinguished by a fanatic pursuit of purely mechanical, physical achievement and virtuosity. The spirit, the joy, the reason to dance has been sacrificed on the mundane altar of technique. This sacrifice almost always leads to dropping out and giving up; technical brilliance does not feed the soul. As teachers, we have a responsibility not only to facilitate the development of the dancer's precision tools of technique but also to nurture and safeguard in the student's mind their original love of dance, why they do it.

In dance ritual, if the meaning behind the dance, the significance and purpose, the 'why', are not the essential motivating factors and foremost in the being of the dancer, the dance loses its power and becomes empty.

> Expressive acts performed in common are characteristic of all ritual, but when the original impulse that gave rise to it is lost the form becomes mechanical and no longer stirs the response which makes sharing possible (Foster, 1976, p. 25).

Highly literate performers of dance rites may become so caught up in the purpose of their dance that they achieve a state of transcendence; they have attained an answer to their 'why', at least for the duration of the dance. Ever since man became self-aware, rites have been practised as an expression of man's relationship with the world and everything beyond the world. Dance was one of the first communicative rites, and in some societies literate dance practitioners still communicate with the world and everything beyond in unselfconscious, meditative trance-like states induced through devotional and/or traditional music and dance (and sometimes drugs). I have also observed people in such trance-like states on the dance floors of night clubs!

If we dance because it makes us happy, dance literacy may be developed by asking, "Why does dancing make me happy?" If dancing is an act of courtship, dance literacy may be developed by asking, "Why does this move work in one context and not in another?" If dancing has a social component, dance literacy may be developed by asking, "Why does dance provide me with social satisfaction?"

If dancing is what a parent makes a child learn, it is critical that the child asks, "Why am I learning dance?" Such questions as these are very often not asked and therefore dance literacy is under-developed.

In 2006, Lobo and Winsler conducted research designed to investigate the possible effects of participating in a creative dance program on the social competence of pre-school children. They make acute observations about creative dance.

> Creative dance is defined as the interpretation of a child's ideas, feelings and sensory impressions expressed symbolically in movement forms through unique uses of his/her body (Dimondstein, 1971). Creative dance/movement celebrates spontaneity, originality and individuality through structured movement opportunities in which the dancer continuously invents movements according to personal preferences (Joyce, 1994). It is a method of learning about one's own personal strengths and weaknesses, and a means to explore new physical, social and emotional territories. Dance encourages innovation and honors individual experience and resources at whatever stage they arrive (Joyce, p. 503).

Clearly, Lobo and Winsler (2006) are speaking of dance literacy development through creative dance in their research report. They explain that

> the dance program was designed to assist students in feeling better about themselves, to help them connect their mind to their body. Even more important, each child's contribution was valued and the diversity of different ideas was appreciated (2006, pp. 512–513).

The results of this study are an empirical validation of what dance educators have long contended. Lobo and Winsler (2006) also found that the children involved in dance programs benefited from significant positive developments such as reduction in behavioural issues, as compared to children who did not participate.

> Children who participated in the twice-a-week, eight-week dance program made both significant gains in their social skills and significant reductions in their behavior problems over the course of the program, whereas the children not exposed to the dance program did not show much improvement (2006, p. 512).

Lobo and Winsler conclude, "In terms of implications for practice and policy, the present investigation provides clear, strong and scientifically rigorous evidence for the importance of dance and creative movement programs in early childhood" (2006, p. 515). This positive influence of the development of dance literacy on social competence (social literacy?) has also been described from practice by Marigliano and Russo (2011). They have observed that creative movement activities foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They note that during creative movement sessions, children learn to think before they act, to pay attention to detail and to consider differences between experiences. Senior Research Scholar Judith Hanna published a persuasive paper in 2008, indicating the history and significance of including dance in the K – 12 curriculum in order to advance dance literacy which "fosters creative problem solving and the acquisition, reinforcement and assessment of non-dance knowledge" (2008, p. 491). Hanna concludes,

> The proffered interdisciplinary constellation of nonverbal communication, cognitive, and dance theory and research advances knowledge of dance as a powerful multisensory language, a means of thinking, doing, and experiencing. Dance has been demonstrated to be an engaging cognitive way of solving problems as it communicates emotions and ideas and declarative and procedural knowledge through various devices and spheres for embodying

> the imagination……Dance education, through mind-body integration, helps empower youngsters to become aware that they are distinctly human. As students embody abstract concepts in dance-making, they can explore their transcendent, aesthetic, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual selves (2008, pp. 501–502).

A moving story indicating the positive behavioural influences of dance literacy development is reported by Ruth Foster in Knowing in My Bones:

> In this medium [dance] the boy seemed to find himself and gradually his aggression disappeared..…; he had found in expressive movement a means of manifesting to himself, and coming to terms with, the tensions which formerly had erupted in violent behaviour….. In knowing his inner being through action he began to transform himself (1976, p. 19).

Embodied Literacy – How to Dance

An aspect of dance literacy also shared with other disciplines is developed when we explore and study the 'how' of dance. This learning how to dance develops embodied literacy and dance is unique in that the whole body (and mind!) of the self is involved in presenting the expressive fluency of dance. Embodiment plays a significant role for musicians, singers, actors and visual artists as they develop their expressive fluency, but for the dancer the body IS the instrument of expression. Dancers embody their practice as no others. The dancer's development of embodied literacy is fraught with challenges quite specific and particular to the discipline. These challenges have their genesis in the body and body/mind connections.

There is a wonderful diversity in the human form and its attendant mind – just like snowflakes, no two body/mind combinations are alike. Every single individual develops a personalised, idiosyncratic method to bring her/his physical manifestation through the various kinetic stages that result in walking. Some bodies may have a limited capacity and some may not have the capacity to do this at all. Those who do arrive at walking, challenging gravity to remain upright, have done so most often without conscious awareness or mindful direction of the process. Because our bodies are different and our minds are different and because how we have learned to walk is unique, the way we walk is also specifically and uniquely ours. Watching people walk is fascinating. The ambulatory differences may not be initially apparent, but with developing embodied literacy and observation skills, variations emerge, subtleties of rhythm and stride length appear; angles of foot, looseness or tightness in the hip swing, degree of knee and foot articulation – these and many more factors contribute to making your walk specifically and uniquely YOUR walk. These are indeed pedestrian matters, but since the body is the instrument of the wanting-to-learn dancer, it is important to recognise that we all arrive in the dance studio or other locale of learning with differently programmed kinaesthetic pathways as well as differently constructed limbs, joints, musculature, connective tissue, cardiac and lung systems etc.

Rudolf Laban wrote in 1950 that as human beings, we have the capacity

> to choose between a resisting, constricting, withholding, fighting attitude, or one yielding, enduring, accepting, indulging in relation to the 'motion factors' of Weight, Space and

> Time… This freedom of choice is not always consciously or voluntarily exercised; it is often applied automatically without any contribution of conscious willing. But we can observe consciously the function of choosing movements appropriate to situations; that means that we can become conscious of our choice, and can investigate why we so choose. We can observe whether people yield to the…forces of weight, space and time, as well as to the natural flow of movement in the sense of having a bodily feeling of them, or whether they fight against one or more of these factors by actively resisting them (p. 20).

Laban's (1950) words resonate viscerally with me as a dancer, dance educator and dance observer. If one dances with the force of gravity in space and time, the movement has an organic, 'natural' sensation and an appearance of ease. It is also less likely to be physically damaging. If the dancer struggles against gravity through space and time, the movement has a strained, forced quality, a discombobulated, alienating appearance and higher potential for both physical and psychological damage. Weight, space and time must be incorporated into the movement through acceptance rather than fought against as enemy impediments. Yielding to "the natural flow of movement" and "having a bodily feeling of" weight, space and time are fundamental aspects of embodied literacy. To develop dance literacy, the novice must become aware of such choices being made and of the subtleties involved in the many separate but coordinated efforts being expended during the implementation of the actions resulting from these choices.

This should not be construed as promoting a promiscuous, laissez-faire, 'go with the flow', 'whatever' approach to dance training and practice. Creative dance, as described earlier by Lobo and Winsler (2006), encourages unlimited degrees of freedom in terms of form, but still advocates the application of the two fundamentals of embodied literacy – natural flow and bodily feeling – mentioned above. Many dance genres, ranging from western classical ballet to Kathakali to Balinese dance, have more specific forms, dynamics and aesthetics by which they are defined and recognised. Within such genres, expert dancers may no longer be aware of choices being made, but as a result of their established dance literacy, most critically embodied literacy, they make the "right" choices, giving them complete freedom of expression and fluency within the acknowledged parameters of the genre being performed. This is often referred to as "muscle memory", though the functionality of this descriptor could be considered dance literate only when Laban's (1950) fundamentals of flow and feeling are underlying principles of its inscription.

For example, in my own classes I ask the students to feel the movements and the positions, to tune into the feedback that their sensorimotor perception is giving to their brain. I make time for them to receive and process this sensory feedback, to make choices about the next iteration of practice and application of effort. I encourage the students to look for the ease of a movement (though it may not be easy) or the ease in sustaining a position (though it requires effort) rather than the struggle, to involve weight and momentum in jumps, to 'fly', rather than fight against gravity. For me, it is a question of efficiency – each individual, with their unique particularities within the common web of gravity, space and time, is working towards optimal energy efficiency, communication and aesthetics in the dance.

The journey from novice to expert in dance genres with defined, delineated, specific or even codified forms, dynamics and aesthetics requires training and practice.

The pathway, just as it was for learning to walk, will be unique for every journeyman/woman dancer. However, this dance learning must be conscious, aware, active and critically reflective for the development of dance literacy and expertise to progress effectively. Principles of natural flow and bodily feeling must be incorporated in the choices made during practice in order that the muscle memory being inscribed in the dancer be literate and thus facilitate the freedom and fluency of movement and expression. This brings into sharp focus a crucial bifurcation along the dance teaching and learning pathway: if the sensorimotor feedback the learner experiences from her/his own body is not a permissible, encouraged, advocated, sought after component in the formation of the conscious choices made for action, then embodied literacy development is stultified. If the learner is taught to imitate a form or copy a movement without calling attention to, and allowing for critical reflection on, the sensory feedback from her/his own body and without subsequently being given permission to make choices which include bodily feeling and natural flow, embodied literacy cannot develop.

For example, when students in my classes view video footage of their own practice, I ask them to recall what they were feeling as they were dancing, ask where the effort and initiation was focussed, and ask whether they could make effort choices that involve greater ease with improved outcomes. I encourage them to investigate their embodied efficiency in approaching the work they are doing and what they see of their practice on screen. Learning by passive imitation (external direction) without active, conscious reflection, without self-awareness and consistent intimate attention to sensorimotor feedback, and without the inclusion of natural flow and bodily feeling, cannot develop dance literacy or genuine dance expertise. This non-"think-feel", extrinsic goal-oriented pathway leads to unsafe dance practices, injury, disillusionment and quitting. Imitation of form may progress and achievement may be felt, but functional, personal understanding of the underlying structures of the form, that is, an individual's literacy in the embodied nature of the form, will not develop. Exceptional students, such as Rudolf Nureyev and Li Cunxin, Mao's Last Dancer, demonstrate that even within a system which suppresses critical reflection, the learner can follow his/her intuitive sensorimotor feedback and develop the highest levels of embodied literacy and dance expertise. However, if the system and the teachers encourage critical reflection and the listening to one's own body as one learns, there will be less damage and wastage of talent on the journey towards expertise and developed dance literacy.

Dancer, choreographer and philosopher Erick Hawkins (1992) writes passionately about an alleged theory of dance which

> always gets in the way… The theory is to do movements with bound flow – that is, tightening the muscles in order to do the movement. The individual movements that the dancer makes according to his native intuition, when he forgets the implications of the theory, are correct (p. 126).

Hawkins (1992) loved to say "Tight muscles cannot feel" (p. 124). Laban (1950) speaks of bound flow and free flow in the following text from The Mastery of Movement:

> The effort element of 'bound' or hampered flow consists of the readiness to stop normal flux and of the movement sensation of pausing……The flow seems to stream backward towards

> the central area of the body….. The effort element of 'free' flow consists of a released flux and of the movement sensation of fluid….it helps the progression of movement through the body from the central area towards the extremities thus producing a feeling of onward streaming which is characteristic of free flow (p. 76).

In my classes, I speak of a sense of elongation, of energy lines extending along and beyond the limbs, head, eyes and torso. Hawkins's (1992) 'theory', or perhaps rather the widespread ignorance of physics, muscle functionality and biomechanics in dance training, is becoming less prevalent as embodied dance literacy evolves through the understanding, application and assimilation of somatic practices, body mechanics and cognitive psychology in dance teaching, learning and practice.

Eric Franklin, dancer, educator and author, succinctly clarifies a preeminent source of the 'theory' misconception Hawkins identified.

> Much confusion has also arisen from equating aesthetic principles with principles of efficient movement and alignment. Both are important for dance, but they do sometimes conflict. The teacher should therefore be aware when the focus is on teaching aesthetics and when the focus is on teaching alignment based on the principles of mechanics. There is no reason one cannot simultaneously learn a desired aesthetic and the correct mechanics of the technique to combine them optimally. We must stop hurting bodies under the pretense (conscious or unconscious) of teaching technique when, in reality, we are teaching aesthetics (1996, p. 160).

This optimal combining of the aesthetics and mechanics of dance is an essential component in the development of embodied dance literacy. As Franklin (1996) writes, "…in dance, the expression arises from the physical experience rather than from an abstract concept of emotion or from a whimsical desire to express an emotion" (p. XI). The intentions as well as the manifestations of this physical experience must be formulated with clarity, honesty and integrity in order that the dancing be literate, capable of being 'read' by others.

Laban's (1950) concepts of bound and free flow are being fleshed out as knowledge from the sciences of human movement and physiology enters into the lexica of dancing. Awareness of the various functions of muscles such as the agonists and antagonists, synergists and fixators, mobilisers and stabilisers, as well as the types of muscle contraction, such as eccentric, concentric and isometric, promotes a dancer's embodied literacy through improving movement efficiency. We learn through reflective practice to receive, analyse and synthesise the bio-feedback from our own body systems in order to determine how much of what, when and in what coordination with what else, is needed in order to perform both the aesthetics and mechanics of dance optimally. Dance literacy will be developed not through sweaty, 'no pain, no gain', mindless repetition and imitation, but rather through developing knowledge of what the underlying structures of the dance form are and the awareness of how we, each one of us individually, can train our systems to perform the dance.

The teacher and the student both have important collaborative roles to play in the development of the dancer's embodied literacy. The dancer's "native intuition" is not always correct, appropriate or efficient. The correctness of this intuition will be dependent upon the life experience of the dancer, harking right back to her/his first experiences of movement, breathing, twisting, rolling, crawling and walking.

Franklin (1996) explains that good effortless alignment may feel strange at first, because it may not be what you are used to if you are coming from misaligned habits. On a well-developed plane of self-awareness and sensorimotor attunement, it is very likely accurate to say, "If it feels right, it is right". However, the external eyes and dance literacy of the teacher are critical in guiding the development of the accuracy and sensitivity of this self-awareness and attunement within any dance form. The reality of what the student feels must be matched with the reality of what the student does for the dancing to become literate in that form. Degrees of disparity correlate directly to degrees of illiteracy.

Somatic Practices and Embodied Literacy

Somatic practices present another pathway for the development and refinement of self-awareness and thus increased embodied literacy. Moshe Feldenkrais, physicist, engineer and movement researcher, said, "It's only when you know what you're doing that you can really do what you want" (1984, p. 68). Awareness through Movement, a body of work comprising approximately 3,000 lessons devised by Feldenkrais, is a somatic approach designed to foster movement efficiency and clarity. It "leads to knowledge of oneself and to previous undiscovered resources in oneself" (Feldenkrais, 1981, p. 94). Feldenkrais claims,

> Elimination of useless parasitic action will make for efficiency surer than striving for it. Do not be serious, eager, avoiding any wrong move. The kind of learning that goes with Awareness through Movement is a source of pleasurable sensations which lose their clarity if anything dims the pleasure of it all…..So, do not avoid errors, but rather use them as alternatives for what you feel is right and their roles may soon be interchanged (1981, p.94).

Irene Sieben writes, in Dance Techniques 2010, that Feldenkrais:

> used principles from mechanics, thermodynamics, cybernetics, and brain research to underpin the dynamics of posture, the relationship to gravity, and the 'reversibility of movement' (a phrase he took from his study of physics and which refers to effortless control of the body) as being the most important factors for body efficiency (2011, p. 142).

There is an immediate, direct relevance of Awareness through Movement lessons to dance literacy development (and life development!). Much of Feldenkrais's philosophy can also be effectively applied to learning in general. He writes:

> I believe it is more important to learn the way to learn new skills than the feat of the skills themselves…..In order to arrive at the right movement, it is necessary to think of better movement rather than right; the right movement has no future development (1981, p. 92).

There are many other somatic practices being increasingly incorporated in dance training curricula in order to promote the development of the students' self-awareness and embodied literacy. For example, Sieben briefly references, along with Feldenkrais, Charlotte Selver's Sensory Awareness; the Alexander Technique (F. M. Alexander); Mabel Todd's Ideokinesis; Eutony, developed by Gerda Alexander; Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (Irmgard Bartenieff); the Klein Technique of

Susan Klein; Body-Mind Centering developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen; and Eric Franklin's Franklin Method (2011, pp. 139–145).

Many other approaches are also employed today by professional dancers, teachers, companies, university dance departments and schools to nurture the "thinking" dancer, to develop the dancer's embodied literacy. These include various forms of yoga, pilates, gyrotonics, gyrokinesis, spiral dynamics, a variety of martial arts and Tai Chi.

Students themselves are being increasingly recognised and used as a valuable resource in the development of dance students' self-awareness, and thus literacy. As the paradigm of viewing the student as an empty vessel (cf Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005)) fades, teachers are more confidently encouraging peer coaching and peer-to-peer feedback. This advantages both the observed student through personal, specific, immediate feedback, as well as the observer through honing the skill sets of observation, analysis and communication. Furthermore, students playing the coaching role note that their own self-awareness of the given movements has been sharpened by the coaching process. With careful teacher guidance and monitoring, these 'buddy' systems can be an extremely enriching experience for students as they become more actively engaged participants in the learning process and the development of various facets of their dance literacy.

Some Technological Applications

Technology can also play a significant role in helping both the novice and professional better match the reality of self-sensory perception with the external reality of what is actually happening, what is observed and 'read' by others. The mirror has been used for centuries to fulfil limited aspects of this external feedback. Videoing the dancer and critically reflecting during the viewing of the recorded sequence is a radically more advanced method of harmonising the two realities of self-perception ('what I felt') and external perception ('what I looked like'). Remarks such as, "I thought I was really moving big, but I look so lame on the screen" and "I thought I had my leg behind me in the arabesque, but it's way out to the side" and "I felt like I was together with the others, but I'm so out" are commonly heard when using video feedback technology. The teacher needs to take care that the method is used constructively to assist the dancer make self-perception and external perception congruent. When the often demoralising aspects of mismatches in realities are overcome, video feedback can be a powerful tool with which embodied literacy and performance can be enhanced.

Web-based tools have also been used to bring together these sometimes separate realities and to promote dance literacy through encouraging thought, observation, reflection and communication. In a paper presented at the World Dance Alliance gathering in Brisbane, 2008, I reported on the implementation of a student-driven online feedback platform, a discussion forum, used to supplement the practical, studio-based learning of dance.

> Time in the dance studio, where the act of dancing is practised, appears to be more effectively used as the students are better prepared mentally to truly engage in the physical training. They are more receptive to a teacher's corrections because they have a methodology [action research] with which they can apply these suggestions. Students also benefit more from peer-to-peer collaboration as they model face-to-face in class the on-line discussion forum processes of respectful critique, which are initiated in the less-threatening virtual environment (Jones, 2009, p. 4).

Students themselves have said about the online activities: "The discussion forum is a great learning device as it helps us as dancers to reflect and problem solve with our fellow peers and teachers." "I think that having an active forum with class mates is a good way to talk about and share thoughts and opinions that may otherwise not be said. After reading others' forum responses there are many tips that I have picked up from other students." (Online student feedback)

Social media are being increasingly used to facilitate similar approaches in enhancing student engagement with their learning processes.

Psychological Approaches and the Development of Dance Literacy

Philosopher, psychologist and author Carl Gustav Jung wrote in The Undiscovered Self (first published in 1957):

> The fact that our conscious activity is rooted in instinct and derives from it its dynamism as well as the basic features of its ideational forms has the same significance for human psychology as for all other members of the animal kingdom. Human knowledge consists essentially in the constant adaptation of the primordial patterns of ideas that were given us a priori. These need certain modifications, because, in their original form, they are suited to an archaic mode of life but not to the demands of a specifically differentiated environment. If the flow of instinctive dynamism into our life is to be maintained, as is absolutely necessary for our existence, then it is imperative that we should re-mould these archetypal forms into ideas which are adequate to the challenge of the present (1990, p. 39).

From the psychological perspective, Jung (1990) is bringing our attention to the necessity of cultivating and maintaining an intimate personal connection with the flow of our instinctive dynamism. Reconceptualising Jung's words above into the context of the field of dance, we need to modify, to re-mould archetypal forms, which are part of our common human heritage, into the forms of whatever dance genre is being learned and practised without losing the connections with our instinct, our natural flow of movement, our bodily feeling of weight, as Laban (1950) phrases it.

We may have original archetypal forms in common, but our individuated body/mind is unique to each of us, as previously shown. In order to modify our unique form and dynamics that they may fall within the constraints and defined qualities of the dance genre we are pursuing, we cannot simply impose the rules, theories, laws and conventions of that genre on our body/mind and expect to develop embodied

literacy in that genre. We need to adopt a constructivist approach which "recognizes the interactive nature of all human experience. [Our personal] knowledge is the creation of an inventive mind interacting with a universe which itself is a part of what humans construe in the process of interaction" (Eisner, 2002b, p. 380). The dance student must be allowed the freedom to make choices according to the state of her/his own sensorimotor integration and, based on that self-awareness feedback loop, construct and refine the nerve and muscle systems' pathways which transform the capacity of her/his body/mind to conform with the exigencies of the dance genre. Referring to the post-modern and post-structural loss of confidence in both the existence and the applicability of immutable laws, Eisner says, "To say none of these laws exist save those we ourselves fashion is to gain freedom, but also to give up the comforts of the nearly certain" (Eisner, p. 380). Accepting this loss of (near) certainty requires a degree of courage, at least initially, on the parts of both the teacher and the student. However, the prospects of the freedom gained and the contributions this freedom makes to the dancer's expressive fluency in the genre can provide sufficient motivation to confront the fear of travelling in unchartered, indeed, unchartable, territories of discovery.

Many teachers and dancers are now making use of constructivist approaches in dance training. Miranda Glikson, dancer, ballet mistress and dance researcher, said of one workshop she gave:

> Improvisation tools and techniques can be used to develop awareness of how we communicate and interact with our environment. In the workshop our perceptions of the body in space and in place will be examined. Exploring through improvisation gives us the opportunity to observe our movement behaviour and to examine underlying movement narratives by analysing our choices, our patterns and habits. Spatial and energetic concepts will be explored with reference also to the principles of William Forsythe and Rudolf Laban. (Glikson Workshop, QUT, 2013)

Another dance teacher, Professor Theresa Cone, writes of the collaborative nature in her approaches to constructing the learning experiences,

> I tried to remain grounded in the essence of teaching: that of a shared lived experience in which my students and I blurred the boundaries between teacher and learner. The teaching and learning experiences that unfolded were influenced by what everyone contributed to the encounter. These moments called on me to be aware, alive, sensitive, passionate, intuitive, open, thoughtful, and caring (2007, p. 37).

Gill Clarke, dancer, teacher, choreographer and researcher, says, "We are all being influenced by the movement exchanges and conversations we have in the studio every day" (2011, p. 201). Of Clarke's approaches, Edith Boxberger writes, "In this way the body speaks a shifting movement language by filtering new experiences and experiments in action, more than through consciously imposing upon it new movement modalities or explicit knowledge" (2011, p. 210).

Lance Gries, dancer, teacher and researcher, works with release- and alignment-oriented techniques. Gries speaks of,

> coming back to the reality of the body and trying to understand it better, trying to make it more efficient, more elegant, more personal…The student is responsible for building knowledge in a way that works well for him or her (as cited in Boxburger, 2011, p. 270).

I believe that in classical ballet training the student must be allowed to find his or her own way into the classical forms and sequences because these learning pathways will be unique for each student. The teacher can provide a plethora of guiding principles, metaphors, scaffolding and constructive feedback, but the student has to formulate the embodied knowledge for his or her own unique being so that the shapes and movements convey the grace, elegance, power and fluidity of ballet. If the embodied knowledge of the dance is not 'home made', the aesthetic lacks authenticity and communication lacks clarity. The dance must come from within the individual dancer.

Using Your Mirror Neuron System

Eisner says it this way: "What is important for educational theory…and the improvement of teaching…is the recognition of the importance of particularity" (2002b, p. 381).

Again, this is not a laissez-faire tolerance of the student saying, "This particular shape is how *I* do *my* arabesque" and the teacher replying, "Yes, that is your particular arabesque and it is fine" because that shape may very well NOT be an arabesque, at least not one from the classical ballet repertoire. What the dancer does, and the teacher must allow, that IS particular derives from and through individuated, unique embodied literacy. This includes kinesthetic knowledge and awareness of the degrees and co-ordinations of the eccentric, concentric and isometric contractions of relevant agonist and antagonist muscle systems, the exquisitely counter-balanced relationships between the motivators and the stabilisers, the weights of the individual body parts, the placement of the centre of gravity, the degrees of freedom in the articulating joints, pre-established neural pathways and a host of other particular factors which combine with the intention of the dancer to strike an arabesque. Fortunately, much of this complexity can be roughly sketched out by our mirror neurons that inform our sensorimotor systems so that the presented image of the arabesque, serving as the intention of a student's goal, can function to inform many of the required physical processes involved in the student's replicating that goal of 'arabesqueness'.

This mirror neuron system can be perceived as a neural mechanism that underlies action understanding and also provides us with 'insight' into the actions of others, interpreting them in terms of our own movement possibilities (Sinigaglia & Rizzolatti, 2011). The dancer's awareness and sensorimotor feedback loops guide the body/mind in unique ways to first approximate and then refine an externally defined shape or movement sequence. This application of dance literacy is the cutting edge of dance training, which, when mindfully practised, critically reflected upon, and sensitively guided by the teacher further develops the embodied literacy and the capacity of the individual body/mind to refine the dance. A configuration or sequence performed by the dancer and which is at variance with genre-specific or choreographic requirements should be considered not an error but rather an opportunity to hone embodied literacy skills, including strength, flexibility, musicality and

coordination, so that the physical and mental systems involved can be trained from within in iterative cycles to approximate ever more closely the required or desired external performance. This system of learning ownership in dance training and practice is known as ongoing action research.

Sinigaglia and Rizzolatti describe the development and refinement of expressive fluency through symbolic embodied form thus:

> As this [motor] expertise develops, diversifies and becomes increasingly sophisticated, the ability to understand the actions of others increases, diversifies and becomes increasingly sophisticated. In other words, the more the motor goals are finely represented, the greater is the significance acquired by details of the observed actions, which share the same motor intentional content with the actions the observer might execute. It is due to this sharing that action understanding can become extremely subtle (2011, p. 68).

Developing authentic movement expertise develops the capacity to communicate non-verbally, to become more dance literate.

Research and the Development of Dance Literacy

Research in the field of dance investigates any and all of who, what, when, where, why, and how. This research is being carried out by doctors, physicists, psychologists, bio-mechanics, physiotherapists, sociologists, anthropologists, pedagogues, choreographers, computer scientists, historians, biographers…and dancers. Research in dance has been pursued for millennia; books have been written on and about dance for hundreds of years; dance has had a place in universities since the early 1900s, albeit beginning within physical education contexts. The growth of dance within the university sector, as distinct from the conservatoire, has ushered in the rapidly expanding body of literature and media resources on, about, for and within dance. Post-graduate and doctoral programs in dance are attracting increasing numbers as the field develops critical mass. High-quality journals such as the Journal of the International Association of Dance and Medical Science and Brolga publish research outcomes and provide valuable information for further research projects. This burgeoning of dance literature is another aspect of the expansion of dance literacy and the emergence of dance as a significant player in the academic research arena.

William Forsythe, choreographer and director, has been a major player in dance research since the late 1970s, mostly outside of academia. Many of Forsythe's creations, including Artifact, Limb's Theorem, Impressing the Czar and The Loss of Small Detail have been enormously influential on the global stage and the contemporary understanding of dance. The Motion Bank, http://motionbank.org/en/, an online resource, is a 4-year project (2010–2013) of The Forsythe Company providing a broad context for research into choreographic practice. "The project Motion Bank is an invitation to all interested internet users to have choreographies translated for them into a pleasant and understandable language" (Staude, 2010). Another fascinating and useful web-based research resource initiated by Forsythe (n.d.)

is Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, Reproduced, http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu/. The authors, Forsythe, Palazzi and Shaw write, "Our goal in creating these objects is to engage a broad public, explore cross-disciplinary research, and spur creative discovery for specialists and non-specialists alike" (2009). Following a London festival devoted to Forsythe's work in 2009, Sarah Crompton, having interviewed Forsythe, wrote,

> All these works explore Forsythe's fascination with the ways in which people read movement. 'We have no scores, no literature of dance,' [Forsythe] says. 'Scores are maps. You find one set of ideas and map it onto another set of ideas, find equivalents. The pendulum room is a score and it is a question of your ability to interpret it. The balloon room is a score, and the audience gets a chance to perform it. This is one of the things I think is most interesting about the arts. These little leaps everyone has to make, these translations and transliterations, they are mappings ultimately from one domain to the next' (2009).

In this interview, Forsythe says,

> I just happen to be one of a group of people to whom ideas give pleasure and there are lots of us out there, believe me. If dance is only going to stage stories, then dance is going to relegate itself to the status of children's books. Dance is a good field. It shouldn't be relegated there.

Dance Literacy, Dance Ecology and the World

The concepts, interpretations and applications of dance literacy as discussed in this chapter may help avoid such "relegation" and serve to reinvigorate the practice, performance and appreciation of dance with its far-ranging potentialities in local and global communities. Museums are wonderful places for preserving, remembering and presenting the past. However, if art forms such as dance are to remain relevant, dynamic factors in the formation of today's and tomorrow's cultural landscapes, they need to be constantly in a state of becoming, informed by the past but infused with the spirit of today and the exigencies of tomorrow. Each individual in the field has a unique 'voice' which, when articulated in a literate manner, has the capacity to communicate with other individuals, both within and beyond the field. Our common humanity can be harmoniously accepted along with the recognition of our individuality and diversity. Literacy, here defined as expressive fluency through symbolic form – visual, sonic or embodied – both enables and promotes understanding. Dance literacy, through inclusive non-verbal communication, is well placed to be a contributing factor in formulating and disseminating responses to the global systemic changes and challenges humanity is facing this century.

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Chapter 8
Drama Literacy: (In)definite Articles

Madonna Stinson

Abstract Learning in and through drama involves acts of shared imagination as students participate in collaborative, embodied, creative, thoughtful, empathetic and purposeful experiences. These experiences usually require participants to engage as [an]other, at once "not-me" and simultaneously not "not-me" (Woodson, 1999). This chapter discusses the literacies, developed through drama pedagogy involving acts of identification. The author considers the implications for learning in drama of, what Jonothan Neelands has termed, intra-aesthetic and para-aesthetic approaches (Neelands, 2004), whereby the focus modulates, shifts or blurs between orientations leaning, on the one hand, towards the primacy of artistic skill development and, on the other, the personal, social and cultural development of students. She draws on a number of contemporary authors who have considered the nature of drama literacy (cf. Burton, Neelands, O'Toole, Pascoe, Saxton & Miller, Winston and others), as well as recent discussion of the role of emotion in learning to frame an analysis of drama pedagogy. The chapter concludes with a proposed model of practice to support drama literacy development.

Keywords Drama • Drama literacy • Drama pedagogy • Embodiment • Creativity

Introduction

Scenario 1
A group of young people form part of a larger audience, sitting in a darkened theatre waiting for the performance to begin …

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Scenario 2
The large open classroom is full of students gesturing, talking and moving, in role as reporters for TV India. Three boys, of this year 4 class, are involved in an intense discussion as they prepare questions to be put to the Maharajah when they interview him about his plans for the enormous treasure found in a local temple.

Scenario 3
Year 1 students rush to their desks and begin writing messages for "Hermy", the hermit crab puppet, who has asked for their help to solve an important environmental problem.

Scenario 4
Year 11 students, working in groups, rework improvised material to structure it into performance-ready scenes for a documentary drama based on the lived experience of their own community. They are using projections of still and moving images as their backdrop, and some are incorporating music, dance and interactive technology into their scenes.

Scenario 5
An ensemble of young people skillfully moves and speaks as one, in the carefully lit space of the theatre. The audience sits entranced as the narrative unfolds through this polished and focused chorus work in a highly physical, contemporary performance work.

In each of these scenarios, the students are developing drama literacy. This chapter will explore components of drama literacy and consider the learning conditions that actively promote its development.

Defining Literacy

> When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.
>
> Lewis Carroll, 1871, p. 254.

We could be forgiven for thinking that Humpty Dumpty was involved in defining literacy and literacies, considering the number of scholarly texts, including this one, dedicated to the task. The term literacy refers to descriptions of knowing that are much broader than language because human society has developed multiple meaning systems which are intended to express and communicate meaning (Bruner, 1979; Eisner, 1998, 2002, 1976; Langer, 1953). Saxton and Miller (2009) point to "more than thirty recognized literacies" (p. 35) and claim that:

> to be literate … is to be able to function in the world as a participant in, contributor to, and shaper of a democratic society; to possess the critical capacity to be a reader and writer of the world; to have, in other words, literacies that shape us as much as they are shaped by us. (p. 35)

It is this capacity to be a reader and writer of the world, a "yearning to make some sense" (Greene, 1995, p. 25), that concerns us as artists and arts educators.

And, indeed, it is the educator's focus that moves our gaze towards means of developing "interpretive and expressive fluency" (Chapter 1) through the design and implementation of curriculum and pedagogy in our particular symbolic form. The arts are vehicles for meaning making and omnipresent in our society via media and technology, or as part of the "necessary symbolic work" (Willis, 1990) of our everyday lives. Through learning in the arts we can acquire the "multiple forms of literacy that enable one to encode or decode the public vehicles through which meaning is represented or recovered" (Eisner, 1998, p. 26). The family of the arts (dance, drama, filmic and media arts, music literature, and the visual arts) recognizes and values that there are multiple ways of knowing, doing, shaping, and being in the world. A capacity to recognize and work within these multiple ways of knowing is the basis of arts literacy, the know-how of the arts.

The 'Know-How' of Drama

So, what do we choose to mean when we use the term drama literacy? Of course, any understanding or definition is context specific and contestable but, in an attempt to unpack what drama educators mean by the term, I will use the scenarios from the beginning of this chapter as frames or lenses through which I will consider the processes through which we aim to teach students to become confident and competent users of the languages of drama and enable them to act upon the world in which we live.

Scenario 1: Unpacked

In this scenario the student audience members were participants in a large study into theatre attendance of young people in Australia (see http://theatrespace.org.au/). This research involved nearly 3,000 young people through 21 case studies investigating their theatre-going experience. One research question related to theatre literacy, which was defined in this context as the capacity of young people to read, interpret and analyse a diverse range of performance events. Theatrespace findings suggest that teachers, and theatre creatives, believe that theatre literacy is essential for engagement in theatre as audience, and crucial in enabling students to master the complexity of theatre discourses that allows for understanding, analysis and description of the theatre experience (Burton, Bundy, & Ewing, 2014). Burton et al. affirm that theatre literacy is enhanced by formal study of theatre or a wide experience of theatre over time. They claim that theatre literacy is demonstrated by:

- the use of technical theatre language or meta-language when identifying the "aesthetic and conceptual" elements of a play, including the capacity to make connections between productions of both similar and unlike forms;
- the use of language of experience and pleasure, characterised by responses indicating excitement and enthusiasm for the liveness of the event;

- the capacity to compare one theatre experience with a range of other live performances; and
- active involvement in performance making.

Young people who are theatre literate have developed that capacity over time and through regular attendance at many varieties and locations of theatre performance. They are able to talk fluently about theatre performances, using the technical vocabulary that indicates broad and deep knowledge of the art form in performance. Importantly, and in addition, they use language that conveys excitement and pleasure as they identify key moments in the experience. Theatre-literate young people are capable of engaging in dialogue about specific performance elements, comparing one performance with another, and are not simply focused on the practice of "going to the theatre". An important finding of the Theatrespace research was the definitive contribution made to the development of theatre literacy by active involvement in performance making. In other words, theatre-literate young audience members came to be so because of their own art-making practice. While theatre literacy is not essential for enjoyment, when present it allows audience members to communicate an informed critical response to a theatre performance.

It is the active involvement in theatre making, that is, the processes of creating a dramatic text, which may or may not lead to a public performance, that concerns us now. The analysis of theatre literacy considered by Burton et al. (2014), above, relates to the active involvement of young people as audience, as participants in a dramatic performance event devised and presented by others. Let's turn our gaze onto consideration of aspects of literacy relating to the work of young people as art makers: devisers, directors, actors, designers, playwrights and so on.

Drama: Contributing to Language Literacy

No discussion of drama literacy is likely to take place without some reference to the interconnectedness between drama and language literacy. As Shin-mei Kao and Cecily O'Neill point out:

> Drama does things with words. It introduces language as an essential and authentic method of communication. Drama sustains interactions between students within the target language, creating a world of social roles and relations in which the learner is an active participant…The language that arises is fluent, purposeful and generative because it is embedded in context (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p. 4).

It is easy to find research considering the impact of drama on language literacy (see, for example, Brice Heath, 1993; Podlozny, 2000; Wagner, 1998) where there is unequivocal evidence of results such as improved confidence, motivation, spontaneity, fluency, articulation, vocabulary, and variety of speech. Rather than a purely instrumental approach, where exercises and processes are borrowed from some

Table 8.1 Functional, dialogical, linguistic and paralinguistic skills of oracy

Dimension	Category
Functional	Informing (and responding to information)
	Controlling (and responding to control)
	Negotiating
	Imagining
	Feeling
Dialogical	Listening
	Responding
	Turn taking
	Leading
	Narrative
Linguistic	Diction
	Vocabulary
	Grammar and syntax
	Register
	Colour
	Public address
Paralinguistic	Vocal expression
	Non-verbal and gestural
	Proxemics
	Energy
	Silence

aspects of drama practice, more powerful learning is possible when the intrinsic artistry of the form is used to frame learning (Dunn & Stinson, 2011; Neelands, 2009; Stinson, 2009; Winston, 2010).

Scenario 2: Unpacked

In this classroom the students were participating in an extended process drama with lessons designed to enhance oracy (O'Toole & Stinson, 2013). The text that provided the basis for the drama work was a report in The Australian newspaper about an astonishing and valuable treasure discovered in a Hindu temple in Kerala, India. During the drama work, which took place over several weeks, the students worked in and out of role in a carefully structured process drama that was designed to give them opportunities to improve the functional, dialogical, linguistic and paralinguistic skills of oracy (see Table 8.1).

Within this process drama the students explored the story from within, that is, they co-created the narrative while working in and out of role, and responded to the challenges provided by the pre-planned structure of the drama, again in and out of role.

The drama commenced with the excitement of a treasure hunt for clues: phrases which, when sequenced, provided the story pretext for the drama. Following

some freeze-frame recreations of the opening of the treasure vault, the students worked in "mantle of the expert" roles (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) as expert journalists, investigating the issues and implications surrounding the opening of the chamber in the temple. This role allowed for all of the dimensions of oral language (above) to be brought into the awareness of the student group. The students worked (and researched) in and out of role as journalists and characters from the story. They interviewed each other as concerned members of the local community, provided advice to the maharajah, negotiated story presentations with the chief editor (teacher in role), and collaborated to co-create an ongoing dramatic text involving freeze frames, interviews, rituals and short scenes. By accepting and operating in the fictional world of the drama, over several weeks, the students were learning through multiple modes, understanding factual information from various perspectives, respecting cultural values and beliefs, and realizing that individuals within any society may hold differing views on any event.

Here we find an example of learning through drama. Drama focuses on creating meaning in the enactive mode. In drama, people enact real and imagined events to interpret and express an understanding of human experience. By working in role, in the midst of a plot that unfolded moment by moment, these students were discovering information about the topic at the same time as they were developing personal literacy in drama by learning how to manage dramatic form, that is, working in role, dealing with the driving tensions of the dramatic work, and creating embodied dramatic text with metaphoric and symbolic power.

Scenario 3: Unpacked

In another example of drama operating as a medium for cross-curricular learning, these 5- and 6-year-old pupils were working within a drama based on the picture book, "There's a Sea in my Bedroom" (Wild & Tanner, 1989). The classroom teachers had invited us in to use drama to help develop narrative competency and encourage the students to write. In the drama, the children met 'Hermy', a hermit crab puppet who was very distressed because scuba divers had been taking shells from the reef and he was unable to find a large enough shell to make his new home. The example given here illustrates the importance of emotional engagement in commitment to learning in drama. The children were excited to meet Hermy and deeply concerned about his plight. From being reluctant writers before the drama work began, they embraced the fiction and eagerly engaged in writing letters (posted in the shell as a letter box) to Hermy and other sea creatures. In this case the dramatic fiction provided strong motivation to overcome initial reluctance to write. The children accepted the conventions of the puppet as a 'real' character, and later emphatically told a visiting diver (a teacher in role) that he must stop taking shells from the sea, giving many detailed and thoughtful reasons why. The drama offered a safe space for them to experiment with language and ideas, and to rehearse what they might say and do, without fear of failure. Within the drama the children acted

upon the external world as they planned a variety of means of persuading others to cease the environmental damage. This they understood was personal, social and urgent.

Components of Drama Literacy

Drama, says Robin Pascoe (2003, p. 31), "takes place in a special dedicated space, when participants who are performers/makers work collaboratively with participants who are audience, making meaning using the enactive, symbolic and iconic language of drama". The dedicated space may be a theatre, a school or community hall, or a classroom, and the participants may be performers and makers concurrently as we can see from the two examples just above. The language of drama is made up of dramatic elements, conventions, forms and styles, and historical, social and cultural contexts and purposes. These do not operate separately and independently but instead must be considered as interrelated and complementary in dialogic and dynamic ways.

Fundamental to drama literacy is the capacity to manage the elements of drama. These elements are those components that are evident, to some degree or another, in most dramatic works and comprise roles, tension, contrast, symbol, language, movement, time and place. It is the dynamic interplay of the elements of drama that create dramatic meaning (Haseman & O'Toole, 1987; O'Toole, 1992).

Intrinsic to drama is the ability to step into the shoes of someone else, to take on role, and to work in role and within a dramatic fiction to create a dramatic text even if this text is ephemeral and improvisatory. Jonothan Neelands (1998) has suggested a schema that describes the capacity to accept and work in role in six levels, culminating in a standard that would be equivalent to the work of a professional actor. In the figure below I have summarised four of the six levels he proposes for progression in the compulsory years of schooling (Table 8.2).

Neelands (1998) delineates the progress from playing the 'self' to being able to work within and understand the role and characteristics of an 'other', that is, someone whose life experiences and attitudes may be very different to one's own. Ironically, it is through exploring and experimenting with the a range of human perspectives, especially when those perspectives are at variance to one's own, that we come to understand ourselves, confront our own preconceptions, and gain a sense of the diversity and complexity of the human context (Gallagher & Ntelioglou, 2013). This is a pathway to human understanding and empathy. As Neelands, citing Ian McEwan from the front page of The Guardian, illustrates, "Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality" (Neelands, 2003).

Tension is the driving force of drama. Haseman and O'Toole (1987) suggest that tensions can be divided into four main categories:

- tension of the task, when something must be attained or achieved;
- tension of relationships, the positive and negative strains between individuals;

Table 8.2 Neelands' (1998) suggested schema for drama progression

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Public self in the social setting of the classroom. Student behaves as they would in any social situation that involved their classmates	**Public self but operates as a role in the social setting of the classroom.** Student participates and recognises the fiction but participates as 'self' rather than communicating the responses of an 'other'	**Operates as a role but projects a social or cultural attitude to events, which is different from normative or habitual self.** Student begins to imagine how someone who is different might respond and behave in the circumstances of the drama	**Role taken as representative of a social or cultural group with its own history and characteristic response.** Student researches, projects and plays a role that is characteristically different and who has a clear sense of a past and a destiny

Adapted from Neelands (1998, pp. 16–17)

- tension of mystery, incomplete or unknown qualities of the circumstances; and
- tension of surprise, the unexpected.

Bundy (2006) has suggested, in addition, the tension of intimacy. Tension does not equate to conflict but, instead, impels the characters or participants to react and behave in particular ways within the dramatic context. Working in conjunction with these elements are "language, the cornerstone of the drama process" (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982) movement and stillness; time; location; mood; and symbol. These are shaped by the conventions of dramatic form (Goode & Neelands, 1990; Heathcote, 1982) that provide scaffolds by which artists shape and structure dramatic text into specific forms and styles. Drama literacy, therefore, involves the capacity to manage and shape combinations of elements and conventions of drama with knowledge and skill in order to express and communicate an understanding of the human condition.

The Doing of Drama – Forming, Presenting, Responding

As an art form, drama is one within the aesthetic field (Abbs, 1989a, 1989b), and learning in drama takes place through the dimensions of forming (making, shaping, constructing), presenting (performing, showing, sharing) and responding (appreciating, analysing, critiquing). Since drama is an embodied artform, involving cognition, emotion and physical action, the drama classroom remains one of the few educational settings where embodied pedagogy and practice is privileged.

Scenario 4: Unpacked

The preparation of dramatic work for performance requires the skilled and selective application of the dramatic languages mentioned above. Students involved in the devising process or the preparation of dramatic text for performance to an audience develop skills and understandings within the processes of rehearsal, refinement and modification as they prepare a dramatic text for a particular audience and purpose. In this scenario, the students manipulate the elements of drama to strengthen meaning and communication through the rehearsal process; they select and apply the conventions of documentary drama as they structure the dramatic form; they incorporate multi-modal texts, drawing on material from their research and lived experience; and they seek to communicate connections between the dramatic work they are making and the experience of the broader community: to act upon the world as well as to be acted upon by it. Such an experience builds bridges for the participants, allowing them to make connections between the embodied experience of the drama, their inner worlds, and external worlds which may hold alternative perspectives, views, knowings and understandings.

Scenario 5: Unpacked

This scenario takes us, in a full circle, to Scenario 1, this time with a 180° flip. In the first scenario, the students were members of the audience; here they are the performers, presenting a dramatic work to a specific audience and for a specific purpose. They demonstrate, with skill and polish, their control of the elements and conventions of drama. Their performance follows concentrated periods of rehearsal as they practised moving and speaking in unison, and maintaining physical control in the expression of emotions and ideas. They perform the dramatic text with an awareness of what the audience sees and experiences. The rehearsal and preparations process builds an awareness of self and the other performers as well as a 4th-dimensional kind of awareness of what the audience is seeing at any point in time, where their gaze is focused. The performer offers their body as a signpost for emotions, knowledge and understanding.

Definitely In-definite

Each of the scenarios above illustrates, in some way, the processes through which drama literacy may be developed. None of them on their own will be sufficient. Instead it is the opportunity to engage with all of these scenarios, or their like, through which drama literacy is learned. A drama classroom, developing drama literacy, will be characterised by work that is thoughtful and mindful, allowing time

for deep and thorough exploration of roles and relationships and the human condition. It will allow for imaginative exploration of differing and alternate points of view, including perspectives which interrogate interplays of power, authority and control. Drama learning is active and embodied, sanctioning students to "feel thinkingly and think feelingly" (Bundy, 2003, p. 171). Learning is built upon success and enjoyment, however it is not simply play or easy. Instead, students recognise the effort involved and value work that matters, work that is connected to the world beyond the classroom. Experiences permit imaginative exploration, and ask "what if …". Students and teachers in the drama classroom work as co-artists, creating alternatives, and shaping work that interprets their lived experience and is able to express and communicate that experience to others.

In conclusion, drama literacy can be defined as the capacity to "read" and "write" in the symbolic languages of drama, to "know" and to know how to make and communicate meaning personally, individually and collectively in, through and about dramatic contexts. Drama literacy is in-definite because it is neither fixed nor immutable. The nature of the dramatic experience is ephemeral and transient, and our capacity to understand and manage the dramatic experience grows and develops throughout our lives as makers and responders. Drama literacy cannot and should not be reduced to a list of skills or elements and conventions to be learnt. It comes from knowing within the whole experience rather than knowing only how to identify or apply the elements and conventions to form, although that, of course, is one aspect of drama literacy. Drama-literate individuals know not only how to construct or deconstruct, to create or decode, but also understand how it is to be, to step into the shoes of experience of someone other than oneself. There is little point of working with Othello if one doesn't understand what it means to be driven to illogical and extreme measures by uncontrollable jealousy, or, in the examples above, understand the cultural protocols of the importance of being respectful to the Maharajah, or feel passionate about the plight of the hermit crab.

And now to the responsibility of educational systems and policy creators: it is through regular, continuous access and engagement with quality curriculum and pedagogy in the arts that we will find the potential for all young people to display "interpretive and expressive fluency" in drama as readers and writers of the world. If this is what we want for citizens of the twenty-first century, we need to make arts education an entitlement, not a luxury.

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Chapter 9
Developing Media Production Skills for Literacy in a Primary School Classroom: Digital Materials, Embodied Knowledge and Material Contexts

Michael Dezuanni and Annette Woods

Abstract This chapter investigates the relationship between technical and operational skills and the development of conceptual knowledge and literacy in media arts learning. It argues that there is a relationship between the stories, expressions and ideas that students aim to produce with communications media, and their ability to realise these in material form through technical processes in specific material contexts. Our claim is that there is a relationship between the technical and the operational, along with material relations and the development of conceptual knowledge and literacy in media arts learning. We place more emphasis on the material aspects of literacy than is usually the case in socio-cultural accounts of media literacy. We provide examples from a current project to demonstrate that it is just as important to address the material as it is the discursive and conceptual when considering how students develop media literacy in classroom spaces.

Keywords Media arts • Media literacy • Technology • Media production • Knowledge • Classroom practice

Introduction

In recent times, research into media literacy education has tended to focus on the social and conceptual aspects of communication; while technical and operational skills have had much less focus. This is despite their being an essential component of how media knowledge is produced. This chapter draws on theories of embodiment, particularly Katherine Hayles' (1999) concept of incorporation, to argue that the

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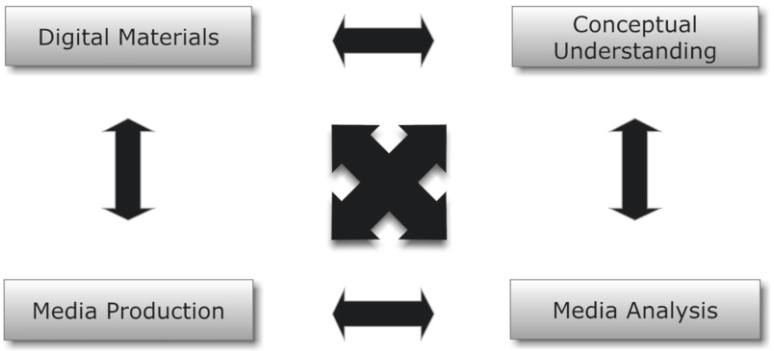

Fig. 9.1 The building blocks model – four building blocks of digital media literacy teaching and learning (Adapted from Dezuanni, 2014)

bodily practices of digital material culture are a crucial component of the theorisation of media arts literacy. We argue that it is impossible to successfully participate in digital media ecologies without operational skills and embodied knowledge. Media arts skills have a range of specificity and complexity that needs to be explicitly taught as an aspect of the production of media knowledge and for students to become 'media literate'. In this sense, media arts literacy involves both material and conceptual practices and knowledge production.

Here we draw on a generative 'building blocks' framework (see Dezuanni, 2014) to understand digital media literacy. Dezuanni's model identifies the knowledge, skills and processes students require to successfully participate in digital culture. Figure 9.1 provides a diagrammatic representation of how these categories work together in the building blocks model. By this way of understanding, digital materials and conceptual understandings are knowledge domains and media production and media analysis are procedural domains. The purpose of isolating these building blocks is to consider how they might productively become the objects of educational attention in classrooms at particular times and within particular contexts, and not to suggest that they work in isolation from each other as young people engage in digital media literacy activities and practices.

In this chapter we draw on empirical work in which we have been involved at one primary school as part of a much larger school reform project.[1] The data used includes participant observation notes, photographic evidence and student artefacts collected

[1] This data was collected as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage project entitled the URLearning project. We thank the ARC for their support of the research. The project was a collaboration between researchers at QUT, the teachers' union and the school in which the project was located. We thank the children, teachers, leaders and community of the school who are our research partners. All participants have provided consent and where appropriate images have been blurred for anonymity reasons. Our research colleagues on this project include Allan Luke, Amanda Levido, Karen Dooley, Beryl Exley, Vinesh Chandra, Katherine Doyle, Kathy Mills, and John Davis from QUT and John McCollow and Lesley McFarlane from the QTU.

within a media arts program implemented within several year four[2] classes in this school. The school was located in a low-socioeconomic and culturally diverse area of South East Queensland, and the media arts curriculum was introduced to assist students with the development of digital media literacy and to impact on literacy pedagogy in classrooms and student literacy outcomes more traditionally configured.

Literacy and Material Practice

Theories of literacy that have supported understandings of literacies as social practice (see, for example, Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Luke, 2003; Street, 1984, 2003) and multiliteracies theory (New London Group, 1996) are familiar to the media literacy education field that upholds its own aims to develop young people's capacity to participate in digital media cultures (Erstad, Gilje, & de Lange, 2007; Fisherkeller, 2011; Share, 2009). Those approaches that understand literacy as social critical practice provide important insights into the ways in which social, cultural and critical aspects of literacy practice work alongside operational features to provide individuals with the ability to successfully participate in literacy ecologies (see, for example, Luke & Freebody, 1997). For instance, media literacy educators have argued that technical production skills have value when they allow students to develop conceptual knowledge of media languages, audiences, representations, institutions and socio-cultural knowledge of technologies (Buckingham, 2003, 2007; Dezuanni, 2011). In this sense, it might be argued that media literacy educators consider conceptual knowledge to be of a higher order than skills and operational knowledge. A relationship exists, however, between technical and operational skills and the development of conceptual knowledge in media literacy education. There is a link between the stories students want to produce and their ability to realise them in material form through technical processes (Bass & Bandy, 2010; Gilje, 2011). Technical and operational skills are an essential component of how stories are told, how concepts are explored and how knowledge is produced and reproduced.

Multiliteracies approaches and research from the New Literacies Studies have tended to focus on discursive rather than material practice and, until recently at least, have placed less emphasis on the material aspects of literacy than is necessary to fully understand how students may develop digital media literacies. Luke (1992) draws on Foucault's work, specifically the 'technologies of the self', and Bourdieu's concept of habitus to argue that material practice, and the training of the body are crucial aspects of literacy learning and development. Luke aims to "retheorise what occurs in the material culture of classroom events as bodily transcription and to show how that culture constitutes the morally regulated, literate subject" (Luke, p. 123). The present chapter argues that, likewise, the bodily practices of digital material culture are a crucial component of the theorisation of digital media literacy. It is impossible to successfully participate in media arts contexts without operational

[2] In Australia Year Four is in the middle primary years and caters to children aged 8 and 9.

skills and embodied knowledge. In this sense, media arts literacy involves both material and conceptual practices.

For Luke the value or "cultural capital" of bodily remembrance for literacy is "in acquiring the bodily habitus for student reading thereby ensuring discipline and promotion within the institution [of schooling]" (Luke, 1992, p. 126). This chapter extends this idea by drawing on Katherine Hayles' work (1999) to argue that students use both bodily writing – inscription – with digital media technologies and their bodies' disciplined capacities – incorporated habits – to participate in digital culture. The chapter argues there are three locations of materiality through which students are involved in digital media production in classrooms: with digital materials, through operational skills and within the broader material context of school places and spaces.

After a brief introduction to the research project that is the basis of this discussion, we investigate materiality in three domains. Drawing on the building blocks model put forward by Dezuanni (2014) we discuss three elements of materiality that are components of media arts production and learning in the primary school curriculum. First, we consider digital materials and the importance of setting operational foundations. Next, drawing on notions of incorporation, we consider the bodily aspects of hardware use in digital media production. Finally, we consider the material spaces and places utilised in classroom media arts production and the constraints of the modern school on quality media production work.

The URLearning Project

The URLearning project is essentially a school reform project that has worked to investigate links between media arts and digital literacy learning and improved school outcomes for students in low-socioeconomic status (low-SES) and culturally diverse schools. The approach has involved researchers, teachers, the union, the students and their families, and communities working together to reform literacy pedagogy, and called on media arts and the introduction of digital literacies in pedagogy and assessment as catalysts for reform of teaching and learning. We have worked with the school leadership and staff to investigate what is required to turn around the performance of a school providing education in a low-SES and culturally diverse community. Our aim, broadly, has been to describe how enhanced teacher professionalism, realised through school-level curriculum planning for literacy, a focus on digital media arts, multiliteracies pedagogies, an after-school media club program, and helping to provide spaces for the rich Indigenous culture and knowledge evident in the area to be the focus of recognitive social justice moves, can generate improved outcomes for students in ways that more highly defined and scripted curriculum approaches may not (e.g., Luke, Woods, & Dooley, 2011).

The school in which we work is located in a satellite city, which forms part of the urban sprawl of the capital city of Queensland. It is in an area where poverty and disadvantage impact upon the lives of children. The lives of many families have

been further complicated by recent government 'reforms' in social welfare which have made school attendance a condition for receipt of family welfare payments. The majority of the 600 students enrolled at the school live nearby. The school has a significant population of Indigenous students, with somewhere between 11 and 15 % of the overall student body identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A further 14 % of the student cohort is from varied Pacific Island cultures. In all, children from 31 cultural backgrounds attend the school. Approximately 6 % of the school population are identified as requiring specific English as a Second or Additional Language support, however, as is the case in many schools in Australia the actual number of students who could benefit from such instruction is likely to be much higher than that.

Here we call on data collected as part of the year four component of the URLearning project. Over 3 years, the year four students and their teachers were involved in media arts lessons and instruction. Early in the project the focus of the year four work was often on developing skills capacity, and often the researchers, and in particular the media arts researcher, were involved in driving the media arts program within the classrooms. However, as the project developed, we took a much more participatory approach. We have called this approach elsewhere a *collegial relations model of reform*, where by teachers and researchers worked together to plan and implement the media arts curriculum across the classroom curriculum. The focus was always about using media arts as a means and an ends – a means to shift pedagogy and assessment in the classrooms as a way to improve literacy outcomes across a broad spectrum of modes including print, and an ends whereby students developed skills and produced knowledge in media arts as a way to communicate and articulate ideas using media. The data used in this chapter is drawn from the final year of this project.

Media Arts and the Production of Digital Materials

The great majority of media arts work undertaken in classrooms in the second decade of the twenty-first century is digital. That is, students produce media art works using digital communications technologies. Indeed, a distinctive feature of media arts curriculum is that even where non-digital materials are used in the initial production of media, for instance, where images are drawn using pens and paper, these materials are digitised before being worked on using a variety of software. The first location of materiality considered in this chapter, therefore, exists within 'digital materials', which include digital text, still images, moving images, recorded voice, music, sound effects and generated media. Students work with these materials through the operation of software interfaces such as operating systems and editing and mixing applications as materials are captured, stored, uploaded, accessed, dropped and dragged, manipulated, edited, mixed and shared. Digital materials are the tangible 'things' with which people work in media production contexts. Different types of digital materials are created using a range of operational skills

and according to specific codes and conventions of communication. These digital materials represent different modes of communication in the manner outlined by Burn and Parker in their discussion of social semiotics and multimodality theory as it applies to media education (2003).

In the various projects undertaken by the year four media arts classes during the URLearning project, we have seen this range of digital materials being used. The media arts program was organised around different units or modules each term, with each unit aiming to both mesh and support the classroom curriculum. The units were planned collaboratively between teachers and the researchers. At times these units also linked across individual units. Thus, skills learnt in one unit were used again in later units of work. At the beginning of each year of the project the media arts researcher spent a great deal of time helping students to become familiar with the process of creating digital text, still and moving images and recorded sound. This was completed in the context of a specific objective to communicate ideas associated with class work, but the aim was not to produce media products as such. For instance, students used the laptop computers and blogging software to organise learning across the curriculum, particularly for their English and geography work. In one instance, they created a profile of themselves for English and in another example they mapped a virtual journey around Australia, adding text, images and sound to record information about the types of attractions they would see in major towns and centres around the country.

For this work, completed early in the year, students used the software available on the laptops to choose particular template themes, which allowed them to manipulate digital text, making the text smaller and larger, choosing particular fonts, and changing the colour of the text. They then added images taken with the camera built into the laptop and they recorded their voices on the laptops and added these sound files to their blog entries. From a literacy perspective, the year four students were very much involved in communicating using multimodal texts in sophisticated ways (Jewitt, 2009). The point we want to emphasise here is that a fundamental aspect of the media arts work was also for students to become familiar with the production of digital materials for a range of purposes. The work the students were undertaking was not immediately obvious as media production work, in which many would expect to see specific genres of popular culture and media produced, and yet we believe it was fundamental to the students having the knowledge and skills to produce other forms of media later in the year. The students were allowed the time to achieve some level of incorporation on the computer keyboard and track pad; they spent time working out how to frame their images using the camera on the laptop; and they experimented with recording their sound, making first estimates and eventually judgements about elements such as how close to the laptop microphone they needed to be. The objective was for students to learn the process of working with digital materials – which is as much a material media arts-based practice as it is a literacy practice.

As the year progressed, the production of digital materials became more sophisticated and the students' activities began to resemble conventional media production more closely. They were increasingly required to produce still and moving

Fig. 9.2 Year four students shooting a 'piece to camera' using Flipcam cameras for their science procedural video (Courtesy of the participants)

images and soundtracks for moving image media productions. In term 3, the students produced a procedural video in which they captured video footage of a science experiment and then edited this to craft it into a segment inspired by after-school science education television shows. To produce the science procedural video, the students were required to capture video footage of the procedure being conducted – in this case a simple science experiment. This required each student to capture a range of different shot types, particularly medium shots, close ups and extreme close ups, and included a 'piece to camera' in which a host introduced the procedure (Fig. 9.2). Recording these images required a great deal of planning and choreography of the camera in relation to the host and science equipment as the procedure took place. Different students took on the role of directing these media processes. This process differed significantly to work conducted earlier in the year, as it required the students to manipulate a hand-held camera and to consider distance between the camera and the items being recorded. It also required more focus on the manipulation of space through framing and composition of the image. The students had to consider how each shot they recorded would work as part of a sequence of shots and in a production in which voiceovers and titles would also be used to communicate. In other words, they had to think about the overall effect of combining different types of digital materials into a moving image media production – and they had to be aware of this as they shot their footage. We believe this is a key aspect of educating students for digital media literacy in the sense that there is nothing natural or inherent about students knowing how to gather and combine digital materials. Furthermore, despite their familiarity with popular culture such as they gained, in this case, through the after-school science programs, they were not familiar with how these programs are actually produced. Producing digital materials requires the use of technology – a camera, computer and editing software – to effectively produce digital materials, and this requires capacity in specific material practices.

The production of the science procedural video, which is clearly focused on science curriculum content, and which was used with these students to develop new ways of being literate and communicating ideas, can be defined as a media arts activity

because it required students to produce digital materials using media production procedures for the creation of a moving image media text. The 'materiality' of digital materials is evident from the students' ability to weave them together to create a meaningful message about the science procedure. Once the students recorded their video footage, they were able to upload it to the laptop computers and then shape it according to convention. They dragged footage to the 'timeline', altered the length of shots, added these shots to a sequence of images and added text as titles and subtitles. Then they created digital audio and worked to weave that into the production using the editing software. The overall effect of this digital 'weaving' process is the creation of a new text that is as much 'art' as it is communication. It is art because its production involves a series of creative choices by the students about how to undertake each instance of the creation or weaving of digital material. The choices they made about text size, colour and shape, shot size and composition, duration, pitch and volume, while informed by available designs, also required personal and group decisions. The shape and sound of the final product is ultimately the result of a process of digital crafting that is similar to the artistic processes required to produce any media arts text.

The Body and Incorporation Practices

The second location of materiality considered in this chapter is the material relationship between students and hardware in which students use tactile and physical processes to handle media production tools. These practices include operational skills that students must acquire to successfully operate this equipment. Burn and Parker (2003, p. 7) argue that media production is always realised through modes that require choices about material tools that are "part of what makes the text mean what it does, and can affect the process of textual production significantly". In this sense, media production profoundly relies on the development of operational skills and practices within material relations.

A range of operational skills and bodily practices are required to undertake material practice to produce digital materials. Operational skills include the ability to use different technological tools, which are material objects that require physical interaction using motor and manual dexterity skills. There are also choices about which tools to use that ultimately affect the final product. They also require knowledge about how to incorporate the tool as an extension of the human body in a physical space. For instance, it requires knowledge of how to hold and place a camera in proximity to the self as operator; where to place the camera in proximity to the group of people or other object(s) being photographed or recorded; and how to place people and objects in proximity to each other.

Hayles (1999, pp. 199–200) argues that to understand how bodies interact with technology, it is important to distinguish between inscription and incorporation. She says: "I mean by an incorporating practice an action that is encoded into bodily

memory by repeated performances until it becomes habitual." She continues: "The body's competences and skills are distinct from discourse, although in some contexts they can produce discourse or can be read discursively". She contrasts incorporating practices to inscription practices; defining the latter as "systems of signs operating independently of any particular manifestation" (Hayles, p. 198). She argues that the significance of inscriptions "derives from the concepts they express rather than the medium in which they appear" (Hayles, p. 198). Hayles does not argue that incorporating practices are somehow natural or more universal than inscription. Rather, she suggests incorporation is a distinct aspect of how bodies become social and cultural through technology. From this perspective, when students undertake media production, the inscription practices that occur when they express ideas through producing culturally encoded images with a video camera are in constant interplay with the incorporated practices of holding and operating the camera.

In this section we discuss two examples of students' bodily incorporations of media technologies to undertake media production in the URLearning project: their use of different types of cameras, and their use of laptop computers. Our argument is that the physical use of these technologies is not natural or inherent but must be learnt and practiced over time for students to become successful media producers and therefore become more 'media literate'. Media technologies have their own affordances that invite human interactions in particular kinds of ways (Fuller, 2005/2007, p. 55). Furthermore, the context in which a media technology is used potentially changes the ways in which it might be used. There is a difference, for instance, between using a digital video camera to record a casual social event at home and using a camera to shoot footage for a documentary, with the latter demanding greater formality and control over the technology (Buckingham, Willett, & Pini, 2011, pp. 53–54).

Many of the media arts projects undertaken by students in the URLearning project involved students using cameras to create still and moving images, but this involved the use of different types of cameras for different projects and, therefore, different incorporation practices were required. Early in their media arts work the students used the cameras on the laptop computers, located at the top of the laptop screen, to take images and video of themselves to include in their English blogs (Fig. 9.3). These cameras are intended for video conferencing or recording images of a person's face as they sit in front of the computer, for such communication techniques as video blogging. The inbuilt camera is not intended to be mobile, or used for shooting images or video 'in the field' or on location even though this is what they are often used for. The only way to see what will be recorded with these cameras is by looking at the laptop screen – there is no viewfinder to enable the user to point the laptop away from themselves to take images on the other side of the laptop. This limits what can be achieved with the laptop cameras. The students used these cameras as they sat at their desks in a conventional classroom setup. The cameras were stable because the laptop computer acted as a 'tripod' and there was no unwanted camera movement as the students recorded their images. The students had little control, though, over the composition and lighting of these images because

Fig. 9.3 Students using cameras on laptop computers to take images of themselves (Courtesy of the participants)

they were unable to control the space behind themselves. In terms of bodily incorporation, the students were fixed into their standard classroom seats sitting at desks in an upright manner. They had little to no choice about the physical placement of the camera and, we would argue, little opportunity to develop skill and control over the camera. The primary incorporation practices at work here were the students' control over their bodies to sit up in their seats and use of the laptop track pad and space bar. In this instance, the creation of digital images required minimal specific incorporation practices related to the camera.

The science procedural video completed in term three of this final year of the year four component of the URLearning project provided students with an opportunity to use cameras in more creative ways as they choreographed the placement of Flipcam video cameras in relation to their desktop science procedures. This included the 'piece to camera' component of these science procedures (Fig. 9.2). In contrast to the laptop cameras, the Flipcams were totally mobile, lightweight and very easily manoeuvrable. These cameras became, in essence, an extension of the students' bodies as they held the cameras in position to record images. The challenge for the students was to hold the cameras still to ensure their images did not suffer from camera shake. The students were not able to use tripods, so had to rely on holding the camera in position as best they could. The teachers demonstrated some techniques for holding the cameras still, such as resting upper arms against upper bodies and holding the camera with two hands, to form a 'tripod'. Also suggested was the process of leaning on a still object such as the back of a chair. However, we saw

few students using these techniques. Rather, because of the small size of the cameras, the students seemed to feel most comfortable using the cameras by holding them with one hand – similar to how they might hold a mobile phone with a camera function.

Flipcam cameras were designed for the consumer video production market for home use for shooting family events and social activities rather than for shooting digital footage to be used in more formal productions. The students therefore had to work hard to use the cameras as an extension of their bodies to replicate more formal production processes to shoot steady and well-framed shots. This was particularly important for the science procedural videos that included close ups of the science procedure in process. Indeed, many of the students' productions included numerous unsteady shots and most of the students did not reach a stage where the use of the cameras became incorporated into bodily remembrance in a manner that would mobilise successful replication of the science infotainment genre. What is interesting about this is that even if the students understood the genre conventions and planned their shots appropriately, it was difficult for them to visually replicate the genre in a manner that would result in a 'successful' science infotainment text. The digital materials were not created in a way that would meet audience expectations. In this sense, bodily training to use technology in an appropriate way can be seen as essential to the development of digital media literacy, if we accept that digital media literacy includes the ability to communicate in effective ways across a variety of genres.

As the year progressed, many of the year four students did seem to gain greater control over the Flipcam cameras. To complete the year's media arts activities, in term four, the students created a digital time capsule in which they recorded video of themselves talking about their favourite pastimes, activities and people. The purpose of the task was to tell an audience, in 20 years' time, what it was like to be a child in the early 2010s (Dezuanni & Woods, 2013). The students used the Flipcam cameras to record video footage of items that represented their favourite pastimes and they also directed other students to record footage of themselves talking about these items and what they meant to them. Our observations of students shooting this footage, as well as the student productions, indicate that the students gained greater bodily control over the Flipcam cameras the more they used them.

Perhaps the most obvious example of successful bodily incorporation in the time capsule project was that the majority of students were proficient at using the laptop computers to edit their time capsule videos. Observations of the project in progress made it clear that most of the students had quite successfully incorporated the practices of using the laptop trackpad and keyboard (see Fig. 9.4). While the students were not able to 'touch type' the majority did not have difficulty locating the appropriate letters on the keyboard and producing text. Furthermore, most of the students successfully used the trackpad to 'drag and drop' images onto the editing timeline. This is notable because at the beginning of the school year, most of the students had not previously used a computer without a mouse. This level of proficiency and incorporation of laptop use is perhaps not surprising given that the students used the laptop computers on a regular basis. Indeed, the students used the 'media arts' laptops across the curriculum for a range of tasks on a regular basis.

Fig. 9.4 A student using the laptop trackpad to 'drag and drop' footage to edit her digital time capsule video (Courtesy of the participants)

Our argument is that for students to experience similar success with media technologies such as video cameras, students need also to use them on a regular basis, and for a variety of purposes.

The Material Nature of Classroom Spaces

The final location of materiality experienced by students involved in digital media production relates to their experiences when they work within institutionally and culturally constructed places and spaces, each invested with socio-material discourses. School classrooms include a range of expectations that may work to support, or work against, digital media technologies becoming an everyday part of students' learning experiences and vernacular communication. These classroom expectations exist within broader social, cultural and community expectations about schooling and education. Digital media production is always located in specific places and within interpersonal and cultural relations that rely on practices and processes that aim to moderate behaviour and invite compliance, or potentially allow for variation and resistance (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1984, 1991). In this sense, the material nature of students' work in digital media production is an ongoing process of negotiation between compliance and potentially playful experimentation within socio-material institutional constraints. These material factors are important to

the development of media literacy because they potentially limit the types of activities that can and do take place in classrooms and how learning occurs for particular students.

The first thing to note about the material space of the year four classrooms accessed for the URLearning project is that media technologies were not a constant presence in the classroom because they had to be shared with other classes and were rolled from class to class on laptop trolleys. Particularly at the beginning of the year, the use of these technologies was a special occasion within the classroom routine and a significant amount of time was spent establishing routines around the use of the laptops and cameras. For instance, the students learnt to follow procedures for leaving their desks to collect 'their' laptop from the trolley, to open it and turn it on and to log into their account. This could have been complicated by the fact that each student was assigned a specific laptop because the machines were not networked and the students could only access their projects on a specific computer. At the end of the session, they returned the laptop to the trolley and plugged in the correct power lead. The movement of bodies and technologies around the classroom space was a challenge for the teachers. All this took time and was, at least initially, a barrier to the laptops being used in the class-room on a more regular basis. By the middle of the year, though, this routine was very well established and the teachers allowed the students to use the laptops more regularly. The use of the cameras, particularly the Flipcam cameras, was less regular and routinised. The presence of the cameras on an irregular basis had implications for them becoming an everyday, incorporated aspect of classroom communication practices.

The materiality of classroom practises with the media technologies also had consequences in terms of the types of media production that could occur and the types of media products that could be produced, with direct implications for media literacy. For the first half of the year, the media arts work was mostly performed by students sitting behind their desks (see Fig. 9.3). There were immediate consequences for where students could shoot footage, how they could choreograph shots to change shot size and camera angles and how they could compose shots in terms of mise-en-scene (what's in the shot), lighting and sound. It wasn't until the second half of the year with the science and time capsule projects that students had more flexible opportunities to move around to undertake their media arts work (see Fig. 9.5). The teachers had by this time come to be more comfortable with students being in the classroom in ways other than the traditional rows of desk configurations. Even when this was possible, though, there were compromises that impacted on the types of digital materials the students could create. For instance, shooting video footage for the science procedural videos required the rearrangement of desks to create an open space in which about eight different groups of students shot their footage in different parts of the room – and this required the groups being careful not to get other groups of students in the background of their shots. There was no space for students to create an authentic looking 'science' set on which to shoot their video to make it look more believable. It was obvious that the science infotainment videos were shot in a school classroom, rather than in a science laboratory (or a makeshift science laboratory set).

Fig. 9.5 Undertaking media arts in different places and spaces around the school (Courtesy of the participants)

During the final production of the year in which students created the video time capsule, the students were able to shoot footage outside the classroom in the schoolyard (Fig. 9.5, top left). This was partly in response to the teachers being concerned about noise levels for the next-door class. Shooting the footage for this project outside was not ideal as the background locations available (trees, gardens and the sides of school buildings) were not always appropriate locations for the content of the students' videos. Furthermore, background wind noise often interfered with the sound quality on the videos. Unless the students projected their voices very well, it was often difficult to hear what they were saying in the recordings. Finally, it was more difficult to control lighting in these outdoor spaces as students could only rely on the sun as a natural light source and had to be mindful of shooting in shaded areas, to avoid creating silhouettes of their subjects.

Our point in drawing attention to these difficulties is not to be overly negative about the potential for media production in school spaces. Despite the difficulties outlined above, many of the students' videos were well produced and the projects provided a range of students with opportunities to learn and to develop digital media literacies (Dezuanni & Woods, 2013). In making these observations about the material hurdles evident in classroom media production, though, we want to show how media literacy is dependent on the materiality of space. When we ask students

to recreate particular genres such as the science procedural video or time capsule video, we should be aware of the material difficulties students and teachers will encounter because school classrooms have material limitations. We noted this during the URLearning project when students were trying to assemble their videos using the video editing and sound mixing software. For instance, the need for quiet was obvious when students were trying to record voice-overs for their productions. We often observed students leaning into the microphones on their laptop computers to try to record their voices with as little background noise as possible, but having difficulty with this because of the amount of general classroom noise in the background. There were few opportunities for students to get away from the classroom noise and still be under the care of their classroom teachers. We observed some students sitting just outside the classroom space to try to achieve this, literally sitting outside the classroom door (see Fig. 9.5, top right).

There were some other spaces and places in which media arts work took place in the school throughout the URLearning project. For instance, at times the media arts specialist teacher was able to take small groups of students to covered areas adjacent to classrooms to conduct editing workshops (Fig. 9.5, bottom left). This space provided the opportunity for less background noise than in the general environment, but its use was contingent on the availability of the media arts teacher and the ability to use laptop computers that could be easily moved into this space. In the final year of the URLearning project, iPads were trialled in year four classrooms for media arts work with some distinct advantages over the use of laptop and separate cameras. The iPads were highly mobile making it easy to undertake floor work (see Fig. 9.5, bottom right) and to use them to shoot footage, record sound and edit in a variety of outdoor and indoor spaces. However, despite their utility, the iPads did not solve the problems outlined above regarding the suitability of classroom spaces for recording, editing and mixing media productions. It is notable that a purpose-built media production space – a sound-proof room with an expensive blue screen and in the school's new library – was not available for media production because it was being used for storage. This final point is indicative of how school politics and decisions beyond teachers' control can effect opportunities for the development of media literacy.

Conclusion: Implications for Media Arts and Literacy

All of these constraints on creativity, including those related to digital materials, production tools and production spaces, limited what could be achieved for media literacy by these students. Consequently, because media arts was being used in this project as a tool for improving literacy and other disciplines, these same limits were placed on the students' development of literacy practices and new disciplinary knowledge. Despite this, we do not suggest that media arts is not a viable medium for learning to communicate ideas in the primary school years. Instead, our findings from this project and from working with the year four teachers and students over 3 years

suggest that media arts is an important component of the curriculum – a means to improved outcomes and an end product in itself.

The early focus on teaching the operational skills of digital materials enabled the students and their teachers to work in more complex ways as they developed projects throughout the school year. What seemed like simple tasks that might just be learnt along the way – using the trackpads, naming and saving files so that they can be found as examples – were novel to the students and had the potential to derail the students' engagement with digital production. Perhaps more importantly, they had the potential to derail the teachers' engagement with media arts as a medium to teach other content. Teachers told us that feeling inadequate in their own skills had previously meant that they had avoided the use of digital technologies in their classrooms. Ensuring that students could trouble shoot with each other if they had some difficulty was an important tool in helping to alleviate this concern for teachers. Understanding these operational basics of digital materials was important in enabling more complex learning and the articulation of ideas, and for the classroom activities to flow and have some routine.

Enabling the incorporation of an automatic and fluent use of digital hardware remained a difficulty in this project – even though the teachers and students did engage with media arts several times a week and had access to both simple hardware and a media arts researcher when issues arose. While by the latter parts of the year the teachers did begin to use the materials more regularly and without our support, the students might not have had the same access to the digital hardware as they did without the routine of media arts lessons timetabled with the media arts researcher. Again, however, the time invested in training students to use hardware in orderly ways – for example, removing the laptops from the trolleys and returning them to be charged – did pay dividends. By the end of the year the students used the laptops for a whole range of tasks across their curriculum. Those hardware items seen as less functional, however – such as the video cameras – were used only at scheduled media arts times. And the students' use of these items continued to require focused attention, never really becoming an automated process for them. Our claim is that if the hardware of digital production is to take on a utility beyond use of itself, regular use for a variety of purposes must necessarily be scaffolded, and ample opportunities to practice must be provided across the classroom activities.

The materiality of space and place matters to media literacy because space and place result in constraints on the types of media production work students can undertake, and the quality of those productions. Modern classrooms, while often set up with interesting desk configurations and a variety of work spaces, do not afford the space or privacy required for high-quality digital production. And while, as was the case at this school, teachers and students might have access to special recording rooms or laboratories, the constraints of 30 young bodies under the supervision of one or two adults usually results in these spaces being deemed inappropriate for 'normal' classroom use. In the case of the year four classes detailed here the classrooms were always in close proximity, with inadequate noise barriers between classrooms. The open spaces of the rooms provided limited opportunities for

quiet recording, and while outside spaces were often used as alternatives these were also less than ideal.

Our claim in this chapter is that there is a relationship between technical and operational skills, material relations and the development of conceptual knowledge and literacy in media arts learning. Through the examples we have provided, we have demonstrated that it is just as important to address the material as it is the discursive and conceptual when considering how students develop media literacy in classroom spaces. Students' ability to communicate stories, expressions and ideas using media technologies across the curriculum is, in part, reliant on their ability to use hardware to produce suitable digital materials, and this is impacted by the extent to which students incorporate the use of the technology into their everyday bodily practice and the control they have over spaces available for creating digital materials. This will remain an ongoing challenge in classrooms in which technology is infrequently accessed for multimodal communication and where media production space is rare. We believe the more that schools and teachers can do to overcome these challenges, the more successful media arts and media literacy projects will benefit students.

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Chapter 10
Music Literacies: Teaching Diversity

Robert Davidson

Abstract Music literacy continues to be widely equated with competency in decoding staff notation, despite longstanding expansion of the term's range outside of music. Additionally, aesthetic literacy has made some inroads into thinking about literacy in music education. However, the primacy of staff notation in conceptions of literacy can dull perception of the diversity of priorities in different genres, and overlook the complexity and pluralism of competencies in reading and writing representations of music in contemporary contexts. The chapter examines these issues in light of student experiences of a music theory course that attempts to reflect the multiplicity of contemporary literacies.

Keywords Composition • Music literacy • Digital literacy • Music theory pedagogy • Popular musicology • DAW • Composition pedagogy • Music improvisation

Introduction

I was fortunate in 2012 that a collaboration gave me the opportunity to return to Trivandrum, India, after a 20-year absence.[1] I had spent most of 1992 with the extraordinarily rich dance-drama forms of Kerala, including learning to sing five Malayalam songs in the Sopanam (temple singing) style from Kavalam Srikumar and his father, the illustrious poet/playwright Padmabhushan Sri Kavalam Narayana Panikkar. I didn't hesitate to contact Kavalam Srikumar in Trivandrum, and was eager to sing those songs for him to see how I'd gone in remembering them over the years.

[1] I was invited by Abhinaya Theatre Research to compose the score for their 2012 production Sagara Kanyaka.

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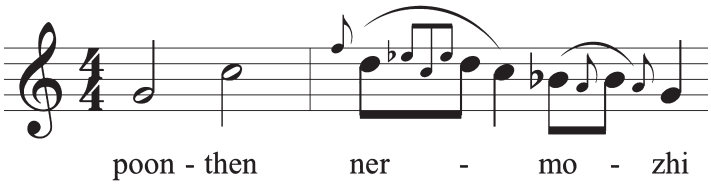
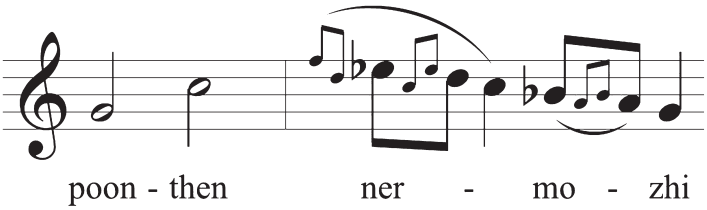
I was somewhat taken aback when he stopped me at the climax of the Swathi Thirunal song Poonthen Nermozhi to say I had made a fundamental error in the melody. I had sung the passage as follows:



Srikumar told me that my rendition betrayed the fact that I'd not been through the basic training for a South Indian singer. "We spend perhaps a year on just sa, and another to add pa.[2] You have not learnt the swara".[3] He slowly pointed out what I'd misheard, carefully singing the swara (the basic, skeletal melody notes) with South Indian solfege, since I had mistaken gamaka (ornaments) for swara. The passage should have been:



In learning the song, I had not had sufficient insider "emic" (Harris, 1976) understanding of the musical language to accurately reproduce the melody, or to discern the difference between my rendition and the original melody. That is, I lacked what could be called music literacy.

Conceptions of Music Literacy

To call this knowledge literacy may seem odd, as South Indian classical music is not based in written notation. Music literacy even in the twenty-first century (long after definitions of literacy have been widely expanded elsewhere (Hoggart, 1957)) is often assumed, particularly in music education discourse, to correspond directly

[2] Sa is the tonic note in any South Indian raga. Pa is the note a perfect fifth higher.

[3] The exact wording of this comment may have varied from what I've written – I write the sense of his statement as I remember it.

to the ability to read Western staff notation. An anxious editorial in the Journal of Music Teacher Education makes this equation, bemoaning that "the once supremely held content of music education, music reading" has lost its paramount position (Asmus, 2004).

The definition is sometimes extended beyond reading notation to also writing it. Waller (2010) notes an imbalance in the frequent comparisons between written language and music notation where writing is overlooked, leading to an unproductive deference to the fixed written text, and thereby encouraging standardisation and cultural obedience, and discouraging critical thinking. He maintains, though, the correlation of literacy to printed staff notation.

The highly influential Kodály method of music education, which gives a central focus to universal music literacy (Choksy, 1974; Goodkin, 2002), extends the definition into aesthetic literacy as well as into audiation,[4] while maintaining the earlier assumptions. The International Kodály Society's website states that "music literacy refers to the ability to read and write musical notation and to read notation at sight without the aid of an instrument. It also refers to a person's knowledge of and appreciation for a wide range of musical examples and styles" (International Kodály Society, 2013).

Aesthetic literacy gives some prominence to the role not only of performing and composing musicians, but also of listeners. For Charles Leonhard (Leonhard, 1991), who pioneered and championed aesthetic literacy in American music education, musically literate people "have a heightened responsiveness to the expressive import of music and are able to think critically and talk intelligently about the music they hear, perform and compose" (p. 29). He emphasises the ability to listen acutely to detailed and distinguishing features and elements of style, and to make informed and justified aesthetic choices. He advocates moving away from the dominant practice of music education he noticed in his lifetime of music teaching, that is a focus on a "nineteenth-century Western European conception of music" and towards a more inclusive, contemporary embracing of plural conceptions.

Carl Dahlaus evidently has aesthetic literacy (and its lack) in mind in his dismissal of the "group norm" that finds value in "a pop tune":

> A listener capable of doing justice to a Beethoven symphony is generally equipped to cope with the musical issues of a pop tune, but the reverse is not true. Arrogance of the initiated must not be defended, but that nobody has the right to blame musical illiterates for being illiterate does not change the fact that illiteracy provides a weak foundation for aesthetic judgements. (Dahlhaus, 1983, p. 6)

For Dahlhaus, literacy appears to consist of awareness of certain details, particularly of pitch and structure (judging from his approach to analysis in the book), which may be applied to either the symphony or the "pop tune" (with drastically different evaluation outcomes), notwithstanding his aim to consider "trivial music" on its own terms. However, his focus on print-based literacy notions could be seen to be

[4] Audiation typically refers to mental hearing, particularly of musical pitch and rhythm.

deafening him to the important content of the "pop tune" – rendering him illiterate in this area. A process like this was noticed by Brian Eno in one of his musician friends, moving him to generalise that:

> musicology doesn't have a place for rock music because it doesn't extend music in the way that musicologists understand. I have a friend who's…he hates rock music. He hates everything, really, except the classical pantheon…he says that everything that's happened in rock music had been done by 1820, or 1790 or whatever date he puts on it (1411 or 808!). And he can say that because all he's listening to is the chord sequence (of course it's totally traditional, it has been around for a long time), the rhythms (boringly ordinary). What he isn't listening to is all the innovations of popular electronic music, the extensions of sound and timbre that have never been possible before. (Eno, 1988)

Literacy's Influence on Perception

Staff notation can have the effect of focusing (and narrowing) perception towards abstract elements that it handles easily, particularly fixed pitch, metrical rhythm, and form. It also directs attention away from elements that resist representation in its staves, such as timbre, the micro-rhythmic variations of "groove", ornamentation and performance inflection, and performance space. Another anecdote illustrates the perception-altering properties of focusing on staff-notation literacy. It involves a music recognition game, where a friend and I each selected tracks for a group of people to identify competitively, the winner being the first to call out the accurate title. My friend had a long experience in studio-based music making, but very little traditional music literacy, while my own experience was (roughly) the other way around. It soon became obvious that I easily trumped my friend when the track was a cover version or arrangement – where a melody was recognisable, but not in its most familiar timbral incarnation. But he had an extraordinary ability to identify an original track within a second, through the sound of the recording. His ability to recognise timbre and space was far more developed than my own, while I had the superior ability to recognise abstract structures of pitch and rhythm.

Timbre, called "the most important and ecologically relevant feature of auditory events" by Levitin (2006, p. 43), is easily tuned out by staff notation's priorities. Rather like a human seeing a dull black colouration in a bird's plumage, blind to the rich ultraviolet hues clearly evident to the bird, a particular literacy can obscure what matters in an unfamiliar music. Eno uses the example of Jimi Hendrix, frequently overlooked in scholarly discussions of electronic music. To focus on the elements Dahlhaus (1983) prioritises is to miss the point, and see poverty where there are riches:

> It happens that the form he was working within, the structure he was working within, was a kind of archaic structure: the blues, if you like. But if someone's working within an archaic structure and doing something exciting, what that means is that the structure isn't the important thing. You should be looking somewhere else. The structure is a way of supporting what the guy is actually doing….he was a musician who understood the system he was dealing with. And the system was not just six strings – it was six strings, and some electronics, and an amplifier and some big speakers and an auditorium and a public and the accumulated resonance of pop music up until that time. (Eno, 1988)

These are old battles, and musicology has certainly moved on since 1988. But Eno's description of Hendrix's understanding, his multi-faceted and wide-ranging literacy, suggests rethinking what it means to have working knowledge of music. It has implications for how music educators think of literacy, affecting what is still a dominant conception in music education – the primacy of printed staff notation. The conception is increasingly strained in the contemporary musical environment, as Nicolas Collins observes:

> Most music today is produced, distributed and heard through digital technology—computers, iPods and cell phones. Notes can be picked out on a keyboard and samples grabbed from existing recordings, then corrected, sequenced, layered and orchestrated as easily as words can be processed. We're living in a Cmd-X/Cmd-V world; it's no longer essential to know how to read and write music notation in order to function within this new paradigm, unless you're a member of that ever-dwindling percentage of musicians who play scored compositions on acoustic instruments. (Collins, 2011)

Notations

One of the most immediate ways traditional conceptions of music literacy can be expanded is simply to include the multiplicity of visual representations of music. Even without leaving the West or the modern era, there are alternative print-based representations of pitch and rhythm, including solfege and letter notations, shape-note notation, pitch-class sets favoured by music analysts, microtonal and chromatically-balanced approaches (including one by Schoenberg (1925)) and the hundreds of idiosyncratic staff notation alternatives that have been proposed (Gaare, 1997). Second, there are printed tablature notations, giving detailed instructions of how to play compositions on specific instruments (most popularly guitar and bass guitar tablature, but also experimental approaches such as the relatively widespread Klavarskribo for keyboards (Pot, 1931). Third, there is the enormous field of private, invented and individualistic graphic notation, including composers' visually fascinating scores (such as those magnificently collected by John Cage (1969)) and children's invented notations (Barrett, 2002).

More salient for consideration in the current environment, in which the prominent ontology of a piece of music is not a score but a digital recording, is the proliferation of screen-based representations. I argue elsewhere (Davidson, 2012) that Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs)[5] fulfil, more effectively, certain functions that once were the burden of staff notation (particularly within the functions of conservation, communication and conception, as identified by Cook (1998). DAWs are storehouses of multiple literacies with their bundle of specialised visualisations of musical elements. Prominent interfaces in DAWs (built on standard interaction design within software) include waveform displays, multitrack displays with waveform

[5] Popular DAW software includes Avid *Pro Tools* (1991–2013), Apple *Logic* (2009–2013), Ableton *Live* (2001–2013) and Steinberg *Cubase* (1989–2013).

and MIDI data displays, "piano roll" displays of MIDI data, grid notation of drum beats, "automation" curves displaying the changing values of signal processing parameters within an audio track, VU amplitude meters, spectrum displays, and the plethora of visualisations of specific parameters within the many available signal processing and sound synthesising tools, including compression, reverberation, equalisation and sampling.

Literacy within a DAW is a formidable task, and experts can reach very impressive levels of virtuosity. Working with the producer Geoff McGahan in creating the album From small things grow (Clocked Out Duo, 2012) (and in many previous projects), I was often struck by how quickly he could identify the best-sounding recording without hearing it, but only from viewing the waveform. This visual literacy of waveforms, honed through spending hours each day editing in Pro Tools, was used in many other ways, including bringing onsets of notes into time with the metric grid and with other instrumental layers, judging the effectiveness of fades, estimating overall balances, and locating extraneous noises. Rapid, proficient skills in reading and manipulating the waveform view in Pro Tools is an essential ability for many producers, and is as fluid and immediate as sight reading staff notation is for an orchestral musician.

The piano-roll view of pitches starting and ending in a grid is a useful one for precise control of duration. A number of composers I have encountered have switched to primarily working in this visualisation, migrating from digital staff-notation software (such as Finale or Sibelius). Damian Barbeler composed his work Bright Birds (Barbeler, 2012a) entirely in piano-roll notation before converting it to staff notation so that the duo pianists could read it. He found the highlighting of note duration helpful in controlling articulation, assisted with the precise dynamic control (using velocity values for MIDI playback). More significantly, the absence of the norms of staff notation, such as key signatures, privileging of diatonic scales and metrical structure, and a rhythmic grid, helped him to create with alternative organising principles (Barbeler, 2012b).

Other than the enormous area of digital literacies, there are often overlooked areas of alternative visual literacy in music; a very prominent area is musical instruments themselves. The layout of the piano keyboard is a sophisticated visualisation of music, and more than one pianist has told me that they see shapes on a keyboard, more than notes on a staff, when memorising pieces. A conspicuous literacy for many performing musicians is that of the guitar fretboard, not only for guitarists but also their bandmates. As a "gigging" bass player, I have successfully negotiated the basslines of many unlearnt songs on the fly by watching the chord shapes of the guitarist or the left hand of the pianist in a manner that feels hardly different from reading a printed part in the orchestra. Orchestral musicians must be expert at reading the visual representation of music that is the conductor's movements, as well as the specific, honed details of the leader of their section. Related literacies include an audience reading the expression of a singer's movements, a choreographer translating musical gestures into physical movements, a moviegoer linking emotions in musical

and cinematic gestures, and a whole plethora of multi-modal literacies beyond the scope of this chapter, discussed at length by Albers and Sanders (2010).

Beyond visual representations of music are other areas that may be brought under the description of literacy, such as aurally distinguishing hierarchies of musical elements, as illustrated in my inability to do so with South Indian singing. Other literacy skills include understanding expressive implications; recognising markers of style and individuality; understanding what is a norm of a genre and what is departing from that norm, and how far; recognising allusions; linking ideas together from different areas of a piece of music; hearing underlying structural scaffolding (such as happens when audiences of Indian classical music clap tala cycles and thereby hear where the performer creates cross rhythms and resolutions) and recognising particular details of sonic texture.

Listening to Daft Punk's album Random Access Memories (Bangalter and de Homem-Christo 2013), for example, will be a very different experience for listeners of different literacies; a highly literate listener will be familiar not only with the abundance of allusions to older music (notably more through timbre and production aspects than through pitch and rhythm), but also with how far these allusions have been subtly modified to create a sophisticated contemporary twist to make the sound unmistakably Daft Punk. Or listening to Sufjan Steven's use of Antares Auto-tune to modify his voice at the climax of his twenty-five-minute song Impossible Soul on the album Age of Adz (Stevens, 2010) will be enhanced for a listener versed in the many meanings of the technology, from its ubiquity in top 40 pop, its ironic use by hip-hop artists such as Kanye West, the denouncing of its overuse by rapper Jay-Z, and the implicit ban of the technology amongst "hipster" indie songwriters such as Stevens himself, and Steven's view of it representing a grasp for perfection, which will make little sense without these complex literacies. As Stevens explains:

> Even though there's all this harmonic pop imposition on the record, it's still based on these rhythmic structures that are very noisy and aggressive; it has a real aggression to it, there's a real hostility to it. At a point in the record where I wanted to transcend all of that, using autotune to fix the pitch to harmonic perfection, it felt like I could arrive at this moment of pure peace and harmony. It just seemed, conceptually, like the only thing I could do. (Carew, 2010)

Pluralistic Music Theory

Music literacies combine and mix in ever-greater complexity with the digital explosion of access to music of all styles, and the increasing interest of musicians in collaborating across style boundaries; the unprecedented diversity of musical style that music students face in the twenty-first century has deep implications for teaching music theory. Writing at a time when this diversity, or "fragmentation", was at a far more nascent stage, Schachter identifies a resulting decline in music literacy, and considers that "one possible response to this trend is to try to minimize the

fragmentation by formulating music theory and its teaching in a way that emphasizes similarities rather than differences among music of different periods, cultures or systems of organization" (Schachter, 1977).[6]

Since 2009, I have designed and taught an annual music theory course at the University of Queensland, "Music Techniques 4" that puts Schachter's (1977) description into practice to some extent, with a cohort of students well-grounded in traditional music theory. The course is based in contemporary music, with an explicit focus on Western "contemporary art music" of the last 100 years, but with frequent extensions into diverse contemporary genres and into earlier periods. The fourth in a series of music theory courses, with the prior three dealing with traditional Western music theory, focused strongly on pitch organisation in "common practice" tonal music, this course continues the preoccupation with technical features of music, but moves outward from a starting point in tonal harmony towards melodic, rhythmic, metrical, textural, timbral, multimodal and experimental aspects of music.

The approach of broadening the technical focus beyond pitch organisation is based on the rationale of moving some way towards a closer alignment with practice in contemporary music life, but imposing limits to avoid overwhelming students with complexity. However, the range of technical features of music is formidable in the course, and too much for any one student to assimilate; instead, each student chooses an independent pathway. The long list of techniques, presented in lectures and readings, is something of a smorgasbord, from which each student chooses a small number for tasks of more detailed reading, discussion, analysis, performance of existing works, improvisation, composition and collaborative composition/performance.

Each student, over the semester, composes five one-minute compositions, each based on a single technique. The compositions themselves are not assessed – this is to encourage alternatives to seeking-a-"correct"-answer approach to creativity. Instead, participation in the activity is assessed. Students perform these etudes in class in small groups, then give and receive comments on the compositions in class and online in a discussion forum (using recordings of the classroom performances). The compositions follow analyses of the same technique in existing compositions. Students choose from a long list of works to analyse, drawn from contemporary classical works, film music, contemporary popular music, jazz and many other genres, represented in either score or recording.

The climax of the course is in the final week, when students perform a collaboratively created cover version of a popular song (themes have included Michael Jackson, Pixar, The Beatles and 1990s indie rock), making use of a collection of the techniques to transform the original into something new. Combining composition, improvisation, collaboration, analysis of scores and recordings, performance and

[6] While identifying this eclecticism as a positive means of addressing fragmentation, he also warns against the dangers of failing to recognise differences in styles.

other activities to experience and make music is an attempt to enhance skills within a broadened conception of music literacy.

At the conclusion of the course in 2010, 2011 and 2012, I collected written responses from a majority of enrolled students, asking "What have you learnt and what can you apply from this course in your ongoing music making?" I followed Norton (2009) in carrying out a thematic analysis, involving immersion, generating, deleting and merging categories, and checking and linking themes. The themes that emerged are discussed with illustrative quotes.

Performance

Students commented that the learning activities helped them in performing compositions through gaining an insider, composer's perspective on compositional structure and craft. This gave a stronger grasp of form, relationships of parts to other parts and to the whole, and a stronger personal connection to the music. Students found the course assisted by "allowing me to connect with the music much better", and that "by understanding, my performances are much more effective". Comments noted "more awareness of the composer's thoughts on the construction of the music itself" and "understanding how different parts come together". This understanding was broadened by making connections between different compositions that shared technical features. Students reported an increased awareness of links between music of diverse styles using similar techniques.

> I've learnt how to find linkages of works that share a common technique. This helps in a practical sense as when you're composing/playing a piece, if you are having trouble with how to do a certain technique it enables you to find other examples that will perhaps be clearer or demonstrate the technique in a different light.
>
> I have noticed I am a much more knowledgeable listener and notice what is going on more now when I listen to a piece.
>
> I want to explore analysing more music like we did because I want to hear more. I love the challenge of not knowing or hearing the obvious and got addicted to the challenge.

Timbral Control

A number of students singled out a raised awareness of timbre – that it was "particularly useful and interesting"; and of its expressive applications – to "make a drama/music effect", to make "quite exciting" sounds, as "a good way of expressing individual emotions", or to "change the dynamic of a piece". Focus on timbre "also opened a whole world of sound that I could apply in composition and understanding how composers achieve the sounds they do". Awareness of timbre and its prominent and varied manifestations in familiar music was an unexpected and surprising outcome for students who had been accustomed to a strong focus on pitch organisation.

Rhythmic Control

A particularly salient area of understanding and increased confidence in performance was in complex rhythm, another area that is de-emphasised in the prior music theory experience of most of the students. Students reported an increased sense of control, applying it from a range of contexts and styles. There is a strong note of enabling and energising practical music making from developing rhythmic control:

> As a drummer in a rock band, a better understanding of all rhythmic techniques helps to compose new songs. Using polyrhythms and knowing how to count them properly is an extremely useful tool.
>
> As an orchestral player: the complex rhythms we discussed, composed in and therefore rehearsed are something I agree I should work on more! The more complex rhythms we are exposed to and understand how to write with the easier it is to sight-read pieces (orchestrally) by composers like Walton.
>
> I have found the rhythm techniques we have learned in the lectures and tutorials has improved my ability to play tricky rhythms. Has been very useful in playing Copland Appalachian Spring.
>
> The understanding and compositional application of cross rhythms has definitely and will continue to help me understand how cross rhythms fit together, and given practical ways of rehearsing them both individually and within an ensemble. Looking at extended techniques was useful in my understanding of other instruments and the huge array of effects they can create.
>
> I found learning about polyrhythmic techniques very useful. I have a better understanding about how they work and know how to work them out by dividing the beat has made me more eager to learn more rhythmically complex pieces. It is also helpful when playing in an ensemble. I notice I play in sync with the other members and focus both on the feeling and the theoretical side of it when counting.

Open-Mindedness

A common experience reported from students was new freedom following their prior experience of more procedural approaches to music literacy. Several students took trouble to note that the grounding in traditional music theory was very important for their skills base, from which their understanding could expand. For one student, "the most significant thing is that it changed the way I think about music as a creative process. It made me feel less restricted, both in performance and composition". Another connected this openness with fun, saying that "to be more open minded towards modern music as it really is fun and inventive". Students were surprised to find that "there are no standard answers, whether your composition is a correct one or not", or commented that "I've also learnt there really isn't a right or wrong way to convey your ideas". This led, for many students, to a sense of empowerment, "to just be confident and happy to express what I want to express":

> Learning to push the boundaries and open your mind.
>
> I learnt that you can really explore and be creative in creating music (as well as re-creating).
>
> I have learnt not to be closed minded, to be open to new and different ideas.

I've learnt not to be restricted by conventional musical rules and sounds. I feel I can identify with more music and I have a stronger appreciation for newer methods…I also liked searching for newer techniques within pieces and people's opinions on topics instead of right and wrong.

I have also learned to be open-minded, experimental, test the limits, break the conventional rules, and think outside the box. It has taken me a while to achieve this, but now I am much more open to extended musical techniques and subsequently will drastically help my music making :)

I have learnt to think more for myself in terms of how I plan/create music. The freedom is refreshingly untraditional in what we get to do. I want to compose more! I liked how things were hands-on a lot, more playing, improv, experimentation of sound etc. I am not as nervous anymore in composing and playing in front of others as I was in the first two weeks. Yay!

To not restrict myself to what I'm used to hearing in ensembles. I don't have to stick to what is "safe".

This course brought my attention to a huge variety of music, styles and techniques. I think the biggest thing I have taken from this course is the ability to experiment with creative ideas and sounds. I have appreciated the opportunity this course has provided for me to experiment with my own compositions and to be able to hear them performed.

There are very few boundaries and this allows us to be creative and try new things in our compositions that we would've never considered before. In previous courses, we have always been spoon-fed and never written a composition from scratch, so this course has allowed us to do this. It was great being able to perform and finally hear what it sounds like.

I think the most important thing I've learned in this course is to not be inhibited by historical conventions of "right" or "wrong". If we did not come into contact with contemporary composition techniques and instead kept studying composers from the Baroque, Classical and early Romantic periods only, I think there is a danger that we as musicians would become afraid of taking risks and breaking rules. We can keep writing Baroque music, for example, for the rest of our lives but never really be as good as Bach. This course encouraged us to explore the future of music, rather than just appreciate the history.

I think it also made me realise that there is no "correct" way to compose, and that creativity does not have very specific boundaries unlike what a school music class believes is an A, B, etc. It has definitely inspired me to compose more.

Composition

Many students discovered an ability to compose, or were encouraged in creative confidence, through the practical, contained task of performing their brief compositions in class, with and for their peers. There are expressions of surprise at unrealised abilities, and enthusiasm to embrace possibilities.

Before this course my music was restricted to what I was familiar with and what I knew and understood. Thanks to the improvisation and composition skills being built I am no longer afraid but EXCITED to try new things and experiment.

Also, composition has been extremely beneficial - the process of making a piece of music.

This course has taught me to open my eyes on a new creative level. I was always scared to compose my own music because I had such little knowledge. There were so many rules with composition but this class has taken them away. It's also taught me to experiment with performance as well and to think outside of "norm" (whatever that is). I really enjoyed this

class and felt like I learnt so much because I was researching and composing my own stuff and I think when people have some sort of choice they are more receptive to learn. I wish there was another semester for this course - there is so much more to learn! Thank you for opening up new doors - I really enjoy writing my own music now.

I've learned to think of the process of music making from a "let's work out how to use this technique" point of view rather than linearly - melody, bassline, inner parts etc. I've been able to use this in my work because it's enabled me to see through composing as I saw it before to being able to compose to a concept, to portray an idea or emotion, rather than just a beautiful melody with a well-structured bottom.

I think learning and practising composing, and learning what works well to make a coherent composition. I think the performing and group work for the tutes has been really valuable in providing an opportunity for small group playing we don't get anywhere else - it has inspired me to make sure I keep playing in small groups.

Learning Practically

A recurring theme in the student comments is the benefits of learning in a practical approach, integrating composition, performance, listening, analysis and reading. This was seen as effective in learning rounded skills that would not be available by other means. There is an emphasis in comments on having opportunity to try things without knowing outcomes, without pre-judging, and by allowing capabilities to unfold in an undirected way. Students found the resulting adaptability very applicable to their creative practice.

I liked how things were hands-on a lot, more playing, improv, experimentation of sound.

This course has taught me to let go more and try a lot of things to see what works.

This course is definitely hands-on practical experience for students to demonstrate their ability to compose, express ideas and techniques.

These techniques will enable me to increase and extend my music making in both a practical and academic way.

Applies to music making as a practical way - we're able to adapt to any situation thrown at us.

The main thing was learning to think in a way where the theory or techniques don't necessarily need to happen, yet naturally happen.

Conclusion

Music literacy extends beyond reading (and sometimes writing) staff notation. Embracing diversity in literacies can benefit students learning music theory, and similar approaches applied more broadly in a curriculum hold promise in promoting creativity, open-mindedness, collaborative effectiveness, autonomy, and empowerment in realising musical goals. Such an approach to literacy appears to be not simply a pleasant alternative to more traditional approaches, but an alternative which more nearly approaches the current realities of musical life, which is most obviously characterised by unprecedented diversity.

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Chapter 11
Connect, Transform, Learn: Achieving Visual Literacy in the Art Classroom

Glenda Hobdell

Abstract The visual arts are dynamic, constantly undergoing change. As art educators continue to navigate the early twenty-first century, it is apparent that a revision of teaching practice to parallel rapid change is necessary if we are to successfully engage and empower students to communicate visually. The impact of rapidly advancing technology has necessitated a shift from more traditional teaching approaches based on theories of instructivism, cognitivism and behaviourism to a more learner-centred constructivist approach. Emergence of the contemporary knowledge economy has highlighted the strength of connectivism as an enabler between teachers, learners and beyond the classroom. Transformational learning can be realised when the art teacher uncovers a pedagogical paradigm that aligns learning experiences with the learner. Through a blend of traditional and technological practice, an authentic connection to students' own lives can be established. Highlighting outcomes of art students as evolving artists, this chapter investigates strategies that successfully develop visual literacies through authentic textual discourse and connected experience. Deep personal understanding is established, together with highly individual, yet rigorously informed, student perspectives.

Keywords Visual arts • Classroom practice • Transformation • Technology • Teaching and learning

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Introduction

Visual arts education has undergone continual historical revision, paralleling the world of art. A substantial shift occurred when early academic, mimetic and formalist deliveries gave way to periods of creative self-expression in the mid twentieth century. Postmodernist frameworks of the 1990s brought with them a move towards a conceptual focus to visual art program writing and classroom practice. Those who have been teaching for at least three decades will have been likely to witness art pedagogy aligning with each of the afore-mentioned historical models. Alongside diverse methods of curriculum delivery, as the world changes, students' engagement levels and ability to visually communicate also vary.

The dynamic nature of the visual arts signals a red flag to art educators. As technologies and artistic paradigms evolve, the need for an ongoing review of practice remains if our current art students' needs are to be met. Current debate positions many curriculum documents, including those from Australian and international education bodies, as having no set content, instead favouring professional freedom. Over time, a perceived shift in thinking to an alignment of curriculum experiences with creative practice is now clear. However, it seems that little has changed since 1964 when Joseph Burke divided art educators into two distinct groups – one focused on adult control, the other on individual freedom (p. 5).

The 2008 Australian national review of visual education (Davis, 2008), First we see, calls for 'visuacy' (visual language communication) to be a core skill central to problem solving, recommending a contrast to traditional teaching methods. In response, Alan Lee claims that art teachers "maintain (an) illusion" of a continuous and developmental curriculum and that "art class activities need to be fail-safe recipes that require little more than arbitrary or indifferent variations as the students' input" (2009, p. 224). Although a traditional, instructivist approach is undoubtedly still apparent in some visual art classrooms, Lee questions current educational authenticity, stating that the illusion is perpetuated by teachers treating students as "modern artists" (p. 227). Lee's comments and use of the outdated term 'modern' may be a direct consequence of the diverse pedagogical practices that still exist in our visual arts classrooms.

I argue that for the visual arts to be treated as academically rigorous, for it to effectively empower our art students, a timely revision of pedagogy is essential. Dichotomous relationships between theory and practice need to be dissolved. Assessment practices must value influence, critical engagement and creative process as well as product. Students need to be guided towards confidence in their abilities to position themselves in the world of contemporary art practice yet still remain cognizant of traditions of the past.

Findings of this narrative inquiry are drawn from an evaluation of current debate alongside a survey of student outcomes, informed by extensive classroom experience and personal artistic praxis. Examples of transformed learning through integral

use of technologies and global mindedness will be presented to provide pedagogical models and practical strategies that can be implemented in the visual arts classroom, regardless of degree of access to digital technology.

Transforming Teaching and Learning: A Disconnection

Current Context: The Secondary Visual Arts Classroom

An apparent disconnect exists between pedagogical practices found in many of today's visual arts classrooms and research that describes "requirements for promoting genuine student engagement (and) understanding" (McTighe & Brown, 2005, p. 235).

The disconnected art classroom employs a teacher-centred approach, is dependent on traditional, instructional teaching methods and adheres to a rigid program that allows little or no flexibility according to students' interests and situations. Characterised by self-proclaimed 'tried and true' teaching methods and 'time tested' curriculum documents, for the disconnected teacher, distinctions between art theory and practice remain evident and student learning can be classified as superficial. The unique learner, their individual learning style, and their reality as an individual embedded in social constructs, all characteristics now considered integral to the learning process, are not considered. When technology is employed in the disconnected classroom, it is as the focus of the lesson – the activity is about the technology rather than artistic process and potentialities. Technology is used as a substitute for more traditional media, limiting the scope of the task, rather than as an enabler for redefinition of the task and higher problem-based learning.

In contrast, a connected classroom prepares students for today's technologically focused, knowledge-based world where clear distinctions between the arts, industry and the everyday are no longer valid. A successful secondary art program is now one that encompasses a wide variety of art-making approaches, providing students with the opportunity to develop a critical and intensely personal view of self in relation to the world. Study of the visual arts allows for and encourages considerable crossing of traditional boundaries, both within the arts and other curriculum areas.

> … the Arts are organically connected, and not easily separable in some contexts, including much contemporary popular culture. (ACARA, 2010, p. 4)

Mirroring arts industry, visual arts programs can merge traditional art areas of drawing, painting, printmaking, design and sculpture with those of digital imaging, video and film, sound, light and installation, to encourage creative problem solving and individuality of approach to studio practice.

Experimentation and purposeful studio practice in a variety of expressive media, including digital, is integral to transformation in a twenty-first century classroom.

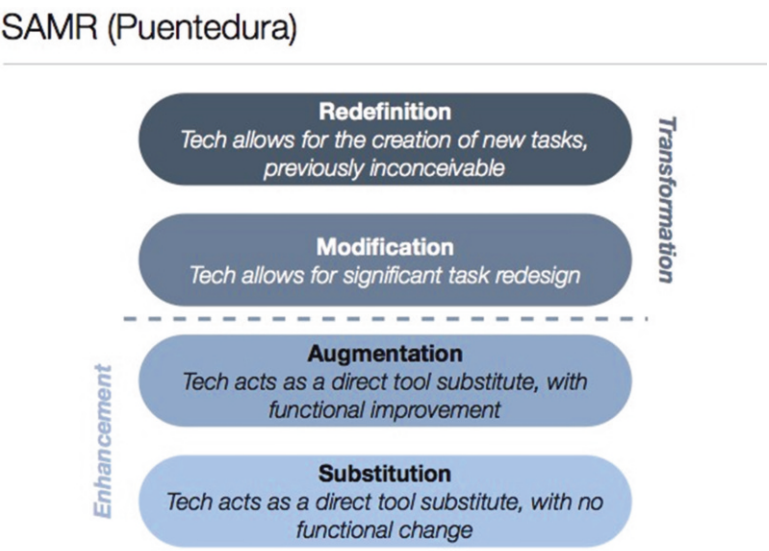

Fig. 11.1 Transformational teaching model – integrated technology (Puentedura, 2011)

Stimulating, challenging and relevant visual arts experiences allow students to develop to their fullest potential using an inquiring and integrative approach. Furthermore, information and communication technologies are essential tools for the research, development and resolution of visual artworks, connecting students with knowledge and skills necessary for success in a highly competitive and technologically rich future. Ruben Puentedura's acclaimed SAMR Model (Fig. 11.1) provides a useful scaffold for transformational learning through integration of technology (2011, p. 5).

Core elements of an effective art program encompass a range of modalities to support and enhance visual literacy acquisition. An introduction to and application of art and design concepts; integrated criticism and analysis; exposure to and practice with a diverse range of studio media and techniques to develop skills and working processes; and understanding of the relation of art to social, cultural and historical contexts are all essential. Studio work fosters practical exploration and artistic production while research journals or equivalent demonstrate independent critical research and analysis across cultures, reflecting global connectivity. A blend of all of these factors can provide the stage for complex investigations of meaningful concepts, engaging students in higher-order thinking processes and thereby preparing them for transition into university-level study and the creative industries. Significant partnerships with university and the broader creative community, such as gallery visits, artist talks, performances, demonstrations, workshops, residencies and curatorial collaborations, greatly enhance the evolution from a diversified to specialised approach to learning.

Transforming Teaching and Learning: A Connected Classroom Approach

What Is Transformational Teaching and Learning in the Visual Arts?

Transformational teaching repositions the teacher as connected, inviting a process of continuous review and reconstruction of curriculum and practice, to develop what art educators, Tourinho and Martins, refer to as a "nomadic consciousness" (2008, p. 66). As connected teachers, we need to model our practice through an embracing of uncertainty. Graeme Sullivan states:

> …'the uncertainty principle' which underlies curriculum research and development… reflects the reality of practice more adequately as it mirrors the contradictory nature of art, the pluralism of schools and society, and the capriciousness of learning. (1989, p. 225)

Aligning effective teaching to the role of a successful conductor, Donovan Walling refers to Zubin Mehta's ability to know "when not to conduct, when to get out of the musician's way" (2001, p. 4). Furthering this analogy, Erica McWilliam refers to the teacher taking on the role of "meddler in the middle" (2005, p. 11), a facilitative rather than directorial role. The art teacher who is prepared to be a risk taker, to embrace a lack of certainty, to abandon notions of a single truth, and to accept the role of learner in the classroom, as well as that of teacher, can enable effective learning for students, fostering critical awareness, collaboration, and complex problem solving.

Key literacies of reading, writing, listening and speaking through the decoding of and response to texts are explicitly valued and clearly addressed in a well-structured, learner-centred, connectivist curriculum design and delivery. Traditional literacy skills are extended in the transformational visual arts curriculum to include critical thinking, semiotic literacy and those described by noteworthy curriculum designer, Heidi Hayes Jacobs, as essential for the twenty-first century: digital literacy, media literacy and global literacy (Demski, 2012). Critical classroom dialogue sanctions students to articulate and address social, political and cultural issues that impact our everyday lives.

Therefore, a connected approach to teaching and learning would involve connecting: (a) student to life; (b) teacher to student; and (c) art to literate practice. A connected teacher creates and develops self-motivation, heightened self-esteem and healthy, productive relationships through a challenging, relevant, rigorous and digitally rich curriculum that values traditional knowledge, skills and processes. Every student can learn and has the potential to succeed, regardless of gender, recognised ability level, social barriers and preconceptions. To connect to and enrich students' experiences makes learning real and meaningful to every individual.

Placing emphasis back onto the learner as the dominant consideration in meaning construction opposes earlier interactive and transactive models of literacy education, where emphasis is placed on the text, suggesting that a shift in perspective is necessary

to place the 'self' at the centre of literate understanding (Moje, Dillon & O'Brien, 2000, p. 167). Furthermore, focusing learning onto the learner promotes creative potential and allows each individual to make unique decisions about the path to follow in the resolution of tasks. However, constructivist learning remains instrumental to effective and connected art pedagogy. Meaningful learning occurs when learners are engaged with activities that allow them to actively construct their own meaning, building on their own experiences and those of others. Moreover, transformational learning occurs in the visual arts when the learner develops a deep epistemic awareness of their own identity, and of the world around them, the meanings it carries and the part they play in it. An ability to actively make meaning through action and reaction is pivotal, pointing to a more interactive view of literacy.

A visual arts curriculum that transcends a traditional delivery of art skills and knowledge to focus on the individual learner strengthens the students' ability to solve complex real-life problems and builds confidence and life skills through deep connection with relevant, contemporary issues and experiences. Therefore, a model promoting a conceptual approach to learning blended with acquisition of traditional and new art skills allows knowledge and processes to be located through highly relevant concepts and themes. As every student brings a unique perspective to learning – distinctive experiences, abilities, interests and interactions – the collaborative sharing of these enriches learning. To connect the students' learning with not only a relevant and engaging curriculum, but also an integral use of technologies, fosters a strong sense of community and shared productivity.

Open-ended, inquiry-based learning experiences develop independent thinking, where the student becomes responsible for their own learning; the focus shifts from teacher to learner.

> An important goal for [art] teachers is to move their students towards independent learning through a gradual move from the teacher directing learning to a point at which the students take responsibility for their own learning process. (Education Queensland, 2010)

The connected teacher transforms the classroom as an environment that celebrates diverse thinking and meaningful textual discourse, as opposed to the production-line approach suggested by Lee that, regrettably, still remains in use in some art classrooms today (Lee, 2009, p. 224). In a connected art classroom, a supportive culture of gradually evolving independence is facilitated (Fig. 11.2).

Focusing learning on related issues provides genuine starting points that enable independent knowledge construction and authorship, offering potential solutions to current questions and concerns; individual opinions are highly valued when they are supported by informed research and articulated justification. Critical self-reflection is crucial to an understanding of knowledge process and an ability to apply discrimination in evaluation of self and others. Journal documentation allows students to record their approach to the development of ideas and solutions to complex problems, actively engaging in the learning process, recording their findings and making knowledgeable judgments informed by critical reference to established artists' work and ideas or events of local, national and global significance.

International art educator, Rachel Mason (2008), points out that recognition of and respect for multiple global identities is now as important as individual cultural

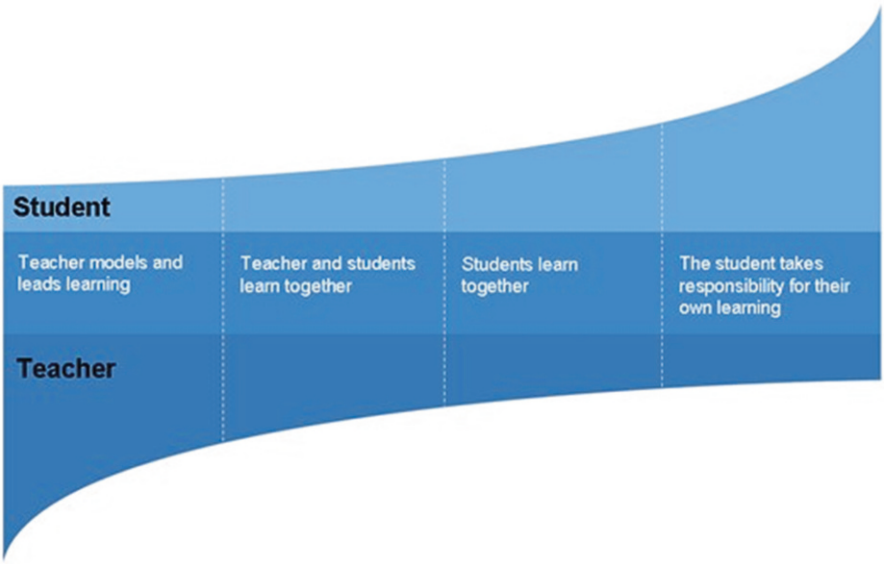

Fig. 11.2 © The State of Queensland 2013. Adapted from Figure 1.1 *A structure for successful instruction diagram from Better learning through structured teaching: a framework for the gradual release of responsibility* by Fisher, D and Frey, N (2006). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), p. 4. (Reproduced with permission from the Department of Education, Training and Employment, the State of Queensland 2013)

identity for the student of art. She also states, "personal, social and cultural identities are inextricably intertwined" (2008, p. 104). As teachers foster a respect for diversity and concern for social justice, made accessible by our broader global reach, students discover a personal identity enriched by interaction with and understanding of others. In keeping with Sullivan, a connected curriculum must embrace diversity of social and cultural context, "engender[ing] the critical skills necessary to enact change" (1989, p. 234).

With precise goals and clear purpose, but also with uncertain solutions and a willingness to accept the serendipitous and conjecture, art teachers can more convincingly position the visual arts student as an informed and imaginative producer and consumer of art – one who is expressively fluent in the creation, communication and articulated interpretation of complex visual information.

What About Technology?

Technology is increasingly assimilated into our everyday lives. The impact of interactive and social media brings with it new media and modes of communication applicable to our classrooms. Innovative integration of technology and tradition

places the teacher at the cutting edge of art teaching practice, becoming a conduit for students to realities of creative industry and visual art practice. Cary states:

> …to visualize and enact a critical arts pedagogy, we must recognize the value of relating art education as practiced in today's schools to the art world as it exists in today's postmodern culture. A critical arts pedagogy seeks engagement with both past and present art worlds. (1998, p.337)

In the Literate Futures Report for Queensland Schools (Luke & Freebody, 2000, p. 9), literacy is defined as "flexible and sustainable mastery of a repertoire of practices with… texts of traditional and new communication technologies via spoken, print, and multimedia". Assimilating new and existing technologies such as smart phones, GPS devices, digital drawing tools, tablets, video games and virtual worlds into the art classroom can bridge the gap between students' lives and the school. Online spaces provide individuals with structure and choice, progressing self-paced learning, meaningful discussion, shared reflection and the formulation of collective knowledge.

Reinforcing ideas of connection between learners and learning is the work by Stephen Billett on personal epistemologies. Billett (2009) proposes that the process of experience gives rise to conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge, stating that "all learning is experiential, [comprising] individual learning and remaking of cultural practices…essentially, the self emerges through social interactions and experiences" (2009, p. 2), together with the historical and cultural contributions they provide. According to Billett:

> experiencing is central to both individuals' learning and the remaking (and transformation) of culture. It comprises a process of personal negotiation of meaning and knowledge making as mediated by the contributions of the social and physical world. (2009, p. 30)

Therefore, a seamless assimilation of old and new allows students to effectively research, imaginatively develop and sophisticatedly resolve contemporary artworks that, importantly, retain connection to conventions of the past.

The Transformed Visual Arts Classroom: A Survey

Through alignment of learning experiences with the learner, an art classroom transforms into a dynamic learning community: one which facilitates participation, integration, investigation, experimentation, inquiry, questioning, exploration, ambiguity, challenge, acceptance, diversity, open-mindedness, risk taking, connectivity, collaboration, interaction, engagement and confidence.

Supporting ideas of dynamic learning environments and transformational learning practices, the Learning by design project actively engages learners as knowledge producers, and transforms the teachers' role as designers of hybrid learning environments. Through the project, education researchers Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis reportedly:

> build… into curriculum the idea that not every learner will bring the same lifeworld experiences and interests to learning, and creat(e) pedagogical scaffolds which do not

> assume that every learner has to be on the same page at the same time. [They] also introduce the idea of multimodality, in which learners move between written, oral, visual, audio, tactile, gestural and spatial modes of meaning-making. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012)

In keeping with constructivist learning theory, transformational learning places students at the centre, as "active agents…rather than as passive receptacles into which one plugs stimuli, digital or other-wise, to produce pre-specified outputs" (Moje et al., 2000, p. 167).

The Role of Technology in My Classroom

Technologies are a significant part of our students' everyday discourse – their social interaction, entertainment and communication. Many of today's students are 'switched off' by traditional teaching methods and application of learning theories that, although appropriate in the past, are no longer applicable.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Marc Prensky warned us, in his writings about change in the way students learn, that "we need to reconsider both our methodology and our content" if we are to engage the contemporary "digital native" students (Prensky, 2001, p. 3). As a topic for significant debate, Prensky's notion of the digital native had a profound impact on my teaching at the time, and the way that I related to the students in front of me. Rather than offering a rigid approach to follow, Prensky confirmed that the technologically rich, constructivist methodology which I had already begun to use with my students was indeed headed in the right direction (Fig. 11.3).

Bringing digital technology into my art classroom since 1995, ideas of a digital division between student and teacher clarified the reasons for some of the successes and connections occurring, when many teachers around me were sharing their frustration with today's youth and their lack of ability to focus on the tasks they offered. Prensky (2005) also states that "it's not relevance that's lacking for this generation, it's engagement" (p. 3). Despite ongoing debate around the language and connotations of the digital immigrant/digital native model, it remains clear that to effectively engage our students we need to embrace the technologies they use as part of daily life and present our curricula in ways that are familiar to them.

Integration of technology in arts education quickly developed into an ongoing personal passion, becoming a powerful catalyst for change, and leading directly, over time, to the shared vision of my colleagues to prioritise embedded use of technology into curriculum and pedagogy. Technologically deficient arts departments have consequently been transformed into powerful learning communities, featuring multimedia labs and connected learners who are routinely engaging in exciting and relevant technology-rich activities.

Endeavouring to keep up with technological trends, I have continued to revise my curriculum planning to parallel change and thereby effectively engage my students. Transformational tasks ask students to not consider the hardware/software as stand-alone art-making tools, but treat them as devices to be used as integral to the

Fig. 11.3 Slide extracted from ICT conference/workshop presentations – based on writings of Marc Prensky, Images used under licence from Hemera Photo Objects (Hobdell, 2007, p. 3)

whole art-making process. At any point in the research, development, production or presentation of artworks, technology will be available to be selected by the student, ranging in complexity from scanning of drawings and digital photographic image capture to digital manipulation, animation, video projection, game design, virtual worlds and game play as part of installed works, or creation of a soundscape as an adjunct to visual imagery.

Underlying the integral use of technology in my classroom is the belief that my students come to me with an innate understanding of digital media, presenting the potential to explore and use new media without the expectation for me to always be the 'expert'. This approach encourages the learner to take on the role of teacher/mentor, and acknowledges the knowledge and skills that they may bring to the classroom space. Solving of open-ended problems allows us to discover solutions together, with peer support – a valued and essential part of the classroom dynamics. Despite a high degree of experience with creative software, I discovered a long time ago that my ability to let the students know that I can learn from them and, more importantly, that I am excited to tap into their knowledge and invite them to share it, is a powerful and productive strategy. If a teacher attempts to control every step of student learning, the lesson will fail to engage learners. An ability to allow creative freedom, exploration and application of prior knowledge is crucial if the students' true potential is to be unleashed.

In setting the context for learning, I ensure that tasks not only involve the setting and solution of complex problems, but also allow student direction in the resolution of the task. In doing so, I allow them to select relevant technologies and combinations of traditional and new media and modes of communication to produce individual and creative outcomes. All students start with a common broad concept or problem to solve. They research the concept, critically appraise the work of other artists using available technologies and texts, independently decide on a focus for study, develop ideas and solutions to the problem through experimentation and in-depth investigation of the topic, explore media and technical application, and finally resolve and critically evaluate the work. The result is that no two students have ever produced similar outcomes and most have chosen to either use digital media as an integral element of the work or utilise technology in the development of it.

As a powerful engagement and motivational tool, computers become a significant link between teacher and learner: a vital element of all classrooms of today. The learner is involved in a saturated world of technological advancement beyond the classroom doors. Access to technology is no longer an issue if we accept the personal devices available to the students every day. Computers are their means of communication; therefore the integral use of technology within our everyday classroom makes learning engaging, real and connected.

The Transformational Visual Arts Task

According to Tourinho and Martins, "…(art) pedagogy is a cultural practice that can only be understood through questioning history, politics, power and culture" (Tourinho & Martins, 2008, p. 64). If the art teacher delivers a static curriculum that fails to consider time and place as integral elements of both art consumption and production, an ability to embed inherent cultural considerations is not realised. It is clear that the role of art education must be aligned to the functions of contemporary art, as well as art of the past, in order to generate critical discourse and multiple perspectives informed by interpretation and experience.

The critical visual arts task is one built on an understanding of visual arts literacy as a fluency acquired through visual expression and symbolic communication. Interpretation and application of semiotic language and visual metaphor through textual analysis are acute processes for meaningful creative expression. To avoid mass-produced outcomes, tasks must allow students to negotiate an individual focus for their own work. Artistic individuality is enacted where connections are made that allow students to apply art concepts and visual language, experienced in the work of others, to their own practice. Deep understanding empowers the student to respond critically – to develop an individual conceptual focus, to knowledgably select and apply media and techniques and to create unique, purposefully communicative artworks.

Individual outcomes of learning in response to open-ended tasks can be a challenging concept, requiring high levels of classroom management and monitoring

of progress to ensure program objectives are met. As individual student focuses are generated, the teacher must take on the role of facilitator of learning rather than as singular expert. The revised role positions the teacher as a guide to diverse, simultaneous learning, unique to each student. Spontaneous decision-making and research capabilities are necessary, as it is impossible to always be pre-prepared with media, equipment and appropriate reference materials. Once established, however, a well-structured and supportive, student-centred approach built on a foundation of individual monitoring, critical classroom dialogue, conceptual art knowledge and essential skill building elicits erudite student decision making and outcomes.

Transformed Outcomes

A Sample Collaborative Task: Justice

> …symbolic communication forms a connection between the artist's internal reality and the outside world that includes, significantly, the viewer's internal reality created by his or her experience of the artwork. (Tourinho & Martins, 2008, p. 64)

Central to my teaching practice is the immersion of my students in academically and culturally rich activities that promote higher-order thinking and the acquisition of deep knowledge. Justice was a challenging, collaborative activity completed in 2001 with a lower senior secondary visual art class. The group of 22 students was of mixed experience, some students having basic Photoshop or video editing skills, others completely new to the art classroom.

A theme of Justice was developed in response to the Australian Federal Court's Art of Delivering Justice Art Prize. Students were, over two school terms (half a year), engaged in a series of activities that generated individual outcomes using mixed media drawing, hand-rendered and digital logo design and animation. Local and national issues and iconic imagery were used as starting points. The Discovering Democracy series (Hirst, 1998), which was provided to all Australian public schools, was used as reference.

Stimuli for the artwork was provided by the Federal Court in the form of study guides and supporting video stories. Students researched Australia's history prior to and after colonisation, the role of the Federal Court and the justice system, and the meaning of native title, before being given documentation of an actual native title case. To enable a realistic knowledge, students affected chosen courtroom roles; they were required to prepare for and re-enact the case, without prior knowledge of the actual court's decision. As testimony to the powerful learning involved, the three student 'judges' delivered their verdict, a judgment equivalent to that of the real case.

With a deep understanding of the theme acquired throughout the year, in the third term, the class imagined ideas for a performance artwork based on the case. Elements of sound, lighting, projected video imagery and animation, body decoration and sets were to be used to create a performance that was to be videotaped and re-edited. As the project was to be presented to a number of public audiences,

students were placed in a curatorial position at all stages of the development and critique of the work; they were asked to consider the nature of their future audiences – real time, recordings and online – to ensure critical engagement and appropriateness of artistic content.

After a synopsis of the intended performance was agreed on, focusing on ideas of cultural collision and reconciliation, separate groups were established to design and produce the following:

- a 2D animation using stop-frame digital video techniques
- still image sequences using own digitally altered images for projection
- a soundtrack compiled from sub-licensed royalty-free music and sound
- a 'white' movement sequence
- a 'black' movement sequence
- sets/props
- costume, and
- lighting and sound.

Group members worked as individuals contributing to their own team, and were in constant liaison with the other teams to ensure a cohesive whole. The collaborative approach undertaken enables the students to acquire life skills that will ultimately be required outside the school context (Street, 1993), impacting on the literate development of each individual student. After the first filmed performance, a student-led critique session revealed some weaknesses, leading to a student decision to revisit these aspects and, effectively, do it all again. The outcome was an award-winning performance video supported by documentation of highly individual research, symbolic and conceptual development and individual decision making, demonstrating transformed learning through a fully collaborative task.

Justice was indeed a transformational learning experience for the group. Positioned as reflective practitioners, students learnt through immersive practice, informed by theory rather than led by it.

> The experience of the students in any reflective practicum is that they must plunge into the doing, and try to educate themselves before they know what it is they're trying to learn. The teachers cannot tell them. The teachers can say things to them but they cannot understand what's meant at that point. The way at which they come to be able to understand what's meant is by plunging into the doing – the designing, the teaching, the examination of their own learning – so as to have the kinds of experience from which they may then be able to make some sense of what it is that's being said. (Schön, 1987)

Early unknowns became surpassed by deep understanding of symbolic, narrative art form; research method; new media and performance context; and collaborative process in the development of a sophisticated understanding of a significant cultural and historical event, its outcomes and implications, and a heightened ability to communicate these. Students' confidence was greatly enhanced; their knowledge and understanding of the past, the justice system and current issues was widened. An ability to select and apply art media and techniques was effectively consolidated with creative decisions arrived at through rich discussion and problem solving. An ability to work with others and use technology was firmly established, and an

Fig. 11.4 Justice, Year 11 (2000) visual art collaboration, video performance – sound, light, performance, set construction (Image courtesy of artists)

understanding and tolerance of indigenous issues in many cases saw very positive change (Fig. 11.4).

As a real outcome, Justice was awarded the Best Queensland Entry and National Collaborative Winner of the Federal Court Art Prize in 2002, as well as a Highly Commended in the Queensland New Filmmakers Awards for a film with a reconciliation theme.

In completing the Justice task, students were able to make images and objects to interpret social and cultural issues, communicating a personal aesthetic by documenting sensory responses to developmental processes. By making and displaying the performance video, students were able to reflect a connected understanding of the functions and purposes of public and community art while justifying responses to synthesised research from a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Drawing on areas of history, citizenship and societies, the work also established a renewed appreciation of the role of art and its place in a contemporary world.

A notable outcome beyond the project was that students from the group handled their final year visual art studies with confidence and tenacity, generating diverse and sophisticated outcomes that built on their learning from Justice.

Individual Student Outcomes

Considering implications of symbolic communication, Richard Cary states that:

> …realisation that symbols can have different meanings in different contexts, that a symbol's meaning can change, and that meanings assigned to symbols may be less than absolute are crucial foundations for critical art pedagogy. (1998, p. 108)

The starting point for my final year secondary visual arts students introduces two concepts – The invisible made visible: semiotics and signs; and Visual storytelling: constructed realities. The concepts build on earlier learning of visual metaphor and meaning making, and through asking for a narrowed individual focus, position the student as constructor of knowledge and communicator of meaning.

Over the course of 7 years, the delivery of this task within the International Baccalaureate (IB) Visual Arts Diploma program has been continually adapted to align with current trends of artistic practice. Articulated through independent

Fig. 11.5 Jamin, Control, 2007, interactive game installation with acrylic painting (Image courtesy of artist)

student research, outcomes are informed by previously learnt skills and knowledge. The course culminates in a student-directed exhibition of each student's individual body of work presented. With approximately 200 students participating in the globally focused course to date, no replication of approaches or final works has been evident from year to year. Each student's collection of works has been unique. Most have undergone substantial change over time as higher degrees of visual literacy have been attained in each student's evolution of a personal aesthetic. A survey of student outcomes to demonstrate transformed learning and critical understanding follows.

Jamin

Jamin entered the secondary art classroom with limited visual art experience and very little confidence in his own artistic ability, but with a passion for video games. Early in the 2-year course, students were introduced to traditional and mixed-media drawing techniques, followed by rotoscoping, where digital drawings are taken from video stills and sequenced to produce fluid animated drawings. Techniques of machinima, in which games technologies are used to manipulate, direct and capture video footage that is later edited, were also investigated.

An increased confidence in his ability to combine traditional and digital techniques was evident. Using game-making technology, Jamin featured a digital image of himself as the avatar, or character, in the game-based installation, Control. The game he created was projected over a painted mountain surface with the viewer controlling the avatar's progress. Over the course of the game, as the viewer progresses through the levels, control is taken off them, a pertinent metaphor for Jamin's increased confidence with the IB program as a whole, and his increased control over his time (Fig. 11.5).

Control was selected by an international curator for exhibition in a professionally curated digital art exhibition showcasing innovative use of technology from around the world. On his arrival in the class, Jamin was very challenged by what he perceived as limited drawing ability and his confidence was minimal. Encouraged to integrate

his passions into his work, Jamin's final exhibition included drawing, conceptual digital imagery, games and animations, which were transformed outcomes made possible by application of his learning from an investigation of blending traditional and technological art forms.

Through exposure to diverse approaches, including unexpected art-making methods, Jamin found his 'fit' in the world of art. By bringing the literacies and skills he already had from his interest in gaming, integrating this with new knowledge and applying both to the concept of 'control' developed over the course of study, an increased 'literacy' in art production, expression and ideas was realised. Acquiring knowledge to take him beyond the classroom, Jamin has since entered an animation degree and regularly returns to the school to mentor current visual arts / film students.

Lorna

Lorna has an innate ability to draw and is comfortable with traditional materials such as watercolour. Over time she developed considerable skills in realist and expressive rendering, entering the senior art course with an excellent foundation in art making, but seeking something more. She was, however, unable to articulate what 'something more' actually was (Fig. 11.6).

Practical and theoretical investigation of symbolic codes of expression provided a turning point for Lorna. Extending her understanding of formal qualities of an artwork, research into abstraction, de-construction and abstract expression opened her eyes to the possibilities of moving beyond the literal into the conceptual and nonfigurative. Following personal exposure to spontaneous, collaborative sound production, Lorna completed an in-depth exploration of relational aesthetics and the conceptual performance works of John Cage. Investigating Cage's theories of indeterminacy, everydayness and role of the audience, Lorna analysed contemporary installation works by Rirkrit Tiravanija and Rafael Lozano, endeavouring to uncover the relevance of these theories to contemporary installation work.

Simultaneously and with increasing degrees of sophistication, she applied Cage's theories in her own work to "evoke a contemplation of spirituality in contemporary life" and "create a dialogue with the viewer". The following extract is taken directly from Lorna's final artist statement.

> My body of work seeks to evoke a contemplation of spirituality in contemporary life. It explores the dichotomy of spiritual collectiveness vs. individuality and the notion of form and colour as a manifestation of spirituality and energy. This is achieved through manipulation of the human body and the symbol of flesh as a vessel for spirituality. Metaphysical landscapes that evoke a contemplation of the non-physical are also created. My exploration into contemporary spirituality draws on the spiritual function of art across cultures and centuries, particularly indigenous Australian and African art and contemporary spiritual rituals.

The preceding extract is taken directly from Lorna's final artist statement (Fig. 11.7).

Fig. 11.6 Lorna, Portrait of a girl (detail) 2010, watercolour (Image courtesy of artist)

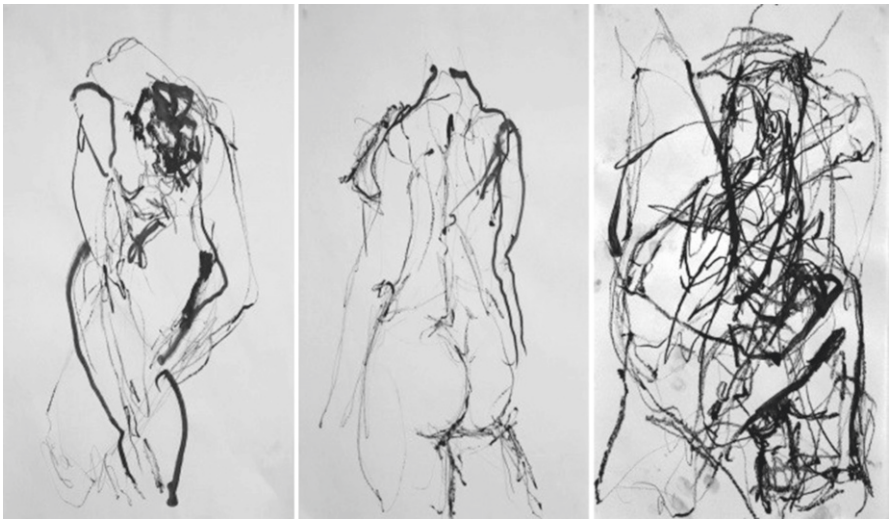

Fig. 11.7 Lorna, Variations, 2012, soluble graphite (Image courtesy of artist)

Fig. 11.8 Lorna, Primordial, 2012, mixed media on board in response to sound (Image courtesy of artist)

Lorna's research into spirituality and indigenous culture has been aesthetically supported by her study of a range of artists and art styles. She clearly demonstrates a synthesis of her findings when she continues with:

> As a painter, I strongly identify with the technical aesthetics and philosophies of Abstract Expressionism. This has evolved from earlier representational rendering of the human form. Artists informing my practice are Wassily Kandinsky who explored the idea that art could be a manifestation of spirituality or 'inner necessity'; Mark Rothko's approach to Reductionism and the power of materiality in evoking a spiritual sense; and the technical mastery of colour and space evident in Cy Twombly's paintings.

Lorna's study has generated a deep understanding of contemporary art practice, both her own and that of others. She has developed her technical knowledge and skills to transform her early work into a highly complex visual and auditory articulation of her chosen conceptual focus, never losing sight of her own identity as an evolving artist (Fig. 11.8).

> Portrait of Forty-Five and One is a culmination of the painting techniques I have learnt throughout the course and demonstrates the visceral qualities of paint. Corporeus merges painting techniques and digital video manipulation to create encompassing sensory experience. I am constantly challenged to adapt and explore the mediums I use to translate and explore my conceptual questions. Exploitation of the visceral qualities of oil painting combined with an investigation of media, including audio-visual and drawing, form a body of work that provides a multi-faceted exploration of the spiritual (Figs. 11.9 and 11.10).

Fig. 11.9 Lorna, Corporeus, video incorporating captured footage, oil paint animation, digital animation (Image courtesy of artist)

Fig. 11.10 Lorna, Portrait of forty-five and one, 2012, oil on canvas 150 × 150 cm (Image courtesy of artist)

Anna

Anna began the visual arts course with an impressive history, exhibiting paintings inspired by her family's indigenous heritage and her father's use of traditional iconography. She was a confident mark maker, already formulating her own stylistic approach to traditional aboriginal painting. Initially, Anna was unsure of accepting any influence from outside her chosen style, but remained open to investigation of other art-making techniques and styles.

Encouraged to keep sight of her roots, Anna progressed through the course, broadening her understanding of contemporary practice and developing her ability to marry the familiar with unfamiliar modes of expression. She explored contemporary indigenous art as well as a variety of artworks from other cultures,

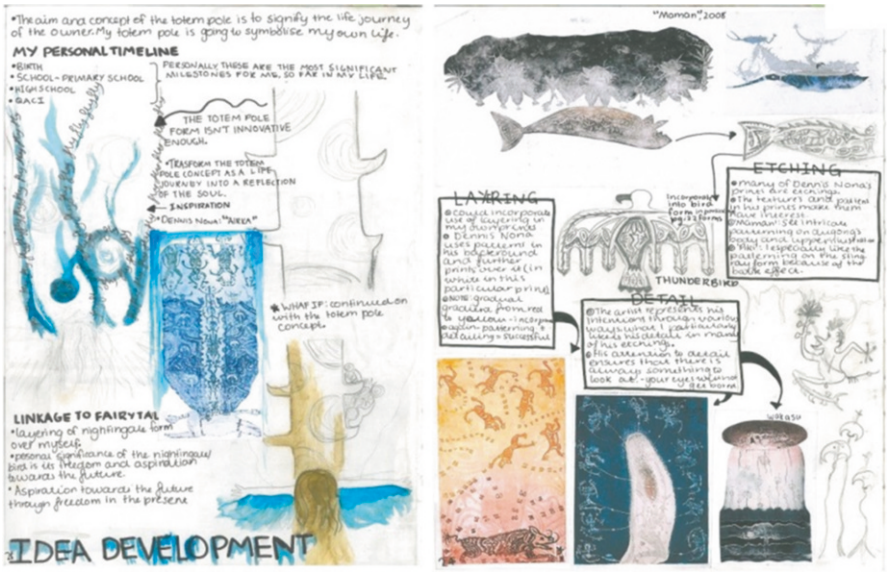

Fig. 11.11 Anna, research pages from the visual journal (Image courtesy of artist)

undergoing extensive research into the significance of ceremony, time and place in Australian aboriginal art.

Excerpts from Anna's visual journal demonstrate her connected learning, depicting the development of ideas for a totemic print work (Fig. 11.11).

Anna chooses to explore the work of contemporary indigenous artist Dennis Nona, who references symbolism and the rich patterned surfaces of traditional aboriginal painting in his print-based artworks. She applies her developing understanding of tradition and contemporary practice to advance her own ideas for a hybrid print work, in which she combines different printmaking techniques in a single cross-media graphic work to communicate her indigenous history and transition from tradition into a contemporary world (Fig. 11.12).

Anna's later resolution of a narrative, digital image series addresses consequences of global warming on indigenous island environments. The work demonstrates her engagement with significant global issues, communicating her thoughts from cultural and environmental perspectives. Her choice of new media positions the materiality of the work as a significant factor, indicative of the analytical nature of her decisions (Fig. 11.13).

Aaron

Aaron, like Jamin, was a fervent gamer before commencing the senior visual arts course. He had a history of drawing, but was excited to learn that use of video games could be a legitimate art-making process. His final folio incorporated a wide

Fig. 11.12 Anna, 2010, hybrid print artwork (Image courtesy of artist)

Fig. 11.13 Anna, Submergence, 2010, digitally manipulated image series (Image courtesy of artist)

range of works, taking inspiration from techniques of drawing, printmaking, painting, photography and new media.

Becoming an expert in techniques of machinima, Aaron shared his newly acquired skills and knowledge to mentor others. Classmates sought his guidance to push their own work to higher levels. Teachers of other subject areas, including science and business, requested that Aaron be able to share his expertise in their classrooms to better engage their students. He presented at a number of education

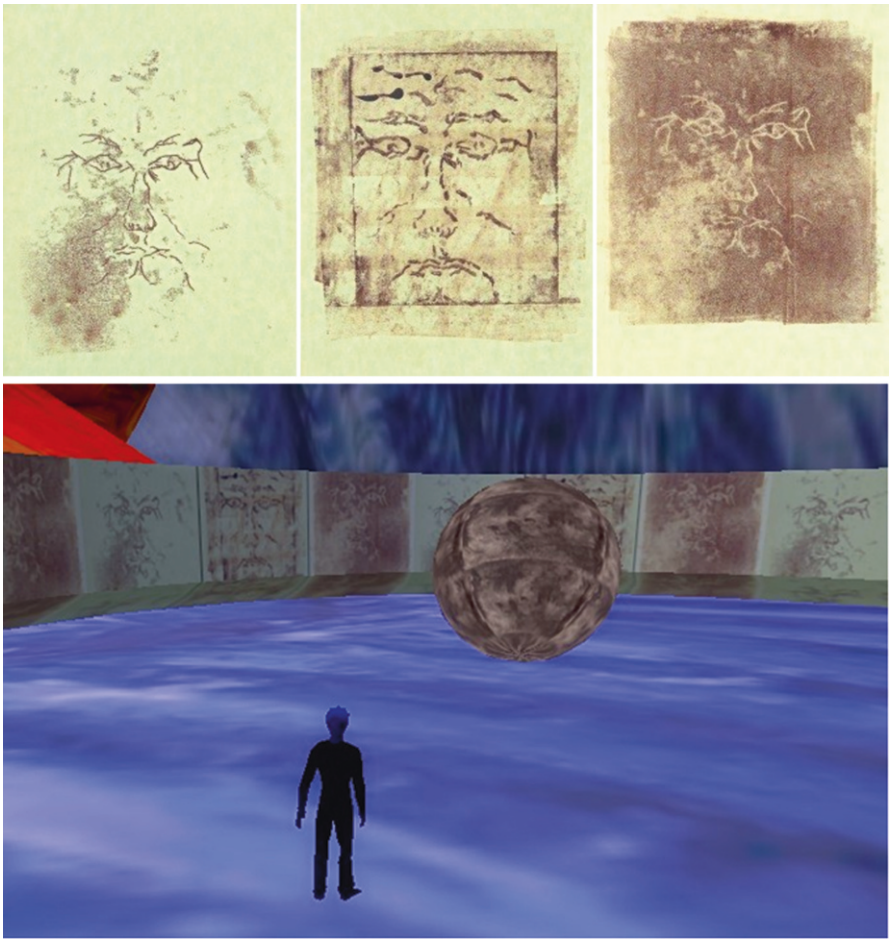

Fig. 11.14 Aaron, Splitting edge (*top*) recontextualised in interactive virtual world (*bottom*), 2011 (Image courtesy of artist)

conferences addressing primary, secondary and tertiary educators to give a student perspective on games in learning.

With an innate curiosity and inventiveness, over time, Aaron discovered through introduction to and exploration of virtual worlds that he could take his traditional works into virtual spaces, altering them to recontextualise the original works. In doing so, Aaron invited his audience to explore his world: drawings and prints had become virtual sculptural forms to be entered and explored by participants. Invited by a university to facilitate workshops for secondary students and primary/secondary teachers, Aaron successfully developed and delivered a well-received 2-week program in which participants made films using machinima techniques in Second Life (Figs. 11.14 and 11.15).

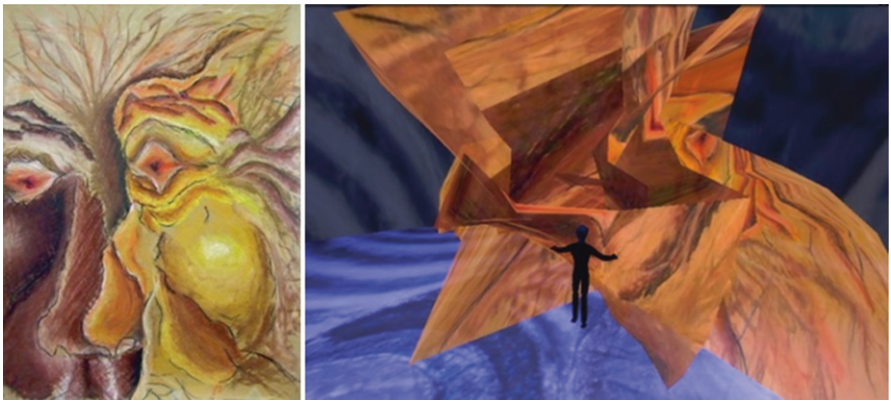

Fig. 11.15 Aaron, Vehemence (*left*) recontextualised in interactive virtual world (*right*), 2011 (Image courtesy of artist)

In a 2010 article on twenty-first century art education, Lilly Lu states, "the best way to learn about cutting edge technology is not to read and hear about it but actually to use and experience it". Lu encourages art teachers to become aware of the potential of using innovative technology to design successful learning experiences, to effectively "engage students in a meaningful way in a virtual age" (2010, p. 24).

Each student developed in different ways: Jamin realised that he had artistic skills despite coming into this practice with little confidence – by drawing on what he knew he achieved results; Lorna was aware of the need of 'finding something more'– her feeling on not being entirely challenged in her previous school led her to want to be challenged and confronted so that her literate skills in art expanded; Anna found a balance between traditional and contemporary approaches to art production by drawing on her own distinct cultural needs and was able to relate this to real-world issues; and Aaron was opened up to the opportunity of being a mentor to others by sharing his skills and ideas, which in turn impacted on his own practice – he was able to connect actual with virtual. For all of these students the 'connectivity' of their practice, albeit in varied ways, enabled transformative learning and empowered them through their own personal artistic journeys.

Conclusion

Each of the student outcomes featured in this chapter have been created by senior secondary visual arts students in response to complex problems based on communication of cultural and personal ideas. Through a developed understanding of symbolic expression and constructed meaning, each of the students has applied a highly personal lens to image making, yet articulated a connectedness to the world around them. In order to achieve differentiated learning and individualised results, transformational teaching and learning has occurred.

Teaching strategies that employ authentic combinations of traditional and new media can successfully develop visual literacies when combined with critical textual discourse and connected experience. To encourage and enable transformative practice for students, significant shifts in my own pedagogical practice have been undertaken over an extensive time period. In doing so, I have been prepared to:

- reflect on the curriculum I deliver to objectively evaluate and revise it;
- abandon the notion of a single truth to reveal potentialities of new art-making techniques and processes;
- seek inspiration from my own art practice and influence from the world of art, past and present, passionately sharing these with my students;
- model an approach that positions theory and practice as highly integrated elements of art praxis;
- combine the old with the new to ensure a contemporary, highly conceptual approach that is still in touch with traditions of the past;
- integrate innovative technological practices;
- value the place of culture, society and history in art, using the real issues that are generated from them as starting points to enable critical dialogue and deep learning to occur;
- engage my students through meaningful textual discourse and connection to their own lives;
- allow students to follow their own artistic directions, building on a foundation of acquired literacies to make critical decisions about their own work
- share my approaches to arts pedagogy and to learn from others, including the students around me.

An immediate shift in teaching practice is perhaps possible but unquestionably challenging. Instead, a gradual change in classroom practice is preferable as it will eventuate in authentic engagement and challenge for our contemporary youth – a transformed and connected learning. In doing so, deep personal understanding can be established, together with highly individual, yet rigorously informed, student perspectives.

Implications for the future of visual arts education are clear. In a complex era of continual change, we must remain open to revision of art pedagogy and acceptance of innovative technology if we are to ensure that learning moves beyond the superficial; that we embrace difference to meet the evolving, diverse literacy needs of the contemporary, visual arts student.

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Part III
Diverse Arts-Literacy Dialogues

Chapter 12
Improving Literacy Through the Arts

Tanya Vaughan and Brian Caldwell

Abstract There is persuasive evidence that participation in the arts can have a powerful impact on achievement in other areas of the curriculum and on student wellbeing. We gained a positive view of what is possible in research commissioned by The Song Room (TSR). TSR is a non-profit organisation that provides free music and arts-based programs for children in disadvantaged and other high-need settings. Researchers examined the performance of students in 10 schools in highly disadvantaged settings in Western Sydney, within a quasi-experimental model with three groups of schools (1) longer-term TSR – 12–18 months (2) initial TSR – 6 months and (3) non-participating – control. The schools were a matched set; they scored roughly the same on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). Students in eight schools completed the Social-Emotional Wellbeing (SEW) survey designed and validated at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Students in TSR programs outperformed students in non-TSR schools in school achievement tests and in NAPLAN tests (Caldwell, B., & Vaughan, T. (2012). *Transforming literacy through the Arts*. London: Routledge). The percentage of students absent on a day when TSR programs were offered was higher in non-TSR schools than in TSR schools. The gain in achievement in reading is approximately 1 year which is a larger effect than achieved in more sharply focused interventions. A higher proportion of students in TSR programs were at the highest levels of SEW and resilience than their counterparts in non-TSR schools. While caution must

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always be exercised in drawing cause-and-effect relationships, these differences in comparisons in matched sets of schools were statistically significant. Moreover, the longer the students were in TSR programs the greater the differences. The findings were to some extent unexpected because TSR programs ran for just one hour on one day in the week, but they are consistent with what has been found in other nations for students in similar settings.

Keywords Arts education • Literacy • Low SES • Neurobiology • The Song Room • Impact of arts

Introduction

There is persuasive evidence that participation in the arts can have a powerful impact on achievement in other areas of the curriculum and on student wellbeing. We gained a positive view of what is possible in research commissioned by The Song Room (TSR). TSR is a non-profit organisation that provides free music and arts-based programs for children in disadvantaged and other high-need settings.

Researchers examined the performance of students in 10 schools in highly disadvantaged settings in Western Sydney, within a quasi-experimental model with three groups of schools: (1) longer-term TSR – 12–18 months (2) initial TSR – 6 months and (3) non-participating – control. The schools were a matched set; they scored roughly the same on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Re-porting Authority (ACARA) Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).

Students in TSR programs outperformed students in non-TSR schools in school achievement tests and in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012). The percentage of students absent on a day when TSR programs were offered was higher in non-TSR schools than in TSR schools. The gain in achievement in reading is approximately 1 year, which is a larger effect than achieved in more sharply focused interventions.

While caution must always be exercised in drawing cause-and-effect relationships, these differences in comparisons in matched sets of schools were statistically significant. Moreover, the longer the students were in TSR programs the greater the differences. The findings were to some extent unexpected because TSR programs ran for just one hour on one day in the week, but they are consistent with what has been found in other nations for students in similar settings.

Impact of the Arts on Student Achievement

Music and arts initiatives have been shown to increase academic outcomes (Bamford, 2006; Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999), intelligence quotient (IQ) (Schellenberg, 2006), and improve literacy (Bamford, 2006; Hunter, 2005; Spillane,

2009) and numeracy (Catterall et al., 1999; Hunter, 2005; Spillane, 2009; Upitis & Smithrim, 2003). Participation in the arts has been shown to encourage changes within the cognitive functions of the brain (Koelsch, Fritz, Schulze, Alsop & Schlaug, 2005; Levitin & Triovolas, 2009; Parsons, 2001; Sacks, 2007; Schlaug, Jancke, Huang, & Steinmetzetz, 1995; Schlaug, Jancke, Huang, Staiger, & Steinmetz, 1995; Schlaug, Norton, Overy, & Winner, 2005; Sluming, Brooks, Howard, Downes, & Roberts, 2007; Wetter, Koerner, & Schwaninger, 2009). Catterall (2005) proposed a theory on the transfer of learning through the arts which can be considered as 'change in knowledge, skills, dispositions, and orientations stemming from neural processes stimulated by learning in or participation in the arts'. The theory encompassed two main points (Catterall, p. 7):

1. Arts learning and experiences, to varying degrees, re-organize neural pathways, or the way the brain functions. Extended and or deep learning in the arts reinforces these developments.
2. The development and re-organization of brain function due to learning in the arts may impact how and how well the brain processes other tasks. (Catterall, 2005, p. 7)

The above studies show how learning in the arts can affect students' academic outcomes. The impact of the arts on students was described by Catterall et al. (1999, p. 17) in these terms: 'The arts do matter – not only as worthwhile experiences in their own right … but also as instruments of cognitive growth and development and as agents of motivation for school success'. Furthermore:

> The arts not only build our brains, they insulate them from our stress-full urban environments. In short, all children, and especially urban children, need the arts if they are to thrive and blossom to their full potential. We should not wait until our children are emotionally disturbed or incarcerated before we offer them the positive cognitive, social, medical and emotional benefits of a well-rounded arts education. To deny urban children arts education is societal child abuse. For those who feel that we can't afford arts education, we must remind them about the cost of a child who drops out of school or becomes incarcerated. A full education that includes the arts is the insurance we pay for our nation's democracy. (Creedon, 2011, p. 36)

Catterall et al. (1999) used the National Educational Longitudinal Survey data, which included 25,000 students from the United States with 10 years of longitudinal data, to perform an elegant and extensive analysis of the impact of the arts. The studies identified three main sets of observations, set out below, that included a focus on students from low-socioeconomic (low-SES) backgrounds, which makes the findings of particular interest in the context of the Australian study reported in this chapter:

1. Involvement in the arts and academic success. Positive academic developments for children engaged in the arts are seen at each step in the research—between 8th and 10th grade as well as between 10th and 12th grade. The comparative gains for arts-involved youngsters generally become more pronounced over time. Moreover and more important, these patterns also hold for children from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds.
2. Music and mathematics achievement. Students who report consistent high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12. This observation holds both generally and for low SES students as a sub-group. In addition, absolute differences in

measured mathematics proficiency between students consistently involved versus not involved in instrumental music grow significantly over time.

3. Theatre arts and human development. Sustained student involvement in theatre arts (acting in plays and musicals, participating in drama clubs, and taking acting lessons) associates with a variety of developments for youth: gains in reading proficiency, gains in self-concept and motivation, and higher levels of empathy and tolerance for others. Our analyses of theatre arts were undertaken for low SES youth only. Our presumption was that more advantaged youngsters would be more likely to be involved in theatre and drama because of attendance at more affluent schools and because of parental ability to afford theatre opportunities in the community or private sectors. (Catterall et al., 1999, p. 2)

Wetter and colleagues investigated the influence of music instruction on academic outcome in a retrospective study of students from Bern, Switzerland (Wetter et al., 2009). The study involved 53 children who practised music and 67 who did not. Significantly higher academic grades were found in the students who practised music in Grades 4, 5 and 6 in comparison to those who did not practise music. No significant difference was identified in Grade 3. The effects were consistent across the academic subjects that included mathematics and languages (French and German), with no significant difference identified for sports. Although the apparent lack of effect in Grade 3 could have been due to several factors, Wetter et al. proposed that length of time in music instruction may have been a contributing factor.

Another study identified a link between length of music instruction and gains in IQ and academic achievement of 147 students aged six to 11 years old in Toronto, Canada (Schellenberg, 2006). The longer the duration of the music instruction the higher the gains in intellectual functioning (Schellenberg). Both studies retained their significant findings when they controlled for the economic situation of students (Schellenberg; Wetter et al., 2009). Schellenberg's study, like that conducted by Wetter et al., found significant gains in all academic subjects rather than specific associations with some subjects. Wetter et al. described the importance of music education:

> At present, funding for music education is often reduced in order to save money. Music and arts are sometimes regarded as a luxury and as being of lesser significance for a child's education than other subjects such as mathematics or languages. We believe that such thinking is not justified because music is an important part of our culture and its exertion both involves many different skills and activates several areas of the brain. We believe that there are strong reasons why music has been our true companion for thousands of years until now, only some of these reasons and their implications have been discovered. (Wetter et al., 2009, p. 372)

Wetter et al. described how music appeared 'to induce structural and functional variations of central regions of the brain resulting in manifold implications' (Wetter et al., 2009, p. 372). Advances in imaging technology for neurobiology have enabled studies that investigated what specific areas of the brain were activated during the analysis of music and music performance (Koelsch et al., 2005; Levitin and Triovolas, 2009; Parsons, 2001). The neural systems underlying music were found to be distributed throughout the left and right hemispheres of the brain (Levitin and Triovolas, 2009; Parsons, 2001). Compared to non-musicians, professional musicians have been found to have differences in brain symmetry, increased corpus callosum

(which connects the left and right hemispheres of the brain) and significantly increased grey matter in several regions of the brain (Schlaug, Jancke, Huang, & Steinmetz, 1995; Schlaug, Jancke, Huang, Staiger et al., 1995; Schlaug et al., 2005). Interestingly, although 'music processing shares some circuitry with spoken language processing', found within the left hemisphere, there is also the involvement of 'distinct neural circuits' (Levitin & Triovolas, 2009, p. 226). Professional orchestral musicians have shown enhanced performance in a non-musical visuo-spatial task (three-dimensional mental rotation), with increased use of a specific area of the brain (Broca's area) in comparison to well-matched controls (Sluming et al., 2007). This study provided 'additional objective evidence to support the suggestion that the development and maintenance of musical performance abilities confers benefit on non-musical cognitive domains' (Sluming et al., 2007, p. 3804). These findings suggest physical changes within the brain through interaction with music, some of which are localised to regions associated with language processing (although they also have distinct neural circuits), indicating a link between music and language.

These findings are of even greater importance considering the plasticity of the brain, as explored in The Brain that Changes Itself, which presented evidence that new neuronal pathways can be created throughout life (Doidge, 2010). A study at Harvard Medical School investigated what brain regions were activated that enabled the discernment between regular or irregular musical chord patterns in children (10-year-olds) and adults with and without musical training (Koelsch et al., 2005). No significant differences were found between the groups. The authors concluded that 'humans have a general ability to effortlessly acquire complex musical knowledge, and to process musical information fast and accurately according to this knowledge'; this 'underlines the inherent interest of the human brain in music and thus stresses the biological relevance of music' (Koelsch et al., p. 1074). This study provided insight into the biological basis of the unique appeal of the arts to children.

The Song Room (TSR)

The Song Room (TSR) is a not-for-profit organisation in receipt of grants from public and private sources that conducts free programs in the performing arts in schools where these are not currently offered. These programs are conducted by mutual agreement between TSR and participating schools. TSR delivers its programs to over 200 school communities each year for a minimum of 6 months each and works with over 20,000 children every week. Programs are targeted to schools in the most marginalised communities from every state and territory of Australia, to the 700,000 children in schools without specialist teachers in the arts (The Song Room, 2011a). Across Australia, approximately 200 schools and 45,000 students are engaged for a minimum of 6 months each year (The Song Room). Students typically participate for approximately one hour per week in each class. Instruction is provided by a teaching artist (TA), contracted to TSR and working in partnership with the classroom teacher at the school of placement.

TSR is a national program that encourages learning and development for underprivileged children through creative arts and music. TSR provides long-term, tailored workshop programs to various groups of disadvantaged children, including children at risk of juvenile crime involvement. TSR's additional emphasis on complementary performance programs, community holiday programs, capacity building and sustainability, and partnerships and collaboration (The Song Room, 2011b) can be interpreted as equivalent to an emphasis on performance, complementary program components, extended time in program and ties with other community organisations, respectively (Stone et al., 1998). Ties to the community through the building of 'local community capacity' were considered to be essential to 'make a real difference…in the lives of children' through TSR (Saubern, 2010, p. 12).

Research into the Impact of TSR Programs

Our research team examined the performance of students in 10 schools in highly disadvantaged settings in Western Sydney. Three schools offered a longer-term program over 12–18 months, and three schools offered an initial short-term program of 6 months. In each instance the program was conducted for Grade 5 and 6 students for one hour on a single day once per week. A control group of four schools did not offer The Song Room program. The three sets of schools were a matched set. At the time of the study they scored roughly the same on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), as calculated in 2009. An even closer match was evident when 2010 ICSEA scores were used. The study is a rare example of quasi-experimental design in educational research.

ICSEA is scaled to a mean of 1,000 with a standard deviation of 100 (ACARA, 2011). ICSEA 1 data collected from the My School website in 2010 enabled the choice of control schools, while ICSEA 2 data collected from My School 2 in 2011 provided a more accurate comparison of ICSEA between the experimental groups. The ICSEA 2 data collected from the My School 2 had improved accuracy to predict NAPLAN scores (ACARA) and was different from the ICSEA 1 as it contained data sourced directly from parents rather than the Australian Bureau of Statics census data, and included the proportion of students from Language Background other than English (LBOTE) families having a low school education levels (Barnes, 2010). The schools not participating in TSR programs were chosen by the research team from a list of schools provided by TSR to match schools offering TSR programs. Weighted mean enrolments of the three groups were 439 (longer term), 359 (initial) and 444 (non-participating). Weighted mean ICSEA 1 scores were 910 (longer term), 905 (initial) and 883 (non-participating) for ICSEA, as shown in Table 12.1. The ICSEA 2 scores provided an improved match between the cohorts, with those who had not participated in TSR having the highest ICSEA of 913, and the initial and longer-term cohorts having an ICSEA of 903. The slightly increased ICSEA for the non-participating group of schools would act as a slight bias towards the identification of higher outcomes in those who had not participated. The weighted

Table 12.1 Demographics of the three cohorts involved in the study (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012)

Category	School (nom de plume)	Date of TSR commencement	Enrolment	ICSEA 1	ICSEA 2
Longer term (n = 109)	Cooper Stone Public School	2009 Semester 1	296	918	937
	Willow Brook Public School	2009 Semester 1	493	907	886
	Margaret Park Public School	2009 Semester 2	289	929	973
		Weighted mean	439	910	903
Initial (n = 140)	Curraburra Public School	2010 Semester 1	340	819	827
	Alfield Public School	2010 Semester 1	204	1100	1058
	Bonvilla Public School	2010 Semester 1	330	992	990
		Weighted mean	359	905	903
Non-participating (n = 121)	Banksia Public School		479	955	959
	Docks Creek Public School		332	862	915
	Shornville Public School		477	813	867
	Pinlowe Public School		387	948	942
		Weighted mean	444	883	913

mean in each instance takes account of the relative numbers of students in each school that participated in the study.

Data on gender, grade level, attendance, grades and NAPLAN results were collected from 10 schools and categorised according to participation in TSR program.

The key findings of the study in student achievement and attendance are illustrated in Table 12.2. The calculation of an effect size provided a measurement of magnitude of the study outcomes, which was translated into gain in time. An effect size of d = 1.0 is equivalent to 'advancing children's achievement by two or three years' (Hattie, 2009, p. 9), so from extrapolation of this statement an effect size of d = 0.79 was equivalent to a gain of at least one year in reading and literacy. The difference in grades was seen as an impact of about half of one year in science and technology. The difference in absenteeism on a TSR day represents 65 percent less absenteeism among participants in longer-term TSR in comparison to those that had not participated.

Students that participated in TSR showed significantly higher grades in their academic subjects (English, mathematics, science and technology, and human society) in comparison to those who had not participated in TSR. Grades in science and technology and in human society were significantly higher for students who had participated in TSR in comparison to those who had not participated in TSR. The longer-term TSR students showed the highest percentage of A and B grades in English, with the initial TSR students showing an intermediate percentage, and

Table 12.2 Summary table of illustrative findings (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012)

Indicator of student performance	Longer-term TSR	Initial-TSR	Non-participating in TSR	Gain in time
NAPLAN 2009 Reading overall literacy	d = 0.79 (p = 0.0002) d = 0.77 (p = 0.0008)			At least one year in reading and literacy achievement
Academic grades Science and technology	d = 0.13 (p = 0.022) d = 0.46 (p = 0.0001)			Lift achievement by about ½ a year in science and technology
Attendance percent absent on TSR day	4.6	5.7	13.2	

students who had not participated in TSR showed the lowest percentage. A previous study identified similar results for students who had practised music with increased grades for academic subjects (Wetter et al., 2009). The sizes of the effects of TSR on the academic grades, science and technology grades and human society grades were 0.13, 0.35 and 0.23 respectively, which were similar to Winner and Cooper's (2000) findings of increased academic achievement (d = 0.10) for students who had studied the arts. The difference in the science and technology grades between students who had participated in TSR and those who had not was equivalent to a lift in achievement by half a year.

NAPLAN 2008 provided the baseline data for the longer-term group. There was no significant difference in scores for Grade 5 students between longer-term and non-participating schools. In fact, a higher percentage of students in the latter were above the national minimum than those in the former for four of the five domains. The analysis of the Year 5 NAPLAN 2009 data for longer-term TSR schools in comparison to non-participating schools shows higher results for writing and spelling in the TSR schools, and significantly higher results for reading, grammar and punctuation, and overall literacy in the TSR schools. The 2009 results were relevant to this study as they present the point at which the students from the longer-term cohort would have participated in the program for 5 months. The effect sizes for the increased band scores for the Year 5 NAPLAN 2009 were 0.79, 0.48, 0.33, 0.37 and 0.71 for reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and overall literacy, respectively. The effect sizes for reading and overall literacy achievement were equivalent to a gain of at least one year. The percentage of students who were above the national minimum for the Year 5 NAPLAN 2009 reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and overall literacy were higher for the longer-term cohort in comparison to students who had not participated in TSR. The percentages of students above the national minimum standard for writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation remained higher in the Year 5 2010 NAPLAN for the longer-term TSR students in comparison to students who had not participated in TSR.

The Year 5 NAPLAN 2009 baseline data showed a lower percentage of students above the national minimum standard in reading, writing, spelling,

grammar and punctuation, and overall literacy in initial TSR schools in comparison to non-participating schools. The results of the 2010 NAPLAN showed improvement for the initial TSR with a higher percentage of students above the national minimum level in spelling and writing in comparison to the students who had not participated in TSR. A similar pattern was observed in the initial TSR for the students below the national minimum standard, with the initial TSR showing the highest percentage of students below the national minimum standard for all literacy domains in the baseline 2009 data, while in 2010 the initial TSR cohort showed lower percentages of students below the national minimum standard in writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation in comparison to the non-TSR students. These data indicate gains in literacy for the initial TSR cohort.

Attendance was significantly higher for the longer-term TSR and initial TSR cohorts in comparison to the non-TSR cohort. The longer-term TSR cohort showed the highest attendance, with the initial TSR cohort at an intermediate level and the non-TSR cohort at the lowest level. The percentage of students who were absent on a TSR day was lower for the initial and longer-term TSR cohorts in comparison to the non-TSR cohort. In 2010, student absence was lowest in the longer-term TSR cohort, at in intermediate level for the initial TSR cohort and highest for those schools that had not participated in TSR. Previous studies have identified similar effects on attendance (Dreeszen et al., 1999) and attitude to attendance (Upitis & Smithrim, 2003). The higher attendance of the longer-term and initial TSR cohorts could have positively influenced the students' grades and NAPLAN results.

As the same effect sizes observed in literacy in the longer-term TSR cohort in the 2009 NAPLAN results were not observed in 2010 NAPLAN when an additional school was incorporated into the longer-term cohort, a multi-factorial model in which other dependent factors play a part should be considered rather than a causation model. Increased performance across multiple disciplines as observed in this study has been previously identified, indicating that engagement with music encourages "general cognitive or intellectual functions" (Wetter et al., 2009, p. 372). TSR can be thought of as working "alongside a range of other initiatives and relationships specific to local contexts" (Hughes, 2005, p. 19). Hughes described the influence of music programs on disengaged students:

> "Those with poor educational experiences need to be engaged in a range of ways, indeed sometimes creative activities can be the first step to addressing needs in a wider sense. They have proved to be effective in engaging disaffected learners and encouraging participation in other learning and skills activities". (Hughes, 2005, p. 20)

Summary

The findings have national and international significance. First, related research in other countries is confirmed (Baker, 2011; Bamford, 2006; Brice Heath & Roach, 1999; Catterall et al., 1999; Catterall & Peppler, 2007; Catterall et al., 2012; Hunter, 2005; Oreck et al., 1999; Schellenberg, 2006; Spillane, 2009; Upitis & Smithrim, 2003). Baseline NAPLAN results in 2008 showed no significant differences between the

longer-term cohort (prior to participation in TSR) and those who had not participated in TSR. In fact, a higher percentage of students in the comparison group than in the longer-term TSR group were above the national minimum standard for four of the five domains. NAPLAN 2009 provided the baseline data for the initial group for which we see the same pattern; in fact, the differences were evident in all five do-mains. Significantly higher Year 5 NAPLAN 2009 results for the longer-term TSR cohort were observed in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and overall literacy ($p<0.01$), with the largest effect size of $d=0.79$ for reading, which was within the 'zone of desired effects' for educational research and equivalent to a gain in achievement of at least a year. The comparison of the Year 5 NAPLAN 2010 results showed lower percentages of students below the minimum national level for the longer-term TSR and initial TSR cohorts in writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation in comparison to those students who had not participated in TSR.

Significantly higher academic grades were observed for students who had participated in TSR in comparison to those who had not participated in TSR. The largest effect size ($d=0.46$) was observed for science and technology grades, and was equivalent to a gain of half a year in achievement. The presence of higher English grades in students who participated in TSR triangulates with the NAPLAN literacy results. Attendance was significantly higher for the longer-term cohort on a TSR day than for the other groups; the initial cohort had an intermediate level of attendance, and the non-participating cohort had the lowest level of attendance on a normal day. The observed increased attendance may have contributed to the observed increased student achievement.

In summary, those students in the TSR achieved higher academic grades, literacy results and attendance than those students that did not participate in TSR. These findings were particularly apparent for the longer-term TSR cohort, who showed the highest levels of achievement in literacy and attendance in comparison to both the initial and non-participating cohorts.

Significance

The impact of participation in the arts reported above is astonishing given that students were engaged for no longer than one hour per week. Indeed, we did not expect to find differences on the scale that has been documented. We began (as we should) with the hypothesis that there would be no difference. Given that we were studying students in matched schools, the findings have important implications for policy and practice. For example, the evidence that gains in learning were as much as one year demands attention. For many, the obvious reason is that students tend to come to school in larger numbers on the days that The Song Room program is offered. Clearly, students are unlikely to learn in the areas that were tested if they are not at school. Findings in relation to attendance are especially noteworthy. We have applied the most stringent tests to form our conclusions, drawing, in particular, on the internationally recognised work of John Hattie, Professor and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne.

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Chapter 13
Using Visualisation and Imagery to Enhance Reading Comprehension

Gary Woolley

Abstract Reading comprehension is a dynamic process that requires readers to construct meaning while they are decoding text. During the reading process readers do not normally retain verbatim text information but develop other, more flexible knowledge structures. Skilled readers do this by constructing a mental model incorporating both visual and verbal information in the form of a cohesive representation of the meaning. The construction of a mental model is formed by the integration of the reader's prior knowledge with the text structure or story content. For example, good readers tend to make bridging inferences by incorporating their own relevant background knowledge to fill in the gaps when important information is not given in the text. When readers are taught to visualise story events they are able to make appropriate inferences because visualising enables them to draw on their own prior knowledge and life experiences. As readers visualise while reading they become more engaged with the text, enjoy what they are reading, and often imagine themselves in the story. Imagining story ideas during the reading process links information in working memory and makes the encoding and recall of information more efficient. This chapter discusses how visual imagery techniques such as drawing, manipulating objects, forming mental imagery, developing characterisations, and using story structure can improve reading comprehension performance.

Keywords Visualisation • Imagery • Cognition • Comprehension • Reading strategies • Memory • Literacy • Language

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Introduction

In recent times, the advent of information technologies and the Internet with its multimodal and non-linear structure has prompted many to question the nature of literacy in Western societies. Kress expresses this notion in the following quote:

> It is no longer possible to think about literacy in isolation from a vast array of social, technological and economic factors. Two distinct yet related factors deserve to be particularly highlighted. These are, on the one hand, the broad move from the now centuries-long dominance of writing to the new dominance of the image and, on the other hand, the move from the dominance of the medium of the book to the dominance of the medium of the screen. (Kress, 2003, p. 1)

Thus, the two modes of writing and the image are each governed by separate logics, and have distinctly different affordances. The organisation of writing, while still depending on the organisation of speech, is governed by the logic of time. In contrast, the organisation of the image is governed by the logic of space and places visual elements in a simultaneous arrangement (Kress, 2003). Consequently, many theories of reading reflect the old-world conceptualisation of print as a linear, sequential, and time-ordered logic. In contrast, learning theories that have focused on imagery have often been regarded as nonscientific and belonging to the world of fantasy or mysticism.

Graphic novels and comics have been popular since early last century, but it is only recently that they have been accepted in education circles as appropriate for children to read. In earlier times it was assumed that the graphic representation simplified the literacy elements and the quality was thought to have been inferior to that of the standard text-based novel. Rather than simplifying the literary elements of texts they are now considered to be somewhat more complex. For example, interpreting a character's facial expressions or nonverbal gestures from illustrations or making inferences from visual cues such as colour, perspective, line, etcetera can be quite complex (Thompson, 2008). When reading multi-modal texts the brain has to processes a multifaceted mix of verbal and nonverbal semiotic codes simultaneously to integrate them and comprehend a narrative.

It follows that traditional theoretical models of reading have been dominated by the logic of print, and this has led many to assume that the teaching of reading comprehension is as straightforward as merely teaching sound-based word recognition and word decoding. Thus, students have traditionally been taught to comprehend text by learning and practising a small set of discrete decoding strategies. These strategies have usually been taught in distinct and disconnected reading comprehension lessons that have no relation to the content of classroom themes or topics. However, comprehension is not a skill like decoding that can be mastered in a relatively short period of time, but is a process that often takes years to complete (Catts, 2009).

Reading and Learning Theory

There have been a number of theories of reading that have influenced how reading is perceived but have tended to narrow the focus to a bottom-up or top-down approach. For example, LaBerg and Samuel's (1974) theory of reading is a bottom-up approach that concentrated on print and word meanings. In contrast, schema theory (Bartlettt, 1932) was a top-down learning theory that placed more importance on the reader's prior knowledge to construct meaning. This theory assumed that existing knowledge representations are abstract and amodal, existing in a state that has no objective reality. Although not being directly associated with the sense modalities, this model laid a foundation for understanding how learners assimilate new information into their existing mental structures. The simple view of reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) is a theory of reading that attempts to conceptualise reading comprehension as the product of both bottom-up and top-down processes: word decoding and listening comprehension. However, these and other similar theories do not adequately explain how mental imagery contributes to the cognitive processing of text information. Thus, few reading theories mention non-verbal aspects of thought, such as mental imagery or affect (Krasney, Sadoski, & Paivio, 2007). It can be asserted that no matter whether they are top-down, bottom-up, or a combination of both they are dominated by a linear, sequential, and time-ordered logic.

At the heart of the reading comprehension process is the construction of a situation model or a cohesive mental representation of the complex meaning of the text content. Kintsch and van Dijk (1978) were influential in developing the notion of the mental modelling as a dynamic comprehension building process that is partly determined by the interaction of the reader's prior knowledge, the text structure, and the story content. Situation models generally do not retain the verbatim text-based information but support more flexible and abstract knowledge structures, such as propositions that link in to build local and global understandings of text. Kintsch (1998) extended this notion by developing the construction-integration model, which allowed for a more flexible integration of information during the thinking process. Once again this model was a verbal/time- and language-based theory that did not include the multimodal, verbal-non-verbal mental representations that have the potential to capture the richness of real-world or imaginative situations.

It is asserted that reading is a more complex and interactive process that includes not only the verbal/time aspects of comprehension but also the visual/spatial modality as well (Krasney et al., 2007; Woolley, 2006a, 2006b). It has been asserted that only theories that deal directly with both these distinctions will be sufficient to develop a meaningful understanding of the reading process (Paivio & Sadoski, 2010). The dual coding theory (Paivio, 1986), on the other hand, is a theory that assumes that all thinking is composed of the activity of two mental codes: a verbal code that

uses language and a non-verbal code that uses mental imagery (Sadoski, Goetz, & Rodriguez, 2000). This is an important notion because mental imagery can be used to depict visual representations of text, pictorial material, local and global events, representations that show part/whole relationships, topographical associations, classifications of objects, abstract representations, and symbols to portray relationships or interaction. This theory integrates the visual/spatial aspects of meaning, while subsuming the basic features of the earlier-mentioned knowledge-based top-down or print-based bottom-up models (Sadoski, McTigue, & Paivio, 2012). For example, imaginative representations will contribute strongly to, and reinforce, word meanings and language performance (Paivio & Sadoski, 2010).

This dual coding hypothesis is largely supported by another theoretical construct known as working memory that conceptualises how information is processed in the mind of the learner (Baddeley & Hitch, 1994). The theorists proposed that a central executive facility allocates attention and information for storage or processing and also temporarily activates information from long-term memory in order to link to the newer incoming information in memory (Alloway, Gathercole, Willis, & Adams, 2004; Gathercole, Alloway, Willis, & Adams, 2006; Swanson, Howard, & Saez, 2006). This theory proposed that visual and verbal information is stored in a separate verbal and visual subsystem referred to as the phonological loop and the visuo-spatial sketchpad. A later version by Baddeley (2000) included a third subsystem called the episodic buffer, possibly used to link the verbal and visual modes of thought. This addition may accommodate the notion of movement by combining the time and spatial aspects of the visual and verbal subsystems.

This notion is given impetus by other theorists, who recognise that learners have at least three modes of thinking. They generally propose that people attend selectively to elements in their learning environment that support their preferred learning style and will favour some learning activities and materials over others. A learning style preference refers to the oral, imagery, or kinesthetic dimension of cognition that influences the learning style of the individual (Kozhevnikov, Hegarty, & Mayer, 2002).

Thus, both the dual coding theory and the Baddeley working-memory model assume that reading and thinking activity incorporates a combination of more than one mode. When readers utilise the visual and verbal modes, working-memory efficiency will be improved by the reduction of the cognitive load associated with the mental modeling process (Joffe, Cain, & Maric, 2007; Sadoski & Willson, 2006; Woolley & Hay, 2004). Moreover, a number of researchers have also claimed that students have improved in reading comprehension when visual and verbal techniques have been applied during reading lessons (Gambrell, Kapinus, & Wilson, 1987; Pressley, 2002; Yuill & Oakhill, 1991).

Levels of Processing

Dinsmore and Alexander (2012) reviewed the research on how readers process text while reading. They found that most researchers generally agreed that reading is a thinking activity that takes place on at least two different levels simultaneously.

They proposed that when good readers read they engage with the text at a surface level and also at a deep level of processing simultaneously. These two processes are essential for effective reading comprehension to take place. However, reading involves more than decoding and interpreting a written message; it also involves an analysis of the reading process itself and how the message will impact the reader's view of the world. Both the dual coding theory (Paivio, 1986) and the construction-integration theory (Kintsch, 1998) support the notion of three interactive levels of cognitive processing (Sadoski et al., 2000). For example, correct phonological recoding is conducted at the text or surface level but is also dependent upon comprehension at a deeper level because of pronunciation. Comprehension is also dependent on context and background knowledge. Comprehension takes place at an even deeper level that involves one's beliefs, attitudes or feelings towards a particular activity or text, and may affect the way in which the reader decodes the surface features of the text and also the ability to combine knowledge structures below this surface level. Thus, reading is an interactive process and operates simultaneously at all three levels (Sadoski & Paivio, 2007). In the following section these levels have been conceptualised as stepping forward, stepping into, and stepping back.

Stepping forward: At the surface level readers decode the bottom-up or surface or physical features of the text itself. They generally do this by focusing on the written message by identifying letters, clusters of letters, words, and clusters of words in order to follow the text discourse. As they do this they often sub-vocalise or speak the written words in their heads. This process is referred to as a stepping forward. In stepping forward the reader must process larger amounts of text in order to decode the message more efficiently because working memory has a limited capacity (Daneman & Green, 1986; Just & Carpenter, 1992) and too many small bits of information can stifle this stepping forward process. Thus, for reading to progress well the reader must touch as few bases as possible by sampling some of the surface features of the text and filling in the missing details from their long-term memory. This recognition process eliminates redundancy and ignores the non-essential information that would clutter their working memory. The surface information is processed and retained in memory not as verbatim strings of symbols such as letters, words, or strings of words, but as small chunks of meaning called propositions. Many children step forward with their reading but many do not go any deeper than merely decoding the surface features of the text.

The stepping into of text processing operates when readers enter a deep level of or top-down processing. This is the mental space where information is transacted and transformed. For example, the propositions made during the stepping forward are transformed by the reader's ability to develop inferences while reading. Usually inferences are formed when readers link ideas from one part of the text to another or when bridging inferences are created by combining existing information from the reader's own background knowledge to fill in the gaps. This mental activity is often required because texts would be too long and copious if all the information were to be supplied. Therefore, authors naturally expect that readers will draw from their own world experience.

At this level the skilled reader is involved in coherence building in order to construct meaning. In doing so the reader enters into a delicate balancing act whereby

the attention resources are allocated and re-allocated in order to make meaning. This process it is characterised by the shifting of attention from a focus on the incoming information, sifting the information, holding onto some information, and letting go of other extraneous information. The reader uses this sifting process to make inferences by assimilating the new knowledge with their background knowledge. At times this will be under the conscious control of the reader and at other times it will take place unconsciously and automatically (Catts, 2009).

Skilled readers are more likely to be engaged readers who actively make inferences and form mental situation models of text passages by incorporating both imaginal and verbal background knowledge to make sense of the implicit information found within texts (Pearson & Johnson, 1978; Snow, 2002; Stull & Mayer, 2007). It can be asserted that, when visual and verbal mental processes are linked in this way children will be more engaged in comprehending texts because visual imagery enables them to store and use their prior knowledge more efficiently while processing new information in working memory. Thus, successful comprehenders tend to be imaginative readers who use non-verbal as well as verbal language.

Stepping back is a third level of processing but is not often included in discussions about levels of processing. However, this is possibly the most important component of information processing. The term stepping back implies that readers step back, or change their perspective from a focus on the surface features and on the perceived meaning of the text to one of examining the reader's own thinking process before, during, and after reading. In other words, it is like taking a bird's eye view of the reading process. Readers do this by (a) setting goals for the reading, (b) monitoring their reading, and (c) reflecting on their reading performance by comparing their performance with their reading goals. This stepping back process also affects the readers' ideas, opinions, and responses to their reading and thinking activity. It may also affect the readers' motivation, self-efficacy, and self-perceptions as a competent reader. Motivated students usually want to understand text content fully and, therefore, process information more deeply. The more they practice using this interactive processes the more gains they make in reading comprehension proficiency (Ehren, 2009; Guthrie et al., 2004).

Text Structure: Local and Global Coherence

In general, the ability to integrate contextual information into a situation model during reading enables readers to build a coherent representation of a text's theme and meanings (Kintsch, 1998; Van der Schoot, Vasbinder, Horsley, Reijntjes, & Van Lieshout, 2009). However, not all readers utilise the existing text structure, such as grammatical and contextual meaning cues, but need to be encouraged to actively use their inferential skills when reading (Bishop, 1997; Bowyer-Crane & Snowling, 2005; Catts, Hogan, & Fey, 2003). Poor readers, in particular, have difficulty visualising story content at the local level of understanding and also have difficulty

retelling the gist of stories at a more global level (Diehl, Bennetto, & Young, 2006; Pressley, 2002; Woolley & Hay, 2004).

The ability to integrate visual and verbal contextual information within a text (print or screen) is also important for comprehension because it helps the reader to build a coherent mental situation model of a text's meaning (Kintsch, 1998; Van der Schoot et al., 2009). Thus, to support the reader's construction of a situation model a text must have a logical structure and contain a number of cohesive devices at the local (sentence and paragraph) level and also at the global (theme or discourse) level. For example, at the local level, a preposition such as 'he' or 'she' will give coherence by linking ideas across sentences. At the global level a story must have a logical time-ordered sequence (Morrow, 1985; Trabasso & Sperry, 1985) and the sequencing of the events in a story should also have good causal connections (Renz et al., 2003). Understanding the causal connections, as they relate to an event, or sequence of events is important for the establishment of a coherent representation of a story's content (Renz et al.). Linguistic structures, such as these, are important cohesive devices that facilitate the global organisation and comprehension of text information because they will incorporate the overall story theme or ghist (Kintsch, 1982). The story theme also has a strategic role to play in building an appropriate situation modeling (Harris & Pressley, 1991; Zhang & Hoosain, 2001).

At the local level of understanding visual imagery can be used to facilitate the inferential linking of new information with existing prior knowledge (Woolley, 2006a, 2006b). However, many less skilled readers will have more difficulty utilising overall text structure, such as grammatical and contextual meaning cues, and need to be encouraged to use their inferential skills when reading (Bishop, 1997; Bowyer-Crane & Snowling, 2005; Catts et al., 2003). In particular, such readers appear to have difficulty visualising story content at the local level of understanding and also have difficulty re-telling the gist of stories at the more global level (Diehl et al., 2006; Pressley, 2002; Woolley & Hay, 2004).

In developing coherence at the global level in a narrative, for example, the reader needs to determine the relative importance of the narrated events. The relative importance will increase with the number of causal connections that link the events to the main ideas (Diehl et al., 2006). This linking process makes it easier for the reader to connect with existing ideas about the story and facilitates the incorporation of prior knowledge. In contrast, when elements within the text are not cohesive, it can make comprehension more difficult for the reader. For example, information that is situated further away from the main theme will be more likely to be forgotten than information with more direct connections to the overall content structure (Meyer, 1975). Coherence at the global level can be augmented when teachers explicitly draw the student's attention to the structural elements of the text. As a result, a number of researchers have found that graphic organisers can link global conceptualisations, particularly when this process is used as a cooperative group activity where discussion of related ideas can take place (Nesbit & Adesope, 2006; Van Boxtel, Van der Linden, Roelofs, & Erkens, 2002).

Knowledge of how texts are structured is one of the most important elements that will lead to efficient reading comprehension (Marr & Gormley, 1982; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, & Duffy, 1992; Whaley, 1981). Normally, skilled readers use some structure or schema to construct their mental models by organising their stories with settings, plots, and episodes (Diehl et al., 2006). A graphic pre-organiser can strategically be used before the reading of a text to support the reader by providing a suitable schema or framework for them to organise and link text ideas.

Instruction and Pedagogical Frameworks

Traditionally reading comprehension has been taught in discrete lessons that introduce individual strategies such as finding the main idea, summarising, and using higher-order questions one at a time. However, it has been suggested that many children are unsure of when, where, and how to apply these strategies to new reading tasks (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Pressley, 2002). Consequently, reading comprehension strategies should be developed routinely and practised over a long period of time on a variety of reading topics and genres (Block, Paris, Reed, Whiteley, & Cleveland, 2009). Several researchers have also posited that the simultaneous teaching of a combination of strategies will need to be routinely applied (National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000; Pressley, 2002). This is necessary because skilled readers seldom use only one strategy at a time. Reading comprehension is complex and operates on a number of levels concurrently, and students need to apply these strategies over a lengthy period of time to develop the right balance.

There have been a number of instructional approaches that have attempted to provide a framework in order to routinely practice comprehension skills using a limited number of comprehension enhancing strategies. For example, reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) is possibly one of the most well-known frameworks consisting of four strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarising. This framework was originally designed as a group intervention for students with reading comprehension difficulties but has been applied to reading groups in a variety of situations and age groups with consistently improved outcomes (Klinger & Vaughn, 1996; Le Fevre, Moore, & Wilkinson, 2003; Pilonieta & Medina, 2009). A central element of this framework is the requirement that students generate their own questions in order to become ‘the teacher’. This reversal of the questioning role enables the empowering of students by forcing them to take responsibility for their own learning.

It has be observed that students who have been taught to compose their own questions were perceived as taking a strategic and self-regulatory role in the learning process (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). This activity enables them to step into a deeper thinking process as they ponder relationships among the various aspects of the text. However, students who tend to ask lower-order questions are more likely to focus more on the local level information and may have difficulty identifying the overall global text structure (Taboada & Guthrie, 2006). In contrast, students who

are encouraged to formulate higher-order or open-ended questions are able to connect with their prior knowledge more easily. Higher-order questions are most useful because they tend to anticipate the macrostructure of the text and main interrelationships among the ideas within the story. Moreover, readers who ask high-order questions are more likely to construct mental situation models into which the text details will more easily be assimilated. Such readers anticipate and apply a more global structure. Thus, higher-order questions tend to enable hierarchical cognitive structures that are characterised by a larger number of connections and relationships among the major concepts in the text (Kintsch, 1998).

KWL (Ogle, 1986) is another example of a reading comprehension framework that orchestrates the three components of: 'What do I know?' 'What do I want to Know?' And 'What have I learned?' Once again this framework has been used in classrooms extensively since it was first designed. Like the reciprocal teaching framework, it has self-regulation processes embedded in the structure with self-questioning as a central element.

The NRP (2000) identified, from the available body of reading research, a number of strategies that were found to be most effective for developing reading comprehension. Pressley (2002) also indicated that there was a great deal that we already know about reading comprehension and what strategies work. He also suggested that there was a pressing need to know what strategies work together more efficiently. When considering what comprehension strategies should be included, the NRP, and a number of other researchers, suggested that both visual mental imagery techniques should also be incorporated in the mix because they foster inferential linking, deeper engagement, and interest while reading (Long, Winograd, & Bridge, 1989; Romeo, 2002; Sadoski & Quast, 1990; Tobias, 1994). However, despite the evidence, visualisation strategies have yet to be fully utilized and included in class-room reading comprehension practice (Pressley, 2002).

COR Framework

The 'Comprehension of the Narrative' (Woolley, 2006a, 2006b) intervention is a reading comprehension framework that used a nine-step process that routinely introduced individual students with reading difficulties to imaginative strategies to develop reading comprehension that focused on the narrative genre. The COR literacy framework (Woolley, 2006b: also see Troegger, 2011) was an extension of the nine-step procedure to be applied to information texts with small groups of students. It draws its name from the three phases of reading: before (Conceptualise), during (Organise), and after (Reflect) reading. It was intended as a flexible framework to incorporate the three levels of text processing (stepping forward, stepping into, and stepping back). It should accommodate a range of visual and verbal strategies in the regular classroom to investigate thematic content (see Table 13.1 for an adaptation of the framework). The framework described in Table 13.1 has been included to

Table 13.1 COR literacy framework (incorporating some visualisation strategies)

	Phases		
Levels of processing	Before reading (conceptualise)	During reading (organise)	After reading (reflect)
Stepping forward	Scanning the text and illustrations Searching for unfamiliar words and phrases	Decoding, developing propositions, monitoring for meaning and using fix-up strategies for when the reading does not make sense	Recalling factual content, summarising, reconceptualising
Stepping in-to	Local: Visualising similar scenes from similar background experiences to draw the opening scene of the story	Local: Stopping at an appropriate place in the narrative and drawing a picture related to story events as the plot unfolds	Local: Recalling mental imagery by creating a drawing related to story events, characters, and places
	Global: Using a graphic organiser to understand the structure of the text to be read. Asking questions to help elaborate drawn pictures	Global: Asking and answering questions related to character actions and scenes as it relates to the drawings	Global: Using the graphic organiser as a way to organise a summary by placing each of the three drawings in the appropriate space on the organiser and making an oral summary
Stepping back	Goal setting; predicting - What do I think will happen in this story? Visualise likely scenarios	Monitoring meaning/self-questioning. Is the story similar to what I imagined at the beginning? How is it the same/different? What do I think will happen now? Visualise a revised scenario	Reflection on strategies used. What can I imagine now that I have come to the end? Were my predictions accurate? What was expected/unexpected? What else could I have considered?

provide an example of a flexible multiple-strategy framework to show how and when visual and verbal strategies can be orchestrated within a lesson.

The framework should not be restricted to visualisation strategies but can incorporate any pedagogical techniques that are consistent with the processing level and that will match the before, during or after phase of the lesson. For example, it could accommodate other procedures, such as the pause, prompt, praise (Houghton & Glynn, 1993) method of guided reading, which could be inserted in the appropriate cells at the stepping forward level, while the four reciprocal reading strategies could be inserted into the stepping into and stepping back levels. However, the stepping back level should conform to a goal-setting, monitoring, and reflection process to enable a self-regulation orientation. It is asserted that the framework is meant to structure the pedagogical practices and provide a coordinated approach to using multiple comprehension strategies.

Illustrations

Illustrations can help to develop visual representations of main ideas and may also provide a visual summary, particularly for younger readers (Kendeou, Savage, & Van den Broek, 2009). Readers can also derive character depth and meaning from illustrations in picture books and comics (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Roser, Martinez, Fuhrken, & McDonnold, 2007; Van Meter, Aleksic, Schwartz, & Garner, 2006). While looking at illustrations during the reading episodes it is presumed that readers construct and incorporate the visual material into their mental modeling process (Glenberg & Langston, 1992). Good illustrations, in particular, will assist younger or less experienced readers with their comprehension by linking their background knowledge with the unfolding illustrations and filling in missing information that is not normally provided in the text. When the illustrations are discussed and elaborated the verbal and nonverbal memory representations are better organised and can be linked in working memory (Van Meter et al., 2006). It is assumed that older and more able readers tend to naturally visualise story content and rely less on illustrations than younger or less skilled readers (Hibbing & Rankin-Erickson, 2003).

The integration of knowledge is different when learners read and draw as opposed to when readers merely examine illustrations (Van Meter et al., 2006). A number of researchers have posited that students' drawing of text content and story events is an effective visualisation strategy that enhances students' mental situation models (Kintsch, 1994). Drawing is particularly beneficial because it is usually a goal-directed activity that enables improved reading comprehension because it creates a concrete organisation of text information (Van Meter et al., 2006). Furthermore, when students draw they typically use self-monitoring processes to compare their attempts with what they consider to be important. The act of drawing taps directly into the students' store of life experiences and background knowledge because it is not possible to draw what they have not previously encountered or understood. Ordinarily, there will be a difference in the quality of the drawing according to

students' age and fine motor skills, and the quantity and quality of students' background experiences, and this is what contributes to a more efficient integration of information in working memory. The quality of the vocabulary and the text-based language structures will also affect the students' ability to include elaborated detail into their drawings and develop deeper comprehension (Perfetti, 2007).

Manipulating

Roser et al. (2007) maintained that a story character's situation could become more concrete, more comprehensible, and more able to be discussed when actual objects, items, pictures, and maps are used to rehearse story content or events. For example, Glenberg, Brown, and Levin (2007) found that when readers were required to manoeuvre objects to recreate the characters and their actions their story recall and inferencing ability was enhanced. The researchers maintained that manipulations of story-related objects enabled the readers to link words to the mental representation of the objects as well as requiring the reader to mentally visualise story elements and important relationships. They observed that the readers tended to retain their imagined scenarios several days later as a direct result of the manipulation strategy.

Acting, Role-Playing and Characterisation

Kelin (2007) used drama as a visualisation activity to help young students enhance their ability to translate the experiences of a story into the context of their own lives. It provided the readers with a vehicle to empathise with the protagonist's perspective through the simulation of events within a story. The interaction of the protagonist with other story characters may be important to tie together ideas within a narrative (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Roser et al., 2007; Wade, Buxton, & Kelly, 1999). For example, characters within stories are usually shaped by their situations and interaction with other characters, settings and plots. Emery (1996) found that when students also discussed the story from a character's perspective they were better able to identify the story's central plot and were more able to develop appropriate retellings.

It should be noted that younger children tend to place more importance on the actions of characters in their causal models of stories. In contrast, older readers are more able to focus on the mental states of characters and on the more abstract story ideas. Older children also seem to show a stronger tendency in establishing causal connections across story episodes and with longer text discourse than younger children (Rapp, Van den Broek, McMaster, Kendeou, & Espin, 2007). Thus, skilled or older readers are enabled to progress to lengthier, complex books by encountering increasingly well-developed characters that react to circumstances in meaningful and predictable ways throughout the course of the narrative (Roser et al., 2007).

Mental Imagery

Mental imagery is the process of creating an image in the mind. Researchers have found that the use of mental imagery as a mental strategy results in greatly improved reading comprehension outcomes (NRP, 2000; Pressley, 2002; Sadoski & Quast, 1990). It effectively links read text information to the reader's own background experiences and provides a memory strategy that helps with recall and comprehension (Joffe et al., 2007; Kosslyn, 1976). Furthermore, when rich descriptive texts are read, the rich language enables readers to visualise with a higher level of intensity that leads to improved comprehension outcomes (Romeo, 2002). Moreover, the vividness of mental imagery activated during reading will increase reading engagement because imagery relies on the activation of personal prior experiences (Farah, 1995). Focused discussion at strategic points during the reading can help to develop the vividness or intensity of the mental imagery (Bell, 1986; Woolley & Hay, 2004). For example, focusing on character perspectives (or mentally placing students in the shoes of the story characters) will guide learners' attention to features that are often less explicit within the text (Rapp et al., 2007; Van Meter et al., 2006). Moreover, by developing a routine of stopping and discussing their character-based visualisations children will be more able to independently practise the strategy until it becomes an automatic mental process during reading. The expectation is that when readers read independently they should focus on meaning (McKeon, Beck, & Blake, 2009) and visualise story content continuously throughout the reading activity (Woolley & Hay, 2004).

Linking Visual and Verbal Strategies

Van Meter et al. (2006) found that upper primary school participants learned more when the drawing strategy, for example, was used with supported dialogue. Thus, the nonverbal or visual representations may be complemented by the incorporation of verbal descriptions and directions. For example, when drawing, a learner may see the need to determine the specific location of an item and seek verbal input from others to build a more appropriate visual representation.

Many reading comprehension problems can be attributed to the inability to use language appropriately to organise students' thinking and reading performances (Leekam, 2007). For example, vocabulary knowledge underlies all learning and is one of the most significant predictors of reading comprehension, however, the acquisition of vocabulary and its usefulness depends on the quality of word representations and the way in which they are encoded and linked in working memory (Perfetti, 2007; Van der Schoot et al., 2009). Blachowicz, Fisher, and Ogle (2006) maintained that the ability to make suitable inferences is a crucial component in learning the meaning of new words. The construction of a concept map during a reading lesson helps learners develop this depth of word meanings and contributes

to the development of an integrated mental model of the text being read (Van Boxtel et al., 2002). This technique is further improved when applied in a collaborative setting with engaging discussion (also see Perfetti, 2007).

Self-Regulation and Engagement

Effective comprehension requires readers to be metacognitively aware by thinking about their own learning processes and take control of the reading so that they can make the necessary adjustments as they read. Thus, a metacognitive teaching focus should involve setting reading goals, monitoring and reflecting in order to develop self-regulation (Afflerbach et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2002). As a result, readers will be more able to selectively use attention to focus on the important aspects of the text, develop main ideas, hypothesise about content, make predictions about upcoming information, and monitor their own comprehension. For example, during the reading readers may ask themselves questions such as "Does this make sense?" If it does not make sense, they apply suitable repair strategies to restore comprehension (Van der Schoot et al., 2009).

A collaborative approach incorporating techniques, such as questioning and peer prompting in which children adopt cooperative roles in analysing texts has been shown to greatly assist metacognitive processes (McKeon et al., 2009; Pressley, 2006).

It has been demonstrated that teaching reading and thinking processes to students through dialogic interactions can increase student's engagement and control of the reading comprehension process (Cole, 2002; Guthrie & Davis, 2003; Hareli & Weiner, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1988). Collaborative groupings that incorporate interactive dialogue have been shown to develop higher student achievement and more positive social, motivational, and attitudinal outcomes (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2007; Overett & Donald, 1998; Woolley, 2007).

The involvement of students in group discussions before, during, and after reading or listening to a story has been shown to lead to improved comprehension, particularly when the teacher models questions or prompts students to describe what they have read (Gambrell, Mazzoni, & Almasi, 2000). Teacher-directed questions can be effective by focusing students' attention on text segments containing information being sought (Taboada & Guthrie, 2006). Moreover, encouraging children to give explanatory answers to those questions leads to better comprehension of text and enables a more strategic use of language (Snow, 2002). Requiring students to explain should promote active learning and lead to a significant improvement of their metacognitive strategies (Griffin, Wiley, & Thiede, 2008).

Such techniques can be used in association with visualisation strategies and augmented by other strategies such as comprehension monitoring, self-explanations, identification of the main idea, previewing, predicting, and summarising text etcetera (Kirby & Savage, 2008). Metacognitive strategies such as these should

be included in all instructional frameworks to support the integration of new and existing strategies. A metacognitive focus, such as this, should lead to student self-regulation and self-determination (Zimmerman, 2002).

Conclusion

Despite the efficacy of visual and verbal comprehension strategies they have not, as yet, been used extensively in multiple-strategy intervention programs. However, there are a number of evidence-based visualising strategies that can be employed in intervention programs to enhance the local and global levels of understanding. Readers construct mental models that incorporate text-based information with their available prior knowledge. The ability to form a suitable mental model may be enhanced by the ability to form mental imagery before, during, and after reading. The incorporation of mental imagery will enhance the efficiency of students' working memories by linking their available resources. Thus, visual and verbal instructional techniques can alleviate cognitive capacity limitations by more efficiently linking information placed within the subsystems of working memory. Visualisation of story content and entering into engaging dialogue with others elaborates new information and deepens the quality of their mental representations. It also enables the reader to make connections between verbal and visual content in a much more integrated way. Thus, the quality of a reader's mental model will be enhanced by the quality of the linking of information within working memory.

It is important to use a number of strategies in a literacy framework and to apply these strategies routinely over several reading episodes to consolidate those strategies and to develop automaticity. Comprehension strategy use will be enhanced when readers are encouraged to link visual and verbal content and actively monitor and reflect on the comprehension process by using self-questioning and self-explanations. Moreover, when applied in an interactive collaborative context, self-regulation and reading engagement is more likely to be promoted.

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Chapter 14
Musicking as Literacy: Possibilities and Pragmatisms for Literacies Learning

Stewart Riddle

Abstract Much work has been done in opening up the field of literacy learning through the work of the New Literacy Studies movement, multiliteracies pedagogy and multiple literacies theory, although the potential of music as a particular human artistic, aesthetic, social and emotional experience in connecting young people to their literacy learning is still relatively unmapped. This chapter will present some possibilities and pragmatisms for literacy learning, arising from a study that sought to map connections between music, literacy learning and the lives of teenagers. Theoretically and methodologically informed by narrative inquiry and poststructuralist thinking, in particular the work of Gilles Deleuze, the study investigated how literacy links to music in the lifeworlds of young people in an attempt to trouble presupposed distinctions between literacy and music.

Keywords Music • Literacy • Musicking • Multiliteracies • Pedagogy • Poetry

Why We Need to (Re)think Literacies Learning in Neoliberal Times

This chapter positions music, or more specifically, the act of musicking, with the literacy space as a potent source of meaning making for young people in their literacies learning. My intent is to take the dialogue between music and literacy further, perhaps stretching it to its edge and beyond. I attempt this by drawing on two theoretical and philosophical positions that have been extended from the work of musicologist, Christopher Small (1998), and philosopher, Gilles Deleuze (1992). Through the bringing together of Small's notion of musicking and various Deleuzian figurations, I will

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begin to explore some of the possibilities and pragmatisms of musicking as literacy. Data will be shared from a study that investigated the literacies learning and schooling experiences of young musickers, in order to highlight some of the possible tensions and releases made available through these arts-literacy relationships. It is important to (re)think literacies learning as our historicity compels it.

The impact of neoliberal ideologies on education has been well-documented in recent times (see Apple, 2012; Connell, 2013). Davies and Bansel (2007) describe how the neoliberal project produces docile subjects who, while considering themselves to be free, are tightly governed by what Deleuze (1992) refers to as societies of control. It is a cause of some concern to researchers who wish to destabilise and trouble such notions of subjection, including Mills and Keddie (2010), as "this move towards neoliberalism has had disastrous consequences for social justice concerns in education" (p. 410), particularly considering St. Pierre's (2000) demand that we examine our own complicity in the maintenance of social injustices. Davies (2009) explains that "we are everywhere caught up in the molar, over-coded 'striations' of government, shaped as entrepreneurial subjects who will be productive in the service of capitalism" (p. 628). It is a cause of concern that our schooling systems are rationalised and homogenised in ways that ignore the vast complexities of young people's lives, choosing instead to build up curricula, pedagogies and other systemic institutionalised violences from essentialising and fabricated binary positions.

The hyper-capitalist marketisation of education is manifested in phenomena such as high-stakes literacy and numeracy testing, increased auditing and accountability measures for schools and teachers, and, most troubling, narrowing curriculum and standardisation. For example, in recent years in Australia we have seen the Education Revolution of the left-centre government implementing a national curriculum, national literacy and numeracy testing programs, and the MySchool website that allows media to create league tables of school performance on standardised tests. Alongside these neoliberal moves of marketising public education systems, literacy has been perpetually in crisis while narrowing versions of what counts as school literacy are at ever-widening odds with the literacy practices of young people in their homes and communities. It is within this context that it becomes ever more important to destabilise and problematise the very notion of what literacy is and what it might mean for young people to become literacies learners.

Literacies Learning in the Twenty-First Century

Over the past decade and a half, there has been a significant theoretical shift from thinking of traditional literacy to new forms of literacies (see Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Edwards & Potts, 2008; Gee, 2000; Janks, 2010; Luke, 1998; Masny, 2006; Masny & Cole, 2009; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2005). This has had significant impact on the conceptual understanding of the literate lives of teenagers, who face the complexities of "a globalised economy, the emergence of new, hybrid forms of identities,

and new technologies that are transforming traditional print 'ways with words' and generating, wholly new, unprecedented forms of expression" (Luke, 1998, p. 306), requiring new ways of understanding what it means to be literate in the twenty-first century. As such, new literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Street, 2005) have emerged, literacies that Cope and Kalantzis (2009) describe as being "embodied in new social spaces – ways of working in new or transformed forms of employment, new ways of participating as a citizen in public spaces, and even perhaps new forms of identity and personality" (p. 167).

There have been attempts to redefine literacies learning to incorporate understandings of plurality and the influence of new technologies, including multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996), where young people engage in a multitude of social communication practices that exceed the boundaries of simple text encoding and decoding. New literacies may change both dramatically and drastically, as technological shifts broaden the scope of what might be defined as literacies practices. Change, particularly technological change, opens new possibilities that are limited only by the imagination. Further adding to the milieu of literacies conceptualising is the work of Masny (2009, 2010) and others on a Deleuzian-informed multiple literacies theory (MLT). MLT is positioned as a third space to new literacy studies and multiliteracies (Masny, 2010), where "literacies fuse with gender, race, religion, culture, and power" (p. 338) to form social, cultural, historical and physical constructs. Building on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), MLT sees literacies learning as a process of constant becoming, indeterminate, unfixable, becoming other, moving, extending, creating difference and differing literacies (Masny, 2006) where learning is an immanent process (Cole, 2009), uncontrollable and unpredictable. Multiplicity is at the heart of literacies learning (Masny & Cole, 2009), where MLT becomes a resource for conceptualising educational materialism by examining breakthroughs, breakdowns, and blockages in literacies learning in order to note dissonance, affect, assemblage, and transversal creative processes (Bradley, 2012).

Literacies learning is nomadic, where literacies are taken up in unpredictable ways in various contexts (Masny, 2010). The movement is away from examining literacies as products with end-points and placing emphasis of actualising life experiences as assemblages of becoming virtual machines (Masny, 2006, 2009). MLT allows for probing subjectivities and representation through affective readings of literacies learning (Bradley, 2012). It is through difference that becoming is made possible. Literacies learning is non-linear, and responsive to problems and lived experience, where desire, transforming and becoming-other through investments in learning are formed through desire as a productive force; an assemblage of experiences connecting, colliding, rupturing and transforming.

Like any social practice, literacies learning and musicking are embodied and take place within discursive spaces. However, embodiment becomes problematic as there is the powerful illusion of disembodiment of the learner, which Haraway (1988) describes as occurring through the visualising technologies of modernism, where the knowing subject becomes distanced and made other. Janks (2010) explains that "we bring who we are and where we come from to the processes of

production and reception of spoken, written and visual texts" (p. 58). Understandably, it is therefore important for teachers, researchers and policy makers to realise that we are dealing with "emerging literacies and new modes of human practice and ways of experiencing the world" (Lankshear, Snyder, & Green, 2000, p. 26). Musicking as a performative, literacies-learning act provides possibilities and pragmatisms to which I now turn.

Musicking as a Performative, Literacies-Learning Act

To the question of what is music, Small (1998) responds that "there is no such thing as music" (p. 2). Small takes the position that music is not a noun/thing/object but a verb/activity. It is a process, a sociocultural human experience, which is an important distinction for understanding musicking as action, rather than music as object. The term musicking comes from present participle of the verb: to music; to engage in the act of music in a multiplicity of possible ways. Borgo (2007) claims that musicking "has become something of a rallying cry for contemporary music scholars interested in highlighting the dynamic, complex and intrinsically social nature of their subject" (p. 92).

Building on Small's (1998) definition, which focuses on the participatory acts of performing and listening, I expand the understanding of musicking here to include any act that can be linked to music, however obtuse the link may at first appear, because through musicking social realities are constructed (Batt-Rawden & Denora, 2005). Borgo (2007) furthers an expanded notion of musicking by explaining that while Small's definition helps to combat formalist tendencies in previous musicological approaches, it is limited by the "temporally and geographically immediate activities of music making with often less to say about the further flung networks of musical participation and influence" (p. 96). These social realities made through musicking can be made available to investigate "the extent that musical world-making practices and their consequences can be tracked and documented" (Batt-Rawden & Denora, 2005, p. 289).

Through their musicking, young people explore, celebrate, challenge and live out relationships between the self and others. Musicking allows young people the opportunity to affirm, reject and establish subjectivities that change across time and space, depending on the particular demands of their social contexts. The musicking practices of teenagers offer insights into discursive subjectivities and issues of dependence, values, beliefs, social belonging and self-awareness. The musical world-making is important for considering the ways that young people constitute themselves as both musical and literate through their musicking. Borgo (2007) describes how such investigations provide the "potential for us to (re)envision musicking as a complex, dynamic and emergent system" (p. 103). I am interested in how the complex and dynamic musicking of young people might be linked to their understanding of themselves in the project of becoming, alongside considerations of how this links to their literacies learning as modes of embodied performativity.

There are particular literacies of musicking, as part of a multi-literacies understanding (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009), which include, amongst other acts, thinking about music, talking about music, dialogue and articulation, meaning making and emotive/affective responses to the impacts of music experience on other factors, including discursive understandings of the world, social power relations, membership, meaning and acceptance. There are multiple links between the acts of language and musicking (Fiske, 2008), creating a multiplicity of relationships between the performers of language and musicking. For example, language is a bounded, territorialised system (Masny, 2010), similar to the territorialisation of music systems. It is in the links between language and music, where Small (1998) explains "the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organised sounds which are conventionally thought of as the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part" (p. 13). Such linkages between language and musicking are important for understanding musicking as a literate act.

The hybrid contexts of teenagers' musicking and literacies practices provide rich discursive spaces for various versions of the subject to be constituted, affirmed and challenged in a multiplicity of ways. The project of subjectivation is an ongoing one, a process of ever-becoming, and the musicking and literacies acts of teenagers form part of the complex interplay of discursive positioning taken up, appropriated, rejected, reformed and articulated by teenagers. Semetsky (2006) makes the elucidating point that, "as a qualitative multiplicity, subjectivity does not presuppose identity but is being produced in a process of individuation which is always already collective" (p. 3). It is an ever-becoming, a becoming-other that precludes classification or categorisation. The assemblage ever forms and un-forms, without end or final purpose.

A young person may enact their subjectivities in different ways at different times, depending on the contextual factors of their situation. However, in schools only particular versions of literate subjectivity are acceptable, often precluding those that value musicking or other ways of becoming. A plurality of literacies is adopted and enacted within different discourses that construct different subject positions. While at school, the particular literate subjectivities adopted by young people often preclude a wide range of skills, knowledges and understandings that teenagers have available to them outside of school, as these are not valued within institutional learning environments. At its most disparate, some teenagers enact literacies practices associated with musicking in competent ways, while concomitantly positioning themselves as literacies-learning failures in school.

On the other hand, outside of school, a young person might adopt a set of entirely different literate subjectivities that make use of sets of skills, knowledges and understandings different from those valued in a school environment. These could, and often do, include musicking practices (Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, & Tarrant, 2003). These literate musicking practices include: singing along to a popular tune that is playing on an mp3 player, stereo or supermarket public address system; discussing at length the particular lyrical context of a contentious song with friends; playing or composing music on a musical instrument; watching a film that contains a soundtrack that causes a visceral response; humming a tune; thinking of music; or a whole host of other activities that may fall under the broad scope of musicking.

These approaches are in contrast with Small's (1998) point that there is no one way of musicking that should be valued above another, stating that "no way of musicking is intrinsically better than any other; all are to be judged, if they are to be judged at all, on their success in articulating (affirming, exploring, celebrating) the concepts of relationships of those who are taking part" (p. 213). Musicking and literate subjectivities are not formed in a vacuum, but rather through a series of complex, interconnected social practices that include such things as decoding and encoding texts, as well as other forms of musicking as communication, such as embodied performance, visual and spoken forms, and music. They are both socially mediated and connect to language in complex and shifting ways.

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of young people's literacies practices is that they are multimodal in nature, combining various modes of social communication in dynamic and interrelated ways (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996). Musicking is an important element of the multimodalities that teenagers experience in ways that are increasingly hybrid and intertextual. Alvermann (2008) makes the point that young people make effective use of language to construct alternate versions of themselves in their interactions with one another. There is fluidity in the literate subjectivities of teenagers, similar to the fluidity in their musicking practices. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) detail the links between modalities of meaning made possible in literacies learning and musicking through "audio representation: music, ambient sounds, noises, alerts, hearing, listening" (p. 178) alongside written, oral, visual, tactile, gestural and spatial modalities. Such fluidity and hybridity speaks to the opportunities made available to young people in rewording their worlds through their musicking.

All too often, however, concerned adults take a reactionary and oppressive stance on the acceptance of teenagers' out-of-school literacy and musicking practices, choosing instead to devalue and exclude, rather than legitimise and include such practices in broader sociocultural critique. No text is created without purpose, and teenagers' musicking and literacy practices are interconnected. Importantly, teenagers place the socially mediated language choices at the heart of their interactions with others, and there are wide-ranging impacts of language choices in affecting, enacting and redistributing power, meaning and membership across discourses.

Considering the large disparities between in-school and out-of-school literacies practices, it is unsurprising that a situation exists where many young people are disconnecting from their school literacies learning, yet have richly textured out-of-school literacy and musicking practices. In their musicking, teenagers engage in a complex array of practices that involve socially interactive transformations, rejections, acceptances and challenges to their understanding of musicking (Borgo, 2007). Gathered around a friend's iPod or stereo, much debate is held around the merits of this particular song or that particular musical artist. It seems that potentially complex critical analysis is undertaken with the greatest of ease, as it is simply part of the rich musicking practice of young people.

Musicking, like the hybrid intertextual nature of instant messaging, allows young people to enact performative and multiple enactments of their own self, adapting to the roles and relationships required of them in different social contexts. If one

considers, along with Lewis and Fabos (2005), that "ways of being and ways of knowing are interrelated" (p. 495), it seems likely that teenagers who are able to engage in sophisticated literacies practices outside of school could be expected to do likewise within schooling contexts. Why then is this not so? There is a situation where teenagers are switching off their literacies learning in schools, while turning on their out-of-school literate lives, and engaging in complex and transformative musicking and literacies practices.

The New London Group (1996) claim that it is the role of schools and teachers to "recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different subjectivities – interests, intentions, commitments, and purposes – students bring to learning" (p. 72). School literacies learning experiences should be multimodal, multi-textual, multi-sensory and multicultural. In this context, musicking is a powerful tool for deconstructing dominant and oppressive narratives, as it allows direct engaging with the musicking practices of young people outside of their school literacies learning, enabling connected and relevant engagement with their own lives.

I now provide one portrait of a musicker-literacies learners taken from a study mapping connections between musicking, schooling and literacies learning. The re-storied interview data are presented in the form of lyrics via the use of rhizomatic storylines (for a de-tailed discussion of rhizomatic storylines, see Riddle, 2013). This portrait is intended to illustrate some of the possibilities of (re)thinking musicking as literacy. Jac is a 14-year-old girl, who attends a local state high school in the western corridor of South East Queensland. I present her here, firstly as musicker, then as literacies learner.

Jac, as Musicker

I have to have music in everything
My life has a soundtrack
The power of music is astounding
Music helps me keep my sanity

I've had people say to me
'Oh, that is silly if you think that band
Can help you through a rough time
Blah, blah'

I sit there and stare at them
Wait for them to finish
And explain the benefits of music
God, I hate people

Music is just my passion
I believe that some people are born
To have an enormous amount of passion for a certain thing
And I think my certain thing is the arts and music

It's, like, music controls me
I get lost in the rhythm

The beat and the lyrics just take over my mind
And I become a part of it

I like those completely
Insane, docile, mindless states of
Pure music-gasming, ecstasy inducing
Euphoric moments of freedom within the realms of music

Being two years old
I had my face pressed up against the TV
Watching Guns 'n' Roses' Welcome to the Jungle on TV
And dancing to it

There's a photograph of me doing it
But I can remember it in my head
I think the pictures triggered the memory
Because I don't think people remember back as far as I do

There's a picture of me as a little tiny baby
With my dad playing guitar to me
And I know what he was playing
Because he told me what he was playing

I can just remember it so clearly
He would always have really long hair
I can remember trying to grab it
When I was playing with him

You know what's really very sad?
Slash is, like, my favourite guitarist in the world
And he's playing Brisbane next month
And I can't go and see him

It is an 18+ gig
You know, it broke my heart
It shattered me, it shattered me
I was, like, crying for three weeks

I was at school the other day
And a song came on
And I instantly burst into tears
Because it was mine and my ex's song

On Saturday night we had a party
We jammed together and it was great
I even sang
Which is something I never, ever, ever do

Music is central to how Jac understands herself. As she says, "my life has a soundtrack". Jac uses music to escape, to express, to explain, and to examine her life because, as Szekely (2003) argues, "in a musical space there is no intention, only retention, protention, ecstasy" (p. 126). Szekely's comments are echoed by Jac's elucidation that she loses herself in "insane, docile, mindless states of pure music-gasming, ecstasy inducing, euphoric moments of freedom within the realms of music", which Bicknell (2009) supports in her discussion of the myriad social and emotive ways that music moves people.

Jac is an avid musicker and has been for as long as she can remember. As demonstrated by her earliest memories of musicking with her father, and photos of her as a small child engaging in musicking, music has always been a ubiquitous part of Jac's life. Jac's connection to her father is strong, and intricately linked to some of her most powerful musicking experiences. Her earliest musicking memories involve a couple of powerful, shared experiences with her father. Having lived with him for most of her life, these experiences have left a lasting impression on her. She wistfully describes her ideal situation of being able to live with him, and pursue her musicking and other artistic passions, forgoing any further involvement in schooling experiences that she finds restrictive and largely pointless. Jac's home situation is complex and troubling for her, which is demonstrated through her violence toward herself and others that comes through in our discussions, such as when she says: God, I hate people.

Jac, as musicker, provides a vividly visceral feeling for the centrality of musicking to her understandings of life. From her reference to life having a soundtrack through to claiming that music controls her when she listens to it, Jac makes no secret of the importance of music in her life. This is fairly unsurprising, considering the bevy of research that claims that music is one of the most important socially defining activities in which teenagers engage. Whether one subscribes to notions of subcultures, counter-cultures, discourses, genres, scenes or any other descriptive label for differentiating and categorising the musicking practices of teenagers, the outcome is the same: music is of central importance to the life of Jac. Her musicking is a catalyst, a catharsis, and simply a coping mechanism, for dealing with, as she says, the "roughest parts of my life so far". It is so embedded in who she is, how she presents herself to the world, and how she deals with discursive discomfit, that it is inseparable from her core understanding of herself and her life. She is quick to dismiss those who cannot see the role it plays in her life. "I hate people" is Jac's way of explaining that she finds it frustrating that there are people who, from their own subjective positions, cannot understand the position from which Jac chooses to represent herself. Of course, music is not the only thing in Jac's life. She mentions other creative endeavours, such as writing and art, but is also quick to link them back to her musicking and understanding of herself as a musician and music lover. She is quick to judge those that she feels are without musicking and passion.

Jac describes the control music has over her and how she gets lost within it. This is a way of demonstrating the safety and security that she finds within her musicking. It is a space where she does not need to worry about how other people feel about her. No one is judging her. No one is condemning her or making predetermined futures for her. When she is musicking, Jac is free to be herself, to lose all of the constraints that are placed upon her by institutions that practise embodied violence on her ways of knowing and being. Jac positions herself within the discursive space of self-as-musicker, through the way that she speaks about the importance of music in her life, her stories of music experiences and the effects those experiences have had on her, along with her sense of self that she articulates through her passion and devotion to her understanding of herself as musicker.

Jac, as Literacies Learner

I hate literacy
I want to shoot it
Because all we do is shit
I've done since I was in Grade 3

Everybody else in my school
Is ridiculously stupid
And I'm really smart
I'm not going to lie

I just hate being down at everybody in Queensland's level
Because I'm from New South Wales
And they have a lot better schooling down there
They really do

I'm really very good at multitasking
I'm on the phone and talking
And on Facebook and on msn
And music and everything

I like to boast about my cleverness
And superiority over silly people
Sorry, I never really like silly people
They annoy me

I debated grammar with my friends as we were going home
Then we stopped and said, 'Shit Man,
We're talking about verb agreements and punctuation
What the fuck is wrong with us'

I write
I do blogging a lot lately, actually
I have a blog at the moment
There's a lot of crap on my blog

None of my friends can read it though
I've, like, told them not to
And hopefully they respect that
But it's just, like, my blogging space

I have been passionate about writing
Stories, poems, plays, blogs, etcetera
For a long time
Some of the writing is music inspired

I have been getting into a lot of scary stuff
That scares normal people
Who don't have brain dysfunctions
It's, like, horror, gore, raping, murderous, rage, psychopathic stuff

There are significant disparities between Jac's in-school and out-of-school literacies: she engages in rich literacies outside of school yet categorically rejects the schooling version of literacies learning. It is interesting that Jac immediately resorts to her emotive response to literacy learning in school, by claiming that she hates and wants to

shoot it. When asked why she feels such a powerful contempt for her literacies learning at school, she is quick to dismiss it as irrelevant to her. Literacies learning, for Jac, is a repetition of pointless activity that she has been doing for years. Jac is scathing in her judgement of other students and teachers at her school, as well as the Queensland education system. She supports the notion that somehow the New South Wales education system is superior to the Queensland education system. This could be in part due to her wish to return to her father's place in New South Wales, and her latent resentment at living and attending school in Queensland.

While Jac positions herself as simultaneously successful as a literacies learner and yet as failing in her schooling, she has no ambivalence on the perception of her intelligence. She considers herself to be very intelligent and capable, which is partly why she finds school such a turn off. She says "everybody else in my school is ridiculously stupid and I'm really smart; I'm not going to lie". However, it is interesting that she also claims to want to try harder as she feels that she is failing in her schooling. Despite Jac finding her literacies learning at school to be of little value to her, at the same time, she makes use of a complex array of literacies learning in her daily life. Being a creative person, Jac enjoys writing for her own pleasure. She maintains a blog, which contains a range of expressive output, including her musings, poetry, short stories, thoughts and commentary on her life, lyrics and other wanderings of the mind. She explains to me her need for the emotional outlet of a blog, much like a journal, where she can document and explore her thoughts, feelings, reactions and imaginings. This is supported by Kehily and Nayak's (2009) comments that girls such as Jac "have new media resources with which to develop identities and social networks. In this way the constrained space of the bedroom, once the sole refuge for girls on the margins of male-dominated youth culture, is transformed into a globally connected site, networked with other young women posed to challenge the gender order" (p. 36), even though she urges her friends to not read her blog.

One of the things that struck me when talking to Jac was her ability to have several things going on at once, which she explains by saying: "I'm really very good at multitasking; I'm on the phone and talking and on Facebook and on MSN and music and everything". For example, during our first face-to-face interview, Jac had her laptop computer on, playing musical excerpts from various artists to me as we talked about them, as well as showing me photos of her favourite bands on her mobile phone, before jumping up to run inside to get a biography to show me. Later, when talking on Skype, she explained that she had several applications open on her computer at the same time and was working on all of them simultaneously. When I mentioned the Mountain Goats' song, This Year, she had found the music video on YouTube even before I had finished describing it to her. Such multi-tasking capabilities provide some interesting considerations regarding the ways in which we teach and expect students to work at schools on one task at a time, particularly when the task involves traditional literacy aspects of reading and writing.

Creative writing is very important to Jac, although it is one of the things she detests about her schooling experience. She explains, "I have been passionate about writing stories, poems, plays, blogs, etcetera, for a long time". Why is it then that Jac

finds such pleasure and release in writing outside of school, yet finds it to be dull and restrictive in school? She explores her passion for writing through a range of genres and styles, although she does admit to a tendency to focus on more graphic and violent images in her most recent musings. When I ask her to explain her motivations for these explorations, Jac explains that it helps her to deal with the emotional turmoil of her everyday life. By exploring themes of horror and rage in her writing, Jac is able to expunge much of her frustration and feelings of impotence in making positive change to her sense of self regarding school and her family and friends.

It seems that Jac's sense of self in turmoil is a key factor in the disconnection she makes from her schooling. Jac is a capable, intelligent, articulate young woman, yet there is a break in how these strengths of her character can play out in the discourse of schooling. Outside of school, Jac makes use of a wide range of literacies in her repertoire of practice; she enables herself through her musicking, and has a sense of purpose and value that she ascribes to herself. Yet, within the school environment, it is almost as if she turns off a switch and becomes the bad schoolgirl, aggressive, non-conformist, violent, moody and disengaged from her own learning.

Musickers as Literacies Leaners

There is much to be done in mapping connections between music and literacy in order to more creatively meet the literacies learning needs of young people in and out of school. I take heed of Street's (2005) advice that it is not enough to privilege out-of-school literacies learning in a simple binary to school-based literacies learning, as this does not begin to challenge the dominant discourse that school literacies learning is the standard against which other literacies become judged. Young people's literate lifeworlds are much more complex than the binary allows, and, consequently, any consideration of literacies learners needs to take into account the complex array of literate activities, including musicking, in which teenagers engage both in and out of their formal schooling. There is no simple home versus school link, as the multiplicity of discursive plateaus that operate in the lifeworlds of teenage musickers are so vastly multifaceted that any comparison and contrast of two facets will necessarily ignore the enormous range of complexities that are at work. Therefore, the project of (re)thinking literacies learners needs to become broader to include musicking. As with any rhizomatic assemblage, anything can and should be linked together, as the lines of flight that might be opened up can produce entirely new versions of literacies learning that we otherwise might never have seen.

Furthermore, the rethinking of texts is part of the process of rethinking literacies learning and literacies learners, for it is through the composing and comprehending of texts that our literacies learning takes place. The typical approach to text signification is to understand meaning as being contingent on the reader, context and author. However, Alvermann (2000) describes a Deleuzian concept of texts, "which is predicated on their particular decentering project – the avoidance of any orientation toward a culmination or ending point. In their sense of the term, a text is neither

signifier nor the signified; therefore, it is inappropriate to think of interpreting or understanding texts in the conventional way" (p. 117). Thus, texts become rhizomatic. There are opportunities in formal school-based literacies learning for a more rhizo-textual approach to be taken, one that works to disrupt taken-for-granted notions and displace existing binary structures in exchange for much more fluid and hybrid text types and literacies learning. Perhaps a more poststructural critical literacies approach would be also be useful in (re)thinking literacies learners, in order to allow for the understanding that texts work in particular contexts as instantiations of discursive truths that can be (mis)read in multiple ways, as such a lens makes it possible to attend to the ways that texts position readers (Janks, 2010) in ways that are neither innocent nor true.

Becoming-literate is becoming-other (Masny, 2006) through the affective modes of desire that form machinic assemblages; indeterminate and unfixable, constantly becoming. Desire works in this way as productive vital flows, as machinic assemblages of the virtual, where deterritorialisation of striated literacies spaces works through continuous immanent connections with other (Masny, 2009) and through the importance of resistance, chaos, instability and the untimely literacies learner. (Re)thinking literacies learners involves learning to read literacies learners as reading the world, the word and the self as texts in ways that are intensive, immanent and transgressively disruptive (Masny, 2010). Literacies learning might then be (re) constructed to allow for new ways of becoming with the world that move beyond the limiting spaces of narrow conceptions of school-based definitions of literacy and work towards unbounding and deterritorialising language itself.

Young people bring different life experiences to their literacies learning. As such, the various lifeworlds of young people impact heavily on their schooling experiences and school-based literacies learning, which can often be at odds with their literate activities outside-of-school environments. For example, in considering musicking as a literate practice, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) make the point that "once again, the objection will be raised that music is not a language, that the components of sound are not pertinent features of language, that there is no correspondence between the two. We are not suggesting any correspondence. We keep asking that the issue be left open, that any presupposed distinction be rejected" (p. 96). Consequently, while I do not necessarily propose that music is a language or that musicking is a literacy, I have shown that the presupposed distinction can and should be rejected as an arbitrary humanist category that limits the possibilities of knowledge and thinking that could be made available to us in a rethinking of musickers as literacies learners.

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Chapter 15
Storytelling as an Arts Literacy: Use of Narrative Structure in Aboriginal Arts Practice and Performance

Robert Barton and Georgina Barton

Abstract This chapter explores the notion that storytelling is an important and integral aspect of arts and literate practice in Indigenous communities. As such, storytelling is an essential element in Indigenous people's process for meaning making, storing and conveying understanding to others whether directly as narrative or more abstractly as works of art. Storytelling is considered from both a historical perspective to more recent examples of artistic expression by prominent Indigenous artists. Indigenous artists' own views of the role of storytelling in meaning making are investigated. The chapter concludes with recommendations to educators about how storytelling may herald new opportunities to redress the continuing educational divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Keywords Storytelling • Narrative • Aboriginal education • Arts practice

'Kalkadungu yudil kanta multhini billa billa' Alf Barton 1993

My father had the unenviable title of the 'last full-blood Kalkadungu man still alive' until he passed in 1997. Having grown up under the strict regimes of the Aborigines Protection Act, the central pillar of the White Australia Policy until 1967, he was afforded few opportunities for education. As a consequence my father only completed two years of formal schooling and couldn't read or write. In order to support his family

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financially he started working at the age of 10 in various menial jobs in the pastoral industry. It would be another 36 years before he learned to read. My father would often reflect that this was the greatest gift he had been given. And what a gift it was…[1]

Challenging the Educational Divide

Across the education landscape very few areas stand out as prominently as the challenge to improve Australian Indigenous students' school participation and performance. Back in 1997 Lo Bianco and Freebody stated that literacy education for Indigenous students:

> has a regrettable history of cultural bias and deficit images, of remedial and inappropriate developmental approaches and assessment models in education, resulting in damaging educational and social outcomes from schooling for Indigenous people (p. 62).

It is clear that not much has changed given that statistics still show that Indigenous students achieve below their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Association, 2009, 2010, 2011). This trend is not uncommon for the Indigenous populations of other countries such as Canada and Northern Europe (Magga, Nicolaisen, Trask, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Dunbar, 2005; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2013).

Despite significant time, effort and investment resulting in a multitude of policies, strategies, programs, and resources aimed at Indigenous students, their families, and the teachers who work with them, the scale, scope and speed of improvement has been marginal. Clearly, current strategies are not effective yet have cost governments and their respective education departments substantially.

Many differing theoretical and practical approaches have been tried since the formal integration of Indigenous students into mainstream Australian education institutions during the late 1960s. There are many studies that target socioeconomically disadvantaged students. In 2006 Freebody and Barton conducted research into literacy programs that focussed on early and middle years of schooling with particular attention to student and community groups at risk of failing to attain acceptable levels of literacy learning. A number of these interventions identified attempted to improve literacy results, particularly in areas with high Indigenous populations. The Reading Recovery Indigenous Text research project (State of Queensland, 2003), for example, trialled the use of Indigenous texts within a reading recovery framework (Clay, 1991). The project, not surprisingly, recommended that more culturally appropriate and responsive instruction is required in order for results to improve. The project drew on Grant's (1998) cross-cultural framework which acknowledged land, language, culture, time, place and relationships as key elements of effective

[1] This chapter is presented as a personal story from the Barton family perspective and in particular Robert's. In this sense we have presented the information balanced between oral and written forms of text.

instruction for Indigenous students. The research recommended that more teachers are trained in this approach but it is unclear if this ever occurred. Similarly, Malcolm et al. (1999) offered a 'bottom-up' approach to literacy learning that explored two-way English. This project identified that the contribution of Indigenous students in schools is often misinterpreted or misunderstood, continuing the marginalisation of Indigenous students in institutionalised settings. This project also identified an urgent need to provide extensive teacher professional development that valued cultural understanding and Aboriginal perspectives. Again it is unclear if this occurred.

In the USA, the No Child Left Behind (Bush, 2001) policy aimed to improve education for marginal groups, however, there has been limited impact on student results (Dee & Jacob, 2011). Comber and Hill's (2000) and Comber and Kamler's (2005) work in Australia investigated ways in which to improve results for disadvantaged communities and comments on a rapid change in teacher pedagogy due to an 'audit culture' enforced on schools. Such research is important to draw on and recognise the ways in which the studies make recommendations for overall reconsideration of current practice.

Further, approaching Indigenous education from an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) perspective has not made a substantial impact, except at a contextual level. Within the Yolgnu community, the Yirrkala school (2011), for example, has embraced an ESL approach to teaching and learning. The community acknowledge that most students are bilingual and have consequently put in place strategies to teach students from this perspective. However, the Northern Territory made a decision not to continue this approach. Simpson, Caffery and McConvell (2009) present evidence of this decision's impact on the desire to 'close the gap' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. They open their discussion with Geoffrey Yunupingu's explanation that unless people understand an Indigenous student's life experience then this gap will remain open.

> And the 'gap' that politicians now talk of grows larger as we speak, as I talk: …as the next speech is given by the next politician, the gap gets wider. I don't think anyone except the few of us who have lived our lives in the Aboriginal world understand this task that is called 'closing the gap'. There is no one in power who has the experience to know these things. … No one speaks an Aboriginal language let alone has the ability to sit with a young man or woman and share that person's experience and find out what is really in their heart. They have not raised these children in their arms, given them everything they have, cared for them, loved them, nurtured them. They have not had their land stolen, or their rights infringed, or their laws broken. They do not bury the dead as we bury our dead. (Yunupingu, 2008, p. 37 as cited in Simpson et al. 2009)

Very few intervention programs targeting Indigenous students, however, have been rigorously evaluated and even fewer proven effective in the longer term. Further, where there have been promising programs or program elements that have achieved results, few have been implemented system-wide as best practice (Northern Territory Department of Education, 1999). The authors would argue that much of the effort to date has been directed toward literacy improvement in the classroom with the primary curriculum focus being English. As such, other discipline areas like the arts (music or visual art, for example) have not been utilised as much as a

source of potential interventions and practice innovations. Yet the arts continue to be a significant pathway in terms of Indigenous people's expression, education and employment. In 2008, for example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics highlighted that over 50 % of New South Wales Indigenous people were involved in cultural activity including arts and craft, performing music, dance or theatre or writing or telling stories. Interestingly,

> Only 2.7 % cited getting money as income as a reason for participating in any of these activities, with the most common reasons being for their own enjoyment and fun (33.8 %), as well as enjoyment and fun with others (27.4 %). Participation in any activity in non-remote areas (52.9 %) was higher than in remote areas (38.3 %). (p. 2)

Indigenous people's accessing of the arts is a reflection of the desire of Indigenous people to be involved in the arts, and highlights the openness of the arts to embrace diversity. Many Indigenous people are already engaging in arts activities and experiences as part of their cultural traditions. As such, the arts are widely used by the culturally marginalised in keeping their cultural ideals and practices alive. Commercially, there are very few barriers stopping an individual entering into the arts field, learning their craft and ultimately earning their keep. The appeal of the arts is also driven by an inherent commitment to social justice which gives recognition to marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The arts community has always been at the forefront of embracing difference. For many marginalised groups the arts is a safe and well-trodden path to healing.

I guess with our music we feel it's healing… healing not just for ourselves but for the people we perform for. And I feel that especially with young people, to be able to put inspiration into the work, whether it's song or poetry or prose or otherwise. That inspiration builds up their spirits - it's healing. It's the power of healing for them. (Barton, Interview: May 2013a)

Given the arts' popularity as a vocational and expressive choice for Indigenous people, it may herald clues to how education systems seek to improve their services and in turn the participation and results of Indigenous students. The arts, like all discipline areas, have distinct literacy demands which it places on learners and practitioners in order to progress in the field. While there is no doubt common traits between teaching literacy in the arts vis` a vis` English, the context, content and processes used in becoming arts literate differs markedly from becoming literate in English. It is these distinctions between the arts and other discipline areas which coincide with, and complement, the ways in which Indigenous people have traditionally sought to learn, understand, know and remember.

Storytelling as the First Literacy

It is widely acknowledged that the Australian Aboriginal culture is one of the oldest living cultures in the world, with current estimations varying from 50,000 to 65,000 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994). Over those years, Aboriginal people developed a highly evolved and sophisticated system of interaction with

Fig. 15.1 Sun Rock Kalkadungu rock art site, Mount Isa, Queensland (Author's own photo)

each other and the environment in order to survive. Many would be familiar with Aboriginal rock art (refer Fig. 15.1 example of rock art) and more recently the burgeoning Aboriginal art industry drawing on imagery, iconography and themes dating back over thousands of years (Macintyre, 2000). The importance of story in these works cannot be underestimated. Story has a central place in the production of works and their relative cultural value and meaning to the people who produce them and to the audiences that would view them over the millennia that followed.

The themes represented in these works reflect a narrative structure which is much older than the works themselves. If anything, the artworks are artefacts of the story. Without story it is likely the artworks would not have been produced because there would not have been anything to share and little reason for doing so. Before the technology to produce these works was discovered and refined, Aboriginal people relied on their oral traditions and other cultural practices such as dance and ritual to capture, consider, understand and convey meaning (Moyle 1988). For Aboriginal people storytelling is the first literacy.

To be knowledgeable or, moreover, literate in one's culture, one must know its stories. There are many stories – stories of origin and creation; stories that define us, our identity and place in the world; stories echoing the moral code of right and wrong; stories of survival and triumph; and stories of grief and loss. Stories give us a way of viscerally experiencing that which the characters of stories told have experienced, and in that moment blur the line between the real and the imagined so that we become one with the narrative.

This notion of storytelling pervades life at a philosophical and practical level, from deriving meaning from culturally significant events and experiences embodied in ceremony and ritual through to more mundane aspects of daily life such as hunting for food and finding shelter. While the impacts of modernity and development impacted greatly on the lives of Aboriginal people, the role of storytelling

remains central to the way Aboriginal people communicate with each other, learn and make sense of the world. Not only is storytelling a dominant communication structure, it is also, we would argue, the preferred pedagogical device used by Aboriginal people to teach and learn.

Storytelling as a Means of Expression

I first came to appreciate the power of story as a young man. I had to accompany my father on an expedition to country with a senior Elder of our community. The Elder – an old Aboriginal man in his late 70s - wanted to take us to a special place that few had seen before. The Elder carried the story of that place and he wanted to share it before he passed onto the dreamtime. The setting for the story so dear to the Elder's heart took us to a remote part of an ancient river system. We drove for several hours by 4WD following the course of the Leichardt River long since dried to dust till we could drive no more. Then we set out on foot for an hour or so traversing the banks of the river as it gradually narrowed and dust gave way to muddy ditches and eventually intermittent stretches of water. Finally we came around a long bend to find a wide expanse of water shielded by high red rocky cliffs on either side.

Here the old man related to us the story of that place. As he spoke, his eyes welled up and tears began to fall openly down his cheeks as he recalled how members of his family were killed there in a massacre so many decades earlier. It had been more than 60 years yet his grief was as haunting, raw, and real as if the tragedy was happening all again. And in his telling of the story, we also grieved not just in response to the old man's pain but our own - having borne witness to his story. So profound was this experience that it would later spur me on to pursue a career as a social worker working in grief and loss. The deep power of stories to embrace emotion, convey meaning and heal was reaffirmed almost daily over the course of my working with hundreds of clients. (Barton, Interview: March 2013b)

In their book Crucial Conversations (2012), authors Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler delve into the importance and use of story in our personal and professional lives to create and communicate meaning. Their research findings based on years of study of thousands of employees, middle management and senior executives worldwide contributes a number of useful insights into relationships, communication and story (Fig. 15.2).

Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, and Switzler's (2012) "Path to Action" model shows the relationship between our experiences and our internal process for creating and assigning meaning to events and experiences. Over time, we build up an internal reservoir of patterns which help us derive meaning and saves us from having to relearn each time we experience something either again or for the first time. These cognitive shortcuts help us to quickly process new events and experiences against the backdrop of our existing knowledge and understanding to determine if it is familiar, what it means and what we should do about it.

Fig. 15.2 The Path to Action

The important element here is the role that story plays in distilling the meaning these events and experiences may have. Stories are the glue that holds these meanings together and form our model of the world. More than this though, Patterson et al.'s (2012) work demonstrates that stories create feelings based on the meaning we attach to events we see, hear and experience. These feelings in turn impact on our behaviour, actions and communication with ourselves and others. In the context of art and art making, stories wrap up the expressive qualities that are imbued in the end products which are created and communicated to audiences. Audiences in turn follow the 'path to action' by viewing and experiencing works, attending to the story that underpins them, and recreating their own feelings which ultimately impact on their responses to the works.

With storytelling being such an integral part of our lives and essential to our meaning-making systems, it seems somewhat troubling that more attention is not afforded to it within education systems. Aside from some formal learning and assessment contexts in standard approaches to Australian English learning, very little consideration and use of story prevails both as a means to engage students, as a means to draw on students' existing body of experience, and as a tool to aid learning. In the main, we are not formally taught how to tell stories, apart from receiving some scattered basic introductions and theory in classroom English or taking a course on creative writing or some other relevant study at our own behest. Nor does teacher training adequately cover the topic in pre-service programs. Instead, our learning of the storytelling craft is typically through immersion and routine exposure to the form/structure again and again, from nursery rhymes and fairy tales to books, songs, shows and performances, movies and, more recently, computer games. Virtually the sum of all our society's cultural and creative effort is defined by and depends on the use of story.

There is an intimate if not symbiotic relationship between the arts and process of meaning making using story. The expressive element of the arts relies on stories to do its emotional heavy lifting. An artwork without story is meaningless, regardless of how technically well executed it may be. Artists need story to both drive the creative process and to communicate messages of emotional substance to audiences. The story of the artist's work answers the audience's perennial question of 'why should I care?'. To be literate in the arts then is to be competent in the ability to tell stories using a given art form and technically skilled in the symbolic vocabulary it comprises.

Storytelling in Aboriginal Arts

I remember vividly the first time I experienced firsthand the work of the great Aboriginal artist Rover Thomas. As a contemporary Aboriginal artist myself, I was well aware of Thomas' legacy, having read about it in numerous academic and personal accounts in journals and articles, and seen online images of his works in various collections. But it wasn't until I visited Art Gallery of South Australia in 2004, that I really understood the power and emotion embodied in his art. The gallery was host to a travelling exhibition of Thomas' works titled 'I want to paint'.

The depth and uncompromising sincerity of the 20 works on show almost took my breath away. As an artist, it made me cry not out of sadness but tears of appreciation for how beautiful these works were and how accurately and profoundly they emoted to me Thomas' life experience and his deep connection with his country and his story. It was as if listening to him tell me his story was not unlike the old man who told his story to my father and I so many years before on the banks of the Leichardt River. (Barton, Interview: March 2013b)

An equally vivid account can be seen in the work of Emily Kame Kngwarreye. Her story is amazing not just because of what she was able to achieve on the international art stage, but also because of who she was. As a senior Aboriginal woman of the Anmatyerre in the remote Aboriginal community of Utopia, Northern Territory, Emily commenced painting just before she turned 80, and had a six-year career in which she produced upwards of 4,000 works before her passing. Emily's work defied conceptions of Aboriginal art as 'primitive' and her work broke away from entrenched stylistic approaches used by her peers and other Aboriginal artists at the time. "Emily's work could not be treated as a map or diagram. It was not notation but music." (The Age, 2005)

Emily's body art series stands as a critical juncture in the Aboriginal art movement in Australia. Figure 15.3 shows the stunning results of 70 plus years of life experience and cultural practice embodied in this untitled work from the body paint series. These sacred markings had rarely met western eyes, having been shared only among the senior women of Kngwarreye's community and their ancestors for their ceremonial practice across many generations. The Anmatyerre had always painted their Dreaming stories in the sand, and on rock, bark, sacred objects and their bodies (McCulloch, 1999). The only differences between 100 years ago and today are the artists' willingness to share their stories with outsiders, the media used and the number of non-Indigenous audiences eager to view and purchase them.

Thomas' and Kngwarreye's works reflect a lifetime of experiences and cultural practice on and of country. The works act as text in a well-established cultural treatise dating back centuries that only the fluent and literate can fully perceive, comprehend and appreciate. Their stories are old, albeit told in new ways and new forms for a modern audience.

The relationship to country and land is a central theme which runs through the work of all traditional Aboriginal artists and no doubt many contemporary

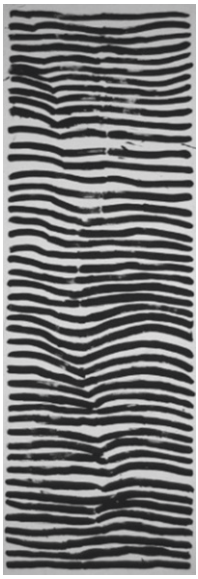

Fig. 15.3 Untitled from the body paint series, Emily Kngwarreye 1996 (detail) Licensed and permission provided by VISCOPY, Australia Part of Emerging Elders

Aboriginal artists as well. Under traditional belief systems, all of life is tied to country, which is the basis for the 'Dreaming'. The Dreaming is the unifying spiritual explanation for the creation of country and all that inhabit it, from people to plants and animals; the landforms which comprise it; the seasons which give rise to the cycle of life; the technologies that enabled Aboriginal people to survive for more than 50,000 years, such as fire, stone tools from spears to axes, and an intimate knowledge of the environment; and finally the social schemas embodied in the roles, rules and rituals all traditional Aboriginal people adhered to in order to not only survive but honour country.

In traditional Aboriginal life, stories held currency and the relative status/importance of an individual member of a tribe could be determined by the number of stories they were officially sanctioned to know and granted permission to share with others. Under this system, a person did not own the stories they were given but was a 'custodian' of this knowledge on behalf of the tribe – a kind of human library of the important things that needed to be remembered for the betterment of the community. One's rights and access to certain stories was determined by one's Elders and peers. As a person gained more respect and status over time, their access to stories would increase until, eventually, they would attain Eldership or a specific role in the tribe as a song man or woman.

The contemporary expression of these traditional stories through the arts also adheres to this hierarchy of custodianship, according to which certain artists hold the right to replicate a Dreaming story or paint about an aspect of traditional life for a wider audience. A classic example is the Honey Ant Dreaming work by

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri.[2] As a senior man of the Anmatyerre, Possum was permitted to carry the Honey Ant Dreaming story. Possum broke new ground through his refinement of dot art, and the intricacy, precision and sheer scale of his works. This refinement can be seen in the various visual iterations of the Honey Ant Dreaming story Possum created throughout his career.

Of course not all stories in Aboriginal art are old; some are new and reflect contemporary Aboriginal experiences and views about life. Outside of culturally sanctioned stories, Aboriginal people are drawing on their own experiences in creating new stories. These new stories are as important as traditional stories but for different reasons. These new stories provide space for the consideration and addressing of contemporary issues that may not have a historical or traditional reference point, such as alcohol abuse, violence, or the stolen generation. As a result, these new stories tend to veer away from traditional themes around land in so much as the debates are more about social and political issues then about the Dreaming and other traditional cultural subjects. These new stories also provide scope for community members other than Elders to be involved in and contribute to the debates, offer solutions and expand the cultural aesthetic through the adoption of new mediums and modalities. These new stories often have direct relevance to non-Aboriginal people who work in service of Indigenous people and communities. Many of these new stories find form in the art works produced by contemporary Aboriginal artists such as Richard Bell, Fiona Foley, Kev Carmody, Kulcha, and the Bangara Dance Company, and filmmakers such as Rachel Perkins and Warwick Thornton.

A Case Study of Storytelling in Contemporary Aboriginal Art Making

I come from what some might consider is an artistic family. My father was an excellent self-taught rhythm and blues guitarist performing at many festivals, events and clubs; my mother, Delmae, is an acclaimed opera singer and poet having performed all over the world; my brother, William, is an internationally renowned didgeridoo composer and performer. I am an established visual artist with five solo shows behind me, a portfolio of significant commissions and design projects with my work held in private and corporate collections throughout Australia and internationally. (Barton, Interview: March 2013b)

What follows is a case study of how our family (William, Delmae and co-author Robert Barton) view the role of story in their respective creative processes and how this in turn creates meaning in their works. Concepts and experience of literacy in the arts will be explored through our art forms of music, poetry, and visual art.

[2] The image may be viewed at http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Exhibitions/your_gallery/YOUR_Gallery_Week1

William Barton

William is a strong example of an artist whose work has transcended the finite views of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous critics about his instrument – the didgeridoo. William's headline performances with leading orchestras around the world, award-winning recordings, and compositions, and contributions to the works of composers such as Peter Sculthorpe, Jennifer Lim, and Mathew Hindson have helped to reposition the didgeridoo from a traditional solo instrument used to accompany ceremonial practice and ritual to one deeply ensconced within the Western art musical tradition. This feat is all the more impressive given William is a self-taught composer and contemporary musician who left school after Year 7 not only to pursue his musical career, but due to the fact that schooling did not engage him and continued to marginalise his artistic practice.

One of the important turning points in William's career was the transition from performing didgeridoo for mainly ceremonial purposes with Indigenous audiences to performing before a wholly Western art music audience. In 2000, William was engaged by the then Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra and composer Phillip Bracanin to perform as didgeridoo soloist in the work *Dance Gundah*. This first performance in this genre set the tone for what would become William's calling. Many similar collaborations followed, including his strong pairing with one of Australia's foremost composers, Peter Sculthorpe. One of the challenges William faced in making this transition was the particular literacy demands of the classical music genre as he took grander projects with higher profile composers like Sculthorpe. William had to bridge the gap between his own aural literacy of the didgeridoo and the ability to apply strategies to learn to work with the Western art tradition with its reliance on written scores and music notation.

As Martin Buzacott notes about William's first performance of Peter Sculthorpe's Earth Cry in 2002:

> For his part, Barton couldn't read the score, so instead he recorded the rehearsals on his Walkman in order to memorise the music, scoured the program notes to understand the composer's intention, drew himself a mud map of the piece, and then visualised the musical landscape as if it were a journey through the familiar topography of his much-loved tribal country around Mt Isa. (Buzacott, 2002)

The next major transition for William has been to extend his own musicianship from purely performer to composer in the Western art tradition. In doing so, William has learned to read music notation in order to more effectively convey his ideas, create legitimacy for the didgeridoo's inclusion in classical music and engage the many classical musicians from around the world with whom he now works.

> Being able to notate for western orchestration, to bridge the gap and learning the language, to bring out the sound in my mind is composing. I learnt how to play from an aural tradition through my Uncle, and now use Sibelius notation software to compose and learn as it goes along. (W. Barton in 4MBS, 2011)

William's compositional works are deeply steeped in the use of story to create memorable soundscapes and impressions of Aboriginal Australia for audiences.

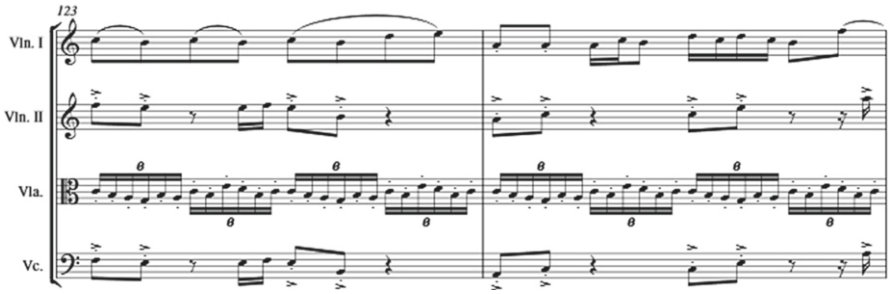

Fig. 15.4 Excerpt of *Birdsong at Dusk* score by William Barton

There is an inherent connection with country, flora and fauna, and traditional language, and there is reference to the ancestors who walked before us, which is embodied in the works William produces. A sound example is William's archetypal work entitled *Birdsong at Dusk*, which tells the story of early morning as the sun rises and the listener is greeted by the quintessential sounds of Australian birds. The piece was conceived by William when staying on a cattle property near Mackay, Central Queensland. The piece is structured on the rhythmic beats of the various bird calls which are played by the didgeridoo and layered upon the strings section. Interestingly, William did not notate the didgeridoo part of this work since he was the intended performer, though he did notate the sections for each of the string instruments to accompany his didgeridoo performance. A sample of the string score is presented in Fig. 15.4. Note the absence of the didgeridoo scoring.

William performs *Birdsong at Dusk* with the Australian Youth Orchestra on their 2013 European tour: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKR9_H7hzyw

There is always meaning in a work but you may not be aware of it at the time of creating it. The story of the work is really important to me because it is the meaning I'm wanting to share with the audience. I've taken the time and effort to learn western notation so non-Indigenous audiences understand what I'm saying. (Barton, Interview: June 2013c).

Delmae Barton

Delmae (or Aunty Delmae) is an Aboriginal Elder and a descendant of the Bidjara tribe on her mother's side. Delmae is also widely renowned as a poet, mezzo-soprano opera singer, story teller, visual artist and traditional Aboriginal song woman. Art played an important role in her upbringing with her family in central Queensland. From an early age, Delmae was exposed to opera singing through her father who, after being blinded in a work accident, would sit ritually each day to listen to performers like Mario Lanza and Édith Piaf, and Delmae's passion for

singing was born. This passion would later spur Delmae on to learn the songs she listened to in their native Italian and French verse.

I would learn the songs and practise singing when on long drives in the Australian outback, in the gulf country. I'd practise holding the notes as long as I could from one telephone pole to the next and then as I got better I tried to hold the notes even longer. (Delmae, Interview: May 2013).

From humble beginnings, Delmae's own transition to performance took some time to develop. A very shy and private nature meant that it was difficult to perform in front of others outside the immediate family. Gradually, by the time of Delmae's 37th birthday, she had built up enough confidence to start sharing her poetry and singing with broader audiences. Initially Delmae honed her performance skills through informal performances for friends and extended family, and then in clubs and festivals. Delmae has gone on to perform extensively throughout Australia, Europe and Asia.

Delmae's career highlights, among many, include: performing at the 2011 Youtube Symphony Orchestra "Jam Session concert" at the Basement in Sydney; featuring as a special guest at the Una Notte Australiana (An Australian Night) at the Vatican Museums' for the Canonisation of Mary McKillop; performing at the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics; and reciting a special poem and cultural and spiritual blessing for Queen Sofia of Spain in a private performance.

Delmae's visual art practice is deeply personal and born of her experiences growing up with her blind father. She considers her paintings 'tactile art' as her painting style involves using her fingers rather than brushes. "For me my paintings are both therapeutic and tactile." Source: (Delmae, Interview: May 2013).

Delmae's works (whether poetry, songs or visual art) are strongly imbued with stories that connect to land, spirituality and her Aboriginal ancestry. Delmae's works span both traditional themes and topical modern social issues. The excerpt that follows, taken from Delmae's poem 'Earth Fire', is typical of her writing which draws out images of desert scenes like that of her country growing up, and Aboriginal figures engaged in ceremonial practice and dancing harkening back to the Dreamtime.

Excerpt from the poem Earth Fire, 5th Stanza, by Delmae Barton (2013):

This, a spiritual land.
Red desert, earth
Mother of our birth.
Red dust, 'neath, red sun, burning
Spirit figures dance
Through the dusts
Of the Dreamtime yearning
Forever more our sacred land
Mother Earth our spirit
Our sacred soul.

A strong element in Delmae's work is the sacred and spiritual which can be seen in the excerpt of Earth Fire.

When I perform poetry or singing or create an artwork, I am inviting people to share in our culture, our ways, our understandings, our land. It doesn't matter where they're from - we can all walk and talk together. And I think I put it in a way that it's a spiritual thing. I share my spiritual journey. So I'm asking people to share with me. (Delmae, Interview: May 2013).

Robert Barton

Robert is an award-winning self-taught visual artist who grew up surrounded by art, including traditional art that he produced, and traditional art that he saw when visiting culturally significant sites or engaging in ceremonial practice. As Rob notes:

> *We had a lot of time on our hands, no electricity and no television and so we had to keep ourselves occupied. Art filled that time available and gave us purpose. We were always creating as a family whether it was painting, playing guitars, singing, or writing poetry and telling stories.* (Barton, Interview: March 2013b).

Robert's transition to sharing his art with others evolved over several years. Robert won a local art competition in Mount Isa when just 15 years old which gave him confidence that his work had broader appeal and meaning outside of his family and the local Aboriginal community. Over several years, Robert refined his practice and started to sell works to visiting tourists. Rather than going down the traditional artist's career route of slowly building his providence by gaining institutional recognition, Robert has focussed on directly marketing his work to clients, a strategy that has resulted in the completion of five solo exhibitions, numerous group shows and major commissions.

Story and meaning grounded in Robert's and his family's life experiences are essential elements in his works.

I don't consider my art necessarily Indigenous except for the fact that perhaps the way that I locate that in my own experience as an Indigenous experience of someone growing up somewhat Western but also Indigenous, in an Indigenous family, and in an Indigenous community. And a lot of the experiences that I had growing up are part of the story that I wrap into the works. (Barton, Interview: March 2013b).

An example entitled Calton Hills was shortlisted for the 2007 Telstra National Aboriginal Art Award. The piece captures the enigmatic story of Robert's father Alf and his struggle to secure traditional lands on behalf of the Kalkadungu people (Fig. 15.5).

> Calton Hills is a working cattle property in northern Queensland held in perpetual trust for the Kalkadungu people. My father instigated the process and singly led the effort to secure Calton Hills in order to gain access to our traditional Kalkadungu lands. This process took more than 20 years, all of his life savings and numerous legal battles but was achieved in the mid 1990s before my father passed on.
>
> This abstract art work documents this awesome achievement…the brilliant reds atop the work reflect struggles along the way, the red at the bottom of the work represents the red soil of this beautiful country. The browns in the middle of the work capture the central story line of the work within the local geography of significant places and people.

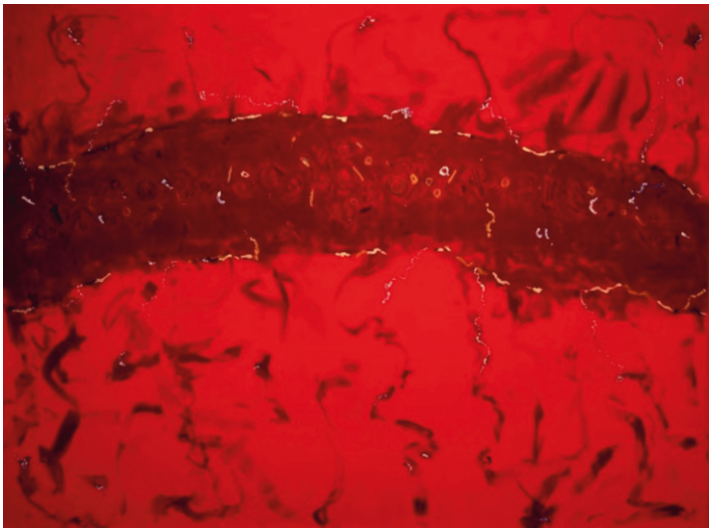

Fig. 15.5 Calton Hills, Robert Barton 2007

> Calton Hills is located half way between Mount Isa and Camooweal on the road to Gunpowder mine. I remember going to Calton Hills as a child with Dad. Prior to securing ownership over our traditional lands we would have to seek permission to visit or go there illegally.
>
> My father's dying wish was to be laid to rest on country - the first Kalkadungu man to be buried on Calton Hills in more than 80 years. I remember we had the service just on dusk as the sun went down. The next morning I woke up before daybreak to visit Dad's grave. There was a thin mist covering the ground and there were about a dozen wild brumbies standing around the grave with their heads bowed. This was a deeply spiritual moment and reminded me of my Dad who'd spent many years working as a drover on Calton Hills.
>
> He had finally returned home…
>
> (Robert Barton, Artist Statement for Calton Hills, 2007).

The work references traditional iconography and symbols. The emu foot pattern (refer Fig. 15.6) for instance was used by the Kalkadungu to mark their territorial boundaries. This symbol would be carved into trees so that adjacent tribes knew where Kalkadungu country began and ended and could they in turn respect this. Other symbols such as the campsite (refer Fig. 15.6) were carved into rock walls, reflecting significant sites for various ceremonial and practical reasons. The Kangaroo and Dingo symbols can be seen in rock art adorning the walls of caves located on Calton Hills. The symbols embodied in the land of the Kalkadungu and reflected in Robert's artworks act as a vocabulary that helps local people remember and understand the significance of different places on Kalkadungu land.

I think it's important to know the origins of things and by that I mean if you are gonna tell a story in a work or paint about an historical artefact then really know it, and know why it's important and why you want to paint that particular event or

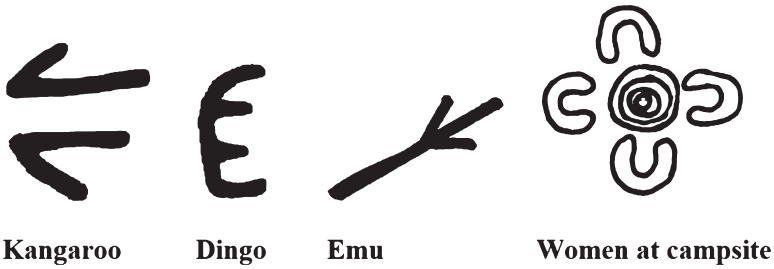

Fig. 15.6 Iconography used in the work Calton Hills

story or experience. So I think it's important to know the origins of things, not in a cursory way but really know it, do your homework and to be an expert of it in your own way. I think you can in a surface level way paint about an event or an experience but it kind of doesn't do justice to how that event may have actually played out or the real meaning or I don't know if it is real meaning but um by having a deeper understanding of what you are painting about and why it's important then you are able to convey much more of that in the work and you take a bit more care with it. (Barton, Interview: March 2013b).

Implications for Literacy Education

The opening stanza 'Kalkadungu yudil kanta multhini billa billa' at the beginning of this chapter is in my mother tongue of Kalkatungu and translates to mean 'a kalkadoon warrior teaches many children to dance'. I included it to show that we as Kalkadungu people had a word for teaching – 'kanta' and that it represented a pre-existing pedagogy and system for conveying knowledge within our society.

The underlying assumption of Western education systems is that prior to European contact, Aboriginal people were devoid of education – as though education did not exist until non-Aboriginal people invented it. This has of course been long since disproven but prevails often in the way education is planned, delivered and experienced by Aboriginal students. Reference to the students' home language and their world view steeped in culture and experiences that are unique/non-western, coupled with existing knowledge based on different forms and supported through culturally determined symbolic structures and pedagogical processes, happens not as a matter of course but as a rare exception. As Aboriginal students are often estranged from Western classroom knowledge and the processes used to teach it, without homage to the context of Indigenous students' lives and the body of existing stories these students carry, results are unlikely to change substantially. By embracing the use of story as a pedagogical frame for meaning making, and drawing on the philosophical and aesthetic input of the arts, Indigenous students may well feel more empowered to engage and achieve.

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Chapter 16
The Arts and Literacy, 'Amplified Right': Hearing and Reading J.S. Bach

Peter Freebody

Abstract In this chapter the music of J.S. Bach is used to illustrate some aspects of the multifaceted relationship between the study of the arts and literacy education. Bach's music has been claimed by a variety of secular, patriotic, religious, and musicological discourses, and this chapter examines some of these – their content and the ways in which they can either enrich or contort our understanding and appreciation of the music. The chapter concludes with a suggested model for rethinking the relationship between the arts and literacy and how this relationship may be expanded in educational settings.

Keywords Bach • Literacy • Arts • Education

> … our experience of recordings, as the recorded life of Bach reveals, has made us fluent in the practices that traditions of the spirit prize: scrutiny of the past, open communication across the ages, a reluctance to judge by appearances, and the recognition that the dead continue to speak, and that the sounds they make, amplified right, are a kind of music. (Elie, 2012, p. 415)

The Arts and Literacy: Stretching the Friendship

In public, the concept of literacy has come to represent an indispensable ingredient in the remedy for social and economic ills in uncertain times, the path to cohesion in culturally complex times, and a prerequisite of logical thought, civic propriety, employability, and democracy – in short, a panacea of mythical proportions (Graff, 1981). In educational settings, partly because of the public's investment in these

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myths, literacy has also become an object of policy anxiety, a media celebrity, and an administrative target, a key performance indicator for systems and the politicians who manage them. Repurposed for these functions, it has been disassembled and its parts sequenced into a narrative about tempo and content – 'normal, grade-appropriate developmental levels'. In his summary of the assessment of literacy in schools, McDermott vented his irritation at the institutional and individual competitiveness and haste that these repurposing exercises motivate:

> Literacy is a great thing, and damn the society that has made it available to us only as we stand on the faces of others. Language, literacy, and learning are about being in the world. They do not have to be about a rush to teaching. (McDermott, 2005, p. 123)

Competitiveness and haste are not qualities of a learning environment that would normally attract arts educators. Considering the qualities that a productive educational relationship between the arts and literacy calls into play draws us into large questions about curriculum and assessment, and the extent of responsibility schools have to address skills, knowledge, dispositions and values useful outside of and after school. Questions include how to educate youngsters in the interplay between passing on heritage and drawing out inventiveness and creativity. If literacy is to deliver its share of an enriched educational relationship with the arts, then a more expansive model will need to be built – hinted at in McDermott's (2005) "about being in the world". Recently the appetite has grown for such an expanded relationship, perhaps as a reaction to the channelling of educational motivations into economic and labour market concerns at the same time as our understanding of how curriculum embodies and legitimates particular views of learners' personal, domestic, civic needs, as well as their vocational and economic trajectories. The sense is that there could be much to be gained from a rejuvenated curricular coupling of the arts and literacy.

My aim in this piece is to illustrate the possibilities of such an expanded relationship through a discussion built around the music of J.S. Bach. I am not a musicologist or even a qualified 'enthusiast', but listening to Bach's music has been indispensable to me for a long time. It has continued to present ever more intriguing, challenging, and pleasing ways of thinking about the relationship between craft, technicality, seriousness of thought, and the expression of emotion, all challenging me to develop a wider-angled view of what is possible in art. Similarly, my growing awareness of the scholarship around literacy education has offered me particular ways of appreciating what the technologies of literacy have made possible for our individual and collective daily experience – depth and focus of thought; deliberateness of expression; options for effective action; forms of, and rationales for, social order; and, in Elie's (2012) words, "scrutiny of the past, open communication across the ages" (p. 415). This chapter is partly an exploration of a notion that these two preoccupations are not coincidental.

Bach lived from 1685 to 1750, and the intervening years have been filled with texts about the nature, meaning, sources, and significance of his work, accounts of its quirky history of performance and reception, and countless searches for, claims about, and claims on Bach the person. So he and his works are now

surrounded by the writings of literally hundreds of musicologists, biographers, social historians, professional and amateur commentators, bloggers, and formal and informal associations of musicians and enthusiasts.

This chapter is about encountering Bach's music in the midst of and through those texts, and the interpretive discourses they continue to interpose between the music and us. The discussion arises partly in reaction to the notion that a detailed, analytic knowledge of these texts might, or even must, interfere with a genuinely personal response to the music. It is a notion that has figured in debates about the arts more generally, and most notably about the study and appreciation of literature, and it sometimes reappears in advice to teachers. The question is 'can a more educationally productive view of literacy be brought into focus through encounters with a substantial artistic corpus such as Bach's?' The argument is that building answers to this question can lead us to explore more educationally helpful definitions of both 'the arts' and 'literacy'.

Literacy for Amplifying Experience

Using the example of engaging and understanding the music of J.S. Bach to illustrate the challenges and opportunities presented by an interest in expanding this relationship is, in some respects, a convenient choice: A lot of reading and writing has been done about and around him, and the importance of his place in the evolution of western music in general. In another respect, however, using music at all also makes the educational argument seem like drawing a long bow. Music seems so accessible and immediate to us, so free from language, so abstract in its goals, and so open-textured in its interpretive possibilities; and yet, paradoxically, it is perhaps the art that can perplex us the most, especially when it comes from different times, places, social settings, and forms of consciousness. As we will see, novice and experienced listeners have found Bach's music to be both immediate and perplexing, powerfully both here-and-now and there-and-then.

Writing, Sending, and Searching for Listeners: Two Scenarios

In 1721 Johann Sebastian Bach was 36 years old and looking for a job. He had a new wife, four young children, and an employer who was rapidly losing interest in music. He sent a gift to the Margrave of Brandenburg, a brother of the king. It was the manuscript for a suite of six fully scored three-part concertos, with a personal dedication. It was also a thinly disguised job application that failed on several counts. Not only did the Margrave not offer Bach a job, but also, from what we can tell, he never acknowledged receipt of the piece or had it played. Thirty-three years later, four years after Bach's death, one of the composer's sons published an obituary for his father in which the Brandenburg Concertos were not listed among his

compositions. For decades after his death we see no indication that any of Bach's family, friends, patrons, or musical colleagues knew that the manuscript for the suite existed. When the Margrave died in 1734 it was found and sold off for the equivalent of about US$20. It was found 115 years later in somebody else's closet and finally published for the first time in 1850, exactly a century after its author had died (Boyd, 1993).

A further 127 years on the United States launched a space probe called Voyager 1. Its task was to send back to earth data about our solar system and whatever else it encountered. Voyager 1 was on the 'express' route to the edge of the solar system and, at the time of writing, is about to free itself from the solar system's gravitational force, about 19 billion kilometers from the sun (NASA, 2013).

Travelling on Voyager 1 is a 'Golden Record', a phonograph disc inscribed with a large and varied array of human cultural artifacts. This disc is both a time capsule for us, and an introduction of us to any extraterrestrial intelligent life forms who might come across it (those with turntables, at least). The director of the Golden Record program, Carl Sagan, asked all of the program committee members for their views of what should be included on the Record. Biologist and author Lewis Thomas's reply was: "I would send the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach, but that would be boasting." Thomas later explained that, when it comes to encountering extraterrestrials, "it is surely excusable to put the best possible face on at the beginning of such an acquaintance. We can tell the harder truths later" (cited in Smith, 2003).

As it turns out, inscribed on the Voyager 1 Record are three pieces by Bach, more than for any other artist. The very first piece on the record is the first movement from his Brandenburg Concerto #2, music from a suite that the composer himself probably never heard, that remained unplayed for a century after his death, and that now happens to be the Voyager's introduction to human culture.

One obvious lesson is that the Brandenburg Concertos are not what they were when Bach sent them to the Margrave. They have, literally and metaphorically, been brought to life through acts of rereading and rewriting. It is not that they were once considered among his minor works; effectively, for the composer himself, they may not have even been thought of as 'works' at all, just a promissory note in a hopeful job application, at best, a set of interesting, complex inscriptions that nobody bothered acting out ("concertos, which I have adapted to several instruments", as he noted in his letter to the Margrave). These inscriptions were created, mailed off, locked away, lost, found, sold, reprinted, and performed. These performances, in turn, have been heard, re-inscribed in recordings, re-performed in settings governed by ever-changing regimes of musical taste and fashion, and 'mailed off' into space, re-inscribed again for new listeners, potentially including extraterrestrial life forms, as an introduction to human history and culture.

But J.S. Bach is also not what he was: Unlike the celebrity musicians that came after him, his professional status, the expectations of his culture, and perhaps his personal demeanor combined to discourage him from expansive or decorative personal disclosures. He declined at least one request to submit a biographical statement for publication in a 'great composers of the century' collection. How do we hear Bach's art when we cannot avoid the volume of written works that have put it,

and him, before us, almost none of which were written by him? And how then do we evaluate these texts and the ideas that have arisen from them?

Examining a sample of these discourses can show us how they interpose themselves, potentially for better or worse, between literate listeners and the music. We can ask: What arts-literacy resources might we need such that the work of the artist, the commentaries, and the written and performed inscriptions, can together add facets to our understanding? Or must these discourses 'parcel up' and label the works such that our encounters with them take less, rather than more interpretive and emotional effort? In short, can engaging Bach's art make us more deeply literate, and can our literacy resources draw us, in turn, into a deeper engagement with artworks such as Bach's music?

Bach as …

For some literate listeners, Bach's work has accorded him a transcendent status, in spite of, or perhaps partly because of, the skimpiness of our verifiable knowledge of Bach the person. For some, he and his work seem to have broken free of the circumstances of their time and place, his religion, his culture, and all the rest – the absolute artist who made absolute art. For others he epitomises those very circumstances: He has been literally inscribed – 'written up' – as the quintessence of a range of categories: a deity, the absolute artist, the "composer at the center, the name and voice for civilization" (Elie, 2012, p. 379), the scholar-musician, the model of German qualities, the master storyteller-poet, the devout bearer of the deep moral grammar of Lutheranism, the pinnacle of the Baroque movement, the proto-Classicist on the verge of Romanticism, the harbinger of the modern. Considering in depth the views of Bach and his music presented by some of these discourses shows the effort required to understand how they position us as hearers, and how they can constrain or amplify how we hear.

Bach as Transcendent

Composer Hector Berlioz noted the reverence, which he did not entirely share, in which German music audiences held Bach's music: "Bach is Bach like God is God" (Berlioz, 1870, p. 308). For many, Bach has a distinctive status in the history of European music. Many of the musicians who have come after him continue to acknowledge the particular nature and extent of his significance. It is often portrayed as, effectively, a debt that can never be fully repaid. Forty years after Bach's death Wolfgang Mozart visited Leipzig and listened to a Bach motet in the church where Bach spent the last decades of his life. On hearing the piece Mozart is reported to have looked up, startled, and exclaimed "This is indeed something we can learn from" (cited in Dirst, 2012). From the depths of early European Romanticism,

Frederic Chopin played from Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier every day, and signed off his letters to musician friends and students, not with 'yours sincerely', but with "Travailler Bach" ("work on your Bach", reported in Rosen, 2000).

Bach's music has been used to mark Transcendent Occasions, dignifying and memorialising events. For instance, the first performer on September 11, 2002, on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York at the site of the World Trade Center, was cellist Yo-Yo Ma. He played the fourth movement, the Sarabande, from Bach's Cello Suite Number 1 while the names of the victims of 9/11 were read out. Ma's friend Steve Jobs launched the iPod eight years later by showing how it could play Bach's music.

Popular musicians have registered their debt to Bach's music in various ways, often by adapting his melodies or style (Jacques Loussier, Paul Simon, Man vs Machine, Jem). African-American Jazz / Blues singer and pianist Nina Simone, for instance, who was drawn to popular music through her activism in the U.S. civil rights movement, remarked: "Once I understood Bach's music, I wanted to be a concert pianist. Bach made me dedicate my life to music" (Simone & Cleary, 1992/2003).

Regardless of assessments of the quality of Bach's music or the impact it has had on 270 years of musicians, there is a particular kind of historical significance accorded to the corpus of his work, captured in remarks by Franz Joseph Haydn, who described Bach as "the man from whom all true musical wisdom proceeded" (David & Mendel, 1945/1998) and Charles Gounod's comment in Upton (1905): "If all the music written since Bach's time were lost, it could be reconstructed on the foundation that he laid". Even though many of Bach's compositions have been lost, it seems that he did not compose as much as some other well-known composers such as Telemann or Vivaldi. The distinct feature of Bach's corpus attended to here is, regardless of its scale or the qualities of individual pieces, its status as an historical record, a musical encyclopedia or time-capsule, a summing up of what had gone before and what was now possible for Western European music, and, more generally, for culture and philosophy.

Bach as Person

A further challenge concerns modern listeners' need to 'know the artist as a person'. The striking lack of documents of biographical statements or accounts of his movements and motivations, in the hand of Bach or even his close contemporaries, make it difficult to know about him as a person and how he interpreted and reacted to the various contexts in which he found himself. Bach's time saw only the beginnings of an interest in the personal circumstances of an individual artist, so there are relatively few first-hand documents. This was not yet a time in which significance was widely attached to documentations of the inner lives of celebrity artists, or to the details of their public lives. This is why so much has been made of the few, generally mundane and formal, letters known to have been written by Bach.

The frustrating uncertainty extends even to what Bach looked like. There are two almost identical versions of the only validated portrait of Bach. Both are by Hausmann, both painted in 1746, in which Bach is holding a manuscript for a piece labelled "canon triplex" for six voices, a 'puzzle piece'. Bach gives us a cryptic, Mona-Lisa smile. In contemplating the portrait and the lack of biographical information available on the composer, the prominent Bach scholar Christoff Wolff remarked "It is difficult to see the man behind the portrait" (cited in Siblin, 2009, p.16); an observation echoed bluntly by Jaroslav Pelikan after his review of many biographies: "Bach the man continues to puzzle his biographers, friendly or unfriendly, and by all indications he will go on doing so" (Pelikan, 2003, p. 140).

The contrast with the expectations of contemporary literate-hearers on this count is striking: We almost demand some parallels between the life and the work as a way of 'knowing the music'. Geck has commented on this particularly twentieth century obstacle to accounts of Bach's music:

> one is always tempted to explain the work from the biography, or at least to illuminate the work from the life … to form a comprehensive myth … In this sense, nineteenth century music, such as that of Beethoven and Wagner, is already the music of 'our' era – demanding, or at least facilitating, identification. (Geck, 2006, p. 18)

Bach's literate-listeners encounter this 'demand' for 'identification', see the interpretive press it exerts, and come to recognise it as one component of the literacy resources developed to engage contemporary social experience; Bach's case helps us see that knowing the person is not required for reading about, listening to, or engaging the music. The search for the person is a distinctly modernist literacy practice (Bowie, 2007), and biographies of Bach generally begin with an acknowledgement that the scarcity of first- or second-hand records means that this 'demand' cannot be met to the satisfaction of contemporary readers.

Bach as Storyteller

As with so much of his surviving work, the almost complete lack of accompanying 'guidelines' or directions in Bach's hand make it difficult to be sure about the relationship between manuscripts and their performances, about the effects they were aimed at creating, and about how Bach regarded the place of a particular piece in his ongoing work of composition – whether he heard the work as consolidating, or extending, or departing from his work to that point, how he saw it prefiguring other possibilities. Despite typical compositional markings there were no other guidelines provided to performance.

It is also difficult to be sure of the extent, sequence, and functions of Bach's works (Durr, 2000) because of the complexity, incompleteness, and occasional uncertainties concerning the occasions, attribution, dating, and status of Bach's manuscripts, as draft or performance manuscript or somewhere in between.

The anecdote about the Brandenburg Concertos is a case in point. It seems that sections of the final suite were developed well before they found their way into the final collection, and that some sections may have been performed on various occasions (Boyd, 1993). So an assessment of the innovativeness of the ways in which it combined counterpoint and a variety of instruments into a concerto format, ways that arose from some unified, new conception of the work on Bach's part, must remain provisional. It is partly how we can learn to hear how Bach reworks and resituates elements his own pieces – how these resettings show us key differences in musical structures – genres and their grammars – that affects how we hear Bach's take on reinvented tradition.

Bach as German

An interpretive strategy offered to us by the texts between Bach and us concerns ethno-nationalism. The title of an influential early biography makes the categorisation plain enough (Forkel, 1802, On J.S. Bach's life, art, and work: For patriotic admirers of true musical art). Through his contact with Bach's son Carl Phillip Emanuel, Forkel characterised Bach's work as an assertion of the distinctiveness and strength of German culture. Forkel wrote in the midst of the push into Europe of both Napoleon and French culture, and Bach was taken to epitomise German values such as meticulousness, moral commitment and idealism, depth and intensity of thought, and working together of thought and emotion through technical and intellectual rigor, rather than through a "self-proclaimed 'authenticity' of feeling" (Lederer, 2008, p. 111). Of course, it was partly Bach himself who helped establish this apparently time-honoured reality of ethno-national attributes. Overall it was this notion of the seriousness of Bach's program that Forkel put against these outside influences, appropriating Bach as "a priceless national heritage, the equal of which no other people can claim" (cited in Geck, 2006, p. 10).

The first biography of Bach that we would recognise as an application of modern scholarship was written by Philipp Spitta (1873–1880). Spitta continued the general theme of Bach's emblematic role in the aggrandisement of German culture and history. The music for him was a quintessentially north German mixture of reserve, classicism, and emotionalism: In large part it was locale that Spitta took to explain its exceptional qualities.

But Spitta also collected data from many musicologists and historians, searched documentary archives extensively, and developed a detailed and nuanced position. He drew on four kinds of resources to develop a variety of approaches to the analysis and assessment of Bach's musical contribution: detailed biographical information, documentation of the historical context of the early eighteenth century in central Europe, aesthetic analyses, and the theological and intellectual content of the works. For his efforts, he is given credit for discovering the famous letter to Bach's old schoolmate Georg Erdmann, the only brief glimpse we get of the 'personal Bach'. "I

must live amidst almost continual vexation, envy, and persecution," wrote Bach (David & Mendel, 1945/1998, p. 152), again looking for a new job.

Spitta focussed on the ways in which Bach evokes poetic, visual, and emotive experiences in his listeners. He showed how readers of his music can see the shapes made by the music in the staves, and how these shapes often parallel the interlocking phrases of the various instruments. It was Spitta who first characterised Bach's music as a form of "absolute music", expression beyond words or drama, an objective structure to be comprehended in itself, rather being 'looked through' as if it were a representation 'of something else'. From his research, Spitta concluded that the available historical documentation did not support the notion that Bach was a product of his era, his religion, or his background (apart from his ethnicity). Bach was to be seen, he argued, as a unique genius, unmatched in any other nation's culture.

Bach as Mythologist

Albert Schweitzer, a minister of religion and an instructor in theology, produced a biography of Bach in 1905. It emphasised Bach's Protestantism and its particular German origins, but focussed its aesthetic interest on the pictorial richness and symbolism in the music. The original title of the book was 'the musician-poet', and Schweitzer's notes on the French translation of his book make it clear how thoroughly he disagreed with Spitta's alignment of Bach with 'absolute music':

> Thanks to the development music has undergone over the past century and a half, we have achieved sufficient distance to see Bach in all his greatness. In emphasizing the interrelationship between literature and music, and thereby setting the course of modern art … that allows us to grasp instinctively the unity of poetry and music in every musical work. (Schweitzer, 1905 cited Geck, 2006, p. 20)

Schweitzer was reading Bach back through the influence of Wagner, the dominant figure in 19th European music. Wagner had popularised literary significance, in particular ethno-national myths, as the way forward for serious music. In the first paragraph of this two-volume biography, Schweitzer establishes a key dichotomy between 'subjective' and 'objective' artists, the former producing work that is "almost independent of the epoch in which they live. A law unto themselves…"; the latter "are wholly of their own time, and work only with the forms and ideas that their time proffers them" (Schweitzer, 1905/1962, p. 1). Schweitzer allocates Wagner to the subjective category and Bach to the objective, a choice that directs his attention to detailing the historical and cultural forces that surrounded Bach, forces that he saw Bach accepting and refining rather than changing.

For Schweitzer, a crucial element of the reception of Bach connected to a belief in the genuinely new musical era that Wagner had ushered in, so Bach's music was to be seen as a perfection of what had gone before, not the beginning of something new. Listeners needed to expect this, not the breaking of new musical ground. This view has been a durable theme in studies of Bach and musical periods more generally (see, e.g., Geiringer, 1966).

Bach as Lutheran

Bach has often been claimed by religion. Schweitzer drew substantially on his placement of Bach in the Lutheran tradition of Protestantism to inform his interpretations of the content of Bach's work and his reformist intentions. His connections with the spiritual life of eighteenth century central Germany has been expanded to portray his work as essentially devotional and spiritual in its intent. According to Pelikan (2003), about 75 % of Bach's work was written to be performed in religious settings, even though this accounts for maybe only 25 % of overall performances of his pieces. Pelikan's detailed comparison of the theological versus secular contents of Bach's work points to the complexity and philosophical significance of this 'claim' on Bach, the claim that his sacred music represented the clearest expression of his most significant aspirations as an artist. In their introduction to their collection of Bach's letters and related documents, David and Mendel put the case for the essentially religious Bach clearly:

> The focus of his emotional life was undoubtedly in religion, and in the service of religion through music. This would be clear from his work alone, of which music written for church services comprises by far the greater proportion … but there is external evidence too of his deep interest in religious matters in his extensive list of theological books included in the appraisal of his estate. (David & Mendel, 1945/1998, p. 8)

Pelikan's (2003) study of the theological intent and content of Bach's music, and the ways in which it reflects the currents of religious debates of his day, ends with a reminder that Bach began each musical manuscript with "JJ" (Jesus Juva – 'Jesus, help') and ended with "SDG" (Soli Deo Gloria – 'only for the glory of God'). But debates persist around whether or not the religion was the focus of Bach's emotional life or just one, admittedly significant, aspect of the 'devotional' attitude of meticulous attention to detail and the complexity and density of the music. Whichever arrangement of these ideas might suit best, it is clear that Bach at least provided listeners with both a sense of general religiosity and detailed specific religious content as interpretive and emotional resources for enlivening the experience of the music.

It is critical to an understanding of this version of Bach that individual self-discovery and self-development were coming to be at the core of Lutheran practice during his lifetime. For the Protestants of Europe this was the beginning of the notion, now regarded as an essential feature of modernity (Taylor, 1989), that individual consciousness can develop and exercise independence and autonomy. This is a move away from the view that a person discovers an external pre-existent order to be followed, and toward the view that the individual needs to build an order that is to be discovered within himself or herself, through faith in the case of the Lutheran formulation. This is the philosophic force of Geck's characterisation of Bach as

> balanced between the systematic thought of the Middle Ages and the subjectively oriented philosophy of the modern era. (Geck, 2006, p. 644)

Bach as Baroque

Schweitzer's view that Bach produced the culminating works of an era stretching back beyond the European middle ages, rather than the platform for a new phase, has been durable, if not universally accepted. It has also been a view that supports the marking of musical eras in terms of emblematic composers, individuals who sum up historical moments, periods, and transitions. As a hypothesis, this view can add facets to our explanations of the music; but on the other hand, it can simply tag our encounter with the music in order to 'explain it away'. Bach has been inserted with forensic care into the artistic periods and movements that both preceded and followed him. He has been often recruited as the arch-Baroque composer, living toward the end of, and embodying the high point of, the Baroque era.

In support of this perspective, it is clear that central to the innovations of that era (around 1600–1760 or so) were the idea and practical workings of tonality, complex instrumentation, and ornamental strategies such as counterpoint. Bach mastered and manipulated these features in many inventive ways. In other respects, however, as Butt (2010) has shown, Bach's use of Baroque techniques was part of a much larger set of combinations he employed in innovative ways to give the music its distinctive mass:

> The combination of order and expressivity, structure and singability, structural autonomy and theological meaning, compositional rigor and social openness results in an enormous density of events: a lot is happening. (Geck, 2006 p. 648–9)

Much of what was happening came from Bach's scholarly disposition (Wolff, 2000), which led him to draw elements from medieval sacred, secular, and folk music, forms that prefigured Romantic emotive elements, and, seen most graphically in his Passions, the growing, almost-too-secular operatic tradition (Butt, 2010; Melamed, 2005).

The 'authentic' Bach

At least as much as for any other composer, Bach's work has been re-examined with a concern for the way it was, and maybe therefore should be, performed. Bach's music has become a lightning rod for the debates gathered under the label of 'authenticity' in music. This is because of some of the points discussed above, because of the complexity of the choral, instrumental, and melodic designs he constructed, and because of his practice of reworking large and small elements from his own works into new configurations. Combined with the relative lack of specific production directions left by Bach, these together mean that changes in instrumentation, the architecture of places of musical performance, the clientele of such performances, and the technologies of sound production and reproduction, have passed on to us a series of re-readings and re-writings of the music. It is these that the authenticity movement has, in turn, critiqued in its search for Bach's music-as-it-was. Perhaps the most dramatic case

relates to the original 'revival' of Bach's music by Felix Mendelssohn in 1829. The 20-year-old Mendelssohn sponsored and conducted a performance of Bach's Saint Matthew Passion, a long, complex and highly variegated collection of pieces narrating the build up to the execution of Christ. Mendelssohn's production involved a large public hall, a huge choir and orchestra, and the removal of much of the tenor's recitative pieces that advanced the narrative. This romanticisation of Bach's work has figured large in the authenticity debate for over a century (Applegate, 2005).

Choral master and Bach specialist Helmuth Rilling once drily remarked that it was all very well that we have original instruments and original performance practices for Bach's music, but "unfortunate that we have no original listeners" (as cited in Melamed, 2005, p. 3). In his analysis of the changes that the authenticity movement has advocated to the Saint Matthew Passion, Melamed observed

> Rilling had a fat target: the often overblown claims that "authentic" performances present pieces "as the composer intended them" or "as they originally sounded … but Rilling's comment … still raises an extremely important question: Is it ever possible for us to hear a centuries-old piece of music as it was heard when it was composed? (Melamed, 2005, p. 3)

From the 'authenticity movement' we find an insistence that musicians should aim for the use of instruments, arrangements, and performance practices that were obtained at the time of the composition. As both an argument and a commercial force, this movement has affected the production of Bach's work perhaps more than that of any other major European composer. Reasons for that include two major technological changes that occurred around the time of Bach's death. The first is the evolution of the modern pianoforte, a development under way but far from established during Bach's later years, that was to change the sound of keyboard music dramatically; the second, not unrelated, reason was changes in the spaces in which large public musical pieces were performed, from churches and open-air venues to larger, acoustically more sophisticated concert halls. Bigger orchestras, bigger performance spaces, and bigger choirs all meant bigger sounds, and not only bigger listening audiences, but audiences with bigger, less intimate, and, initially at least, less complex listening expectations.

The Reinvented, Reinvent-able Bach

Mendelssohn's 'revival' of Bach's work via his Saint Matthew Passion represents its reinvention as early Romantic music. As Elie (2012) has detailed, with each major change in the technology of musical production and reproduction, and the changes in listening publics that these in turn afford, Bach's contribution is reinvented. One barrier to engaging the historical context of musical artworks is that, for contemporary societies, the continual technological reinvention and instantaneous, multi-media availability of music as a commercial commodity means that its contemporary genres change perhaps more rapidly than ever. These forms of music have more overtly become commoditised as fashion accessories. They organise the shelves in music stores and the links on music websites: Early, Renaissance,

Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, Jazz, Rock, Punk, World, Grunge, Hip-Hop, Techno, and the rest. The more significant point with regard to the durability of Bach's music is that evolving technologies of both production and forms of listening highlight particular, perhaps previously unremarked, aesthetic features of the works such as ornamentation and improvisation.

Bach in the Larger Stream

Interposed between us and Bach's music, however, are not only texts; there are more than 260 years in which a particular constellation of changes has occurred. As Williams (1958/1983) has documented, the meanings of terms such as 'art', 'culture', and 'industry' have undergone redefinition from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. These transformations were partly reactions to the Industrial Revolution that began to reshape much of Europe over this period. These changes led to, among other things, a change in the idea of 'the artist' into one who operates beyond the social, economic, and political exigencies of the here-and-now, and whose status is indeed dependent on the works' seeming to transcend those contingencies; new relationships between artists and the audiences, purchasers, and users of their work; new views of artworks as commercial commodities; and the growth of an art-purchasing sector in the new post-revolution society.

So, while more than 260 years separate us from the death of J.S. Bach, those particular years do not constitute merely a 'long time'; the period 1770–1910 was a key period in a re-envisioning of culture, nature, art, industry, democracy, and social and economic class bringing particular changes that would have us hear Bach's music and in new ways. Williams has shown, for instance, how the artistic movement of Romanticism insisted on the separation of 'contemplation of nature' from 'attention to government'. This was one of its key criteria for genuine artistic sensibility and expression.

The backdrop for Bach's work was the rapidly changing economic, cultural, social and artistic landscape in which he lived, and the foreground included the immediate socioeconomic relations from which he and his family earned a living (Connell, 1984). As he changed locales and employers, he faced changes in audience, choral and instrumental resources, and the requirements of his paymasters. These changes in turn can be seen to correlate roughly with the forms of music he developed, reworked, and publicly presented; even his periods of focus on religious versus secular music were not randomly spread through his career. But the conditions he encountered also included, in central Germany of the middle of the eighteenth century, the changing face of work relations in general from late feudal, craft-based work toward ever-finer divisions of labour. In Connell's terms, these new conditions meant that

> each individual worker was left with a more or less meaning-less fragment of activity, sense being made only when they were all fitted together by the rationality of the capitalist at a higher level. In Bach, music had not yet become part of the world of alienation: though in his lifetime it was beginning the transition. (Connell, 1984, p. 213)

Connell finds an "intriguing analogue" between the growing segmentation and specialisation of work, the hierarchicalisation of work relations, and the structure of Bach's music. A feature of Bach's work, exemplified in the Brandenburg Concertos and the Art of the Fugue, was the multiplicity of instruments and melodies contributing to the overall musical messages, "a kind of democracy", as Connell puts it, whereby each musical line "should make musical sense in itself" (p. 212). Connell observes that in the music and the workplace, the decades that followed Bach's death emphasised a more specialised and hierarchical division of labour.

So it is the residuals of ideological reasoning practices that might also shape 'what we hear' when we hear Bach's music. It is possible either to ignore or to draw on these connections between art, work, and social relations as we hear the music; but it is also possible to revisit and critique these readings as part of a more fully literate response to the music, clearing the way for both appreciations and analyses that can both recruit and go beyond its readily 'socially determined' features and effects.

Conclusions: BigArts, BigLiteracy?

How we engage with a major artist's work is a way of exploring how deeply our enculturation into a literacy-saturated society has shaped us individually and collectively. Do the literacy resources we have developed reduce or enrich our experiences, diminish or variegate our interpretive options, and constrain or release our individually and collectively agency? Thomas (2009) concluded from her study of literacy among ancient European societies that literacy has always involved countervailing potentials, and

> that different potentials are seized upon by different communities. In some, writing means bureaucracy, control and oppression by the state, in others an enabling skill that frees an individual's creative potential. (Thomas, 2009, p. 13–14)

So one answer is that literacy refers to technologies that can and do bring about all of these contradictory outcomes. This is why literacy is regarded as the gift that must not be declined:

> It is presented to the young and to non- or semi-literate communities as both an entitlement and a requirement, providing individuals and collectives with the means and the agency to participate in public life, but also insistently establishing the means of their governability (Freebody, Barton, & Chan, in press/2013)

Encounters with music, and indeed all of the arts, are where we can see perhaps most starkly these opposing effects of being literate. Encountering Bach's music, and the sea of commentary on which it has floated toward us, provides us with a powerful test case, and leaves us with some lessons about the arts, literacy, and education.

A first lesson is that any serious consideration of the relationship between the arts and literacy leads us to the inadequacy of a view of reading as just arriving at the meaning of a text, the 'straight line to comprehension' view. One critical resource for

engaging texts is the knowledge, ability, and disposition to draw on multiple interpretive frameworks (Freebody & Zhang, 2008).

Butt's (2010) analysis of Bach's Saint Matthew Passion shows the force of this view of the resources we bring to both art-works and texts about them:

> this music is significant not so much for any specific cultural content or meaning (or some sort of transcendent meaning, divorced from human concerns), but rather in the way its various elements relate within a process created and heard in time. It is this interplay of various elements, not least those that are specifically part of a performance, that makes this music a 'hook', with the potential for resonating with, reconciling or tempering a broad range of meaning and belief. Music of this kind doesn't necessarily 'contain' any specific ideology or meaning, but its dialogic implications strongly encourage us to attach these from the outside. (Butt, 2010, p. 21)

Butt draws our attention to Bach's recruitment of his extensive music-literacy resources in the service of the physical making of music "heard in time", in performance.

A second lesson lies in Butt's (2010) plea for listeners bringing as much as they can carry to 'attach' to the musical experience as broad a 'range of meaning and belief' as the artworks can sustain. Being able to draw on the various forms of analysis, commentary, and debate that lie between us as literate-listeners and Bach's music not only enables us to reject any simple categorisation of what we hear, or what the composer quintessentially 'was', or speculations about what he 'really intended', but also offers us many versions of making the "various elements relate within a process created and heard in time", more complex ways of hearing via more complex combinations of interpretive listening resources. This process, in turn, becomes an interest in exploring more complex interpretations that bring in encounters with a wider range of artworks, and so on. The artwork needs to be a rich enough partner in such a recursive process, but the value of literacy practices needs also to be appreciated as multiplying the 'hooks' we find, and intensifying the combination of thought and feeling that the works can develop.

So how might we sum up a view of literacy education that might prove a generative partner with the arts? The discussion above draws out the kinds of levels of inquiry outlined by Jameson (1991, p. 298). He suggested that educators maintain the distinctiveness of four sequenced projects in coming to understand works of art.

- The first he labels the development of taste, opinion, and personal preferences based on increasingly thoughtful aesthetic responses to increasingly technical features of a work.
- The second he describes as knowledge about the context of a work's production, where, when, for whom, and how it was made.
- Third, Jameson names analysis whereby historical and contextual understandings are combined with formal analyses of the work's genre, structure, and key features, aiming to find out about how, for example, specific kinds of music were economically, socially, and technologically possible, then and there.
- Finally, Jameson recommends evaluation, assessments of the social life that sustained the work of art by way of the work itself: What does this work tell us about

the world in which it arose, thrived, gave pleasure, and was valued? Through this, Jameson argued we can develop sympathy for the dynamics of everyday life, and how they adapt to and change the cultural, social or political currents that flow around and through them.

Clearly, knowing how to read can present lethal difficulties for experiencing the work of artists. Literate listeners can be just-literate-enough to be limited in their experience of the arts: They can apply explanations of unfamiliar sounds, depictions, words, or movements that in effect 'explain away' the experience, avoiding the need to be drawn into the experience, or into further exploration of their sense of unfamiliarity; they can use the taxonomies of periods, movements, or genres as answers to questions rather than as resources for asking sharper questions. The bigger view of literacy focuses our attention on the repertoire of practices learners can use with texts, rather than the quantity of literacy skill they possess (Freebody & Welch, 1993). Encountering rich artworks and challenging artists can give teachers and students alike a unique glimpse of their own literacy repertoires, show them how they have been enculturated to read and write, what they have learned to do and value during, and as a result of, their encounters with texts. To hear Bach, amplified, is to put our personal and collective histories as literate learners to the test, to continually confront the strengths and limitations of those histories.

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Chapter 17
Encouraging Productive Arts-Literacy Dialogues: A Call to Action

Georgina Barton

Abstract There is minimal dialogue in the research literature between the arts and literacy; what does exist tends to privilege one over the other. This chapter presents a call to action – one that offers a more productive and encouraging relationship between the two concepts. It is recommended that a more refined definition of literacy is needed by acknowledging that multimodality and creativity are inherent in the ways in which we communicate, make decisions and ultimately learn and teach. It is also suggested that a different pedagogical approach to the learning and teaching of literacy in schools is endorsed. It is clear that many developed countries place significant importance on the results from standardised tests and that this approach is impacting on teachers' pedagogical practice. Encouraging a positive relationship between arts practice and literate practice will essentially mean that literacy will mean much more than what is verified through high-stakes testing. This chapter encourages the idea that theory should inform practice more than it does currently. Much has been done by researchers of literacy whereby it is influenced by societal and cultural practice and acknowledges that there are multiple forms of communication. Unfortunately, educational institutions, such as schools, have been slow to adopt these types of conceptual understandings of literacy. An understanding of such findings will assist in developing a more productive dialogue between the arts and literacy.

Keywords The arts • Literacy • Modes of communication • High-stakes testing • Pedagogy • Theory to practice

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Introduction

Throughout this volume we have shared a number of conversations between literacy and the arts. These dialogues present new and engaged ways to strengthen the relationship that exists between these two concepts. Revisiting the contributions of the authors to this book, we see a number of key actions that need attention:

1. A refinement of the definition of literacy
2. A different pedagogical shift
3. An application of theory to practice

It is clear that the current popular definitions of literacy, as adhered to by most Western education systems, are focused on reading and writing skills within the narrow bounds of an English curriculum; and in particular those skills which can be measured through standardised testing. The view that is taken of literacy learning by education systems has played a critical role in defining how schools, and in particular teachers and their practice, have addressed concerns around literacy learning outcomes.

Although some attempt has been made in bridging literacy and curriculum, there has been a tendency of one discipline dominating over the other; that is, 'literacy' viewed from an arts perspective or the 'arts' viewed from a literacy one. Arts literacy is an inherently human function from early childhood onwards, but unfortunately diminishes progressively as children enter formal education as emphasis is placed more on traditional notions of literacy. Aesthetic, expressive and creative qualities are important, if not essential, elements in a holistic approach to literacy and learning and are no longer exclusively the domain of the arts.

As technology becomes more pervasive and encroaches on previously offline aspects of peoples' lives, the nature of literacy is increasingly multimodal and aesthetically interdependent. Many of these concerns are not new of course, but there is currently a growing gap between theory and practice around literacy learning and systemic responses to education delivery. There is a need to bridge the nexus between arts and literacy by encouraging positive and productive dialogues which enable a more cohesive approach to research, theory and practice.

A More Refined Definition of Literacy

It is clear from our exploration that the understanding and operation of literacy within the arts takes on a wider ambit than the traditional domain-specific albeit English-centric view of literacy as merely reading and writing. We have shown through the various chapters that the notion of literacy within the arts is not only distinct but diverse. The prominent role of aesthetics and its connection with expression as a vehicle for meaning making often heralds aspects of the human condition which cannot be easily captured or conveyed through the written word.

The problems with continuing an approach to teaching and learning through language alone are that, first, this approach discounts much work that has been done on literacy and literate practice in a range of societies, cultures and contexts (see Barton, 2007; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Gee, 1999; Street, 1993, 2008); second, it continues a dominance of reading and writing within formal education settings rather than valuing other ways to express which may be more consistent with how learners prefer to process information, communicate and learn. Handerhan (1993) suggests that:

> Students need more opportunity to choose different forms of representation to move among worlds of meaning construction as it is feeling and imagination that are necessary components in how individuals make sense of language and literacies (p. 246)

So if we return to the definition of literacy first proposed in Chap. 1 of this book – that literacy is interpretive and expressive fluency through symbolic form, whether aural/sonic, embodied, textual, visual, written or a combination of these within the context of a particular art form – we can understand that to be literate is to be adept at using various symbol systems in creating meaning. We propose that embracing such definitions accepts that to be literate means to be creative and solve problems, and to have the option of expressing meaning and communicating in a variety of modes or ensembles of modes, depending on what we choose as the most effective way to communicate this meaning.

A Different Pedagogical Shift

There is increasing evidence that a substantial pedagogical shift is occurring in schools (particularly in developed West-centric contexts), largely resulting from the pressure to raise achievement standards on standardised tests (McDermott, 2005). Comber (2012), for example, has recently found and reported on the significant impact that testing regimes have on pedagogical approaches in a number of schools across Australia and Canada. She argues that current teaching practices are "part of an international trend towards audit cultures" (p. 122) and potentially decrease the amount of control and agency that teachers have professionally.

This is a serious issue, as, essentially, the decisions being made on what is taught, how it is implemented, and ultimately what is valued in the assessment practices in schools are taken out of the hands of teachers; those who are more adept at identifying and responding to the learning needs of students. While this one-size-fits-all approach may be more easily tracked and managed, it is akin to following a recipe with a fixation on the ingredients, steps and cooking methods used without considering the dietary needs or interests of those who will consume what is cooked.

Another problem with having a heavily focused standardised approach to measuring student achievement is that it fails to take into account the diversity of students. Comber (2012) argues that such change impacts more negatively on

communities in low-socioeconomic areas and with high populations of culturally diverse students. Consequently, already disadvantaged students may be further disadvantaged, particularly where these students culturally and socially are more reliant on aesthetic, expressive and creative literacy behavior outside the 'norm' which education systems deliver. Comber argues that:

> teachers' work is being reorganised by mandated literacy assessments; that it is changing in relation to the emergence of new workers and new tasks related to the management and interpretation of standardised data; that the changes are more profound where the student profile is culturally diverse and where parents have less educational capital. (p. 122)

Similarly, Ryan and Barton (2013) observed that opportunities for teachers to innovate on the teaching of writing was diminished due to pressures to teach on-demand and quick approaches to writing. There was strong evidence that a genre and formulaic approach to writing predominated in classroom teaching, particularly in the lead up to standardised testing. As a result, children's writing lacked an audible voice and therefore the discoursal self (Ivanic, 2004) was absent. Ryan and Barton show how students need more productive reasons, other than standardised testing, to invest in writing.

> Under highly structured conditions, without attention to creativity and identity building, the types of one-off writing that students produce show evidence of specific skill development, yet lack the fluidity and linguistic complexity of confident writers to develop an authentic relationship with the reader (p. 35)

Perhaps one of the most obvious and effective ways to develop creative skills is to engage in creative activities. A lack of quality time to invest in creative endeavours such as writing may stymie students' ability to think creatively, which then impacts on their ability to problem solve, amongst other essential knowledge skills. With such a backdrop, student work and results are likely to suffer in the longer term. It is clear that the increasing pressure on administration in schools to raise achievement results directly impacts on teaching practice. Comber and Cormack (2011) argue that school leadership teams "are asked to take responsibility for both increasing school and student performance on the one hand, while maintaining the fiction that the tests are simply for student support on the other" (p. 77).

Ensuring Theory Informs Practice and Practice Informs Theory

Research on literacy and literate practice in diverse contexts is well established. Theories and models on how students develop literacy skills and become literate have been developed and tested extensively, and the results disseminated widely. There are clear indications of how literacy education should be organised in order to best effect student outcomes (Wagner, 1999).

Despite this background of evidence, however, education systems have either been slow to adopt or have translated them in perverse ways. There exists a gap between theory and practice.

It seems perplexing that efforts to address literacy results have driven systemic changes by policy makers and yet those changes are not in line with the current and large body of evidence of what works in the classroom. Therefore system responses tend to be out of kilter with what students need in order to learn literacy effectively. While those responses not only remain, but are intensified with still greater focus, effort and resourcing, results are unlikely to improve. Moreover, such an approach may well be the reason why literacy results are not improving.

Much literacy research and theory over past 20 years or so has focused more on the social interaction and context in which this practice takes place (Jewitt, 2006; Ririe, 1984). Our definition – which acknowledges not only fluency, but also expression, regardless of curriculum or discipline, for example, whatever it means to be fluent and expressive in science may be different to arts but by no means more or less important.

Understanding and acknowledging literacy or the concept of being literate in this sense not only enhances students' learning but makes distinctly dramatic improvements – more so than the narrow limited skills approach (as can be seen in Chaps. 4, 12, 13, and 14).

A Call for More Engaging, Encouraging and Productive Dialogues

Life is becoming more complex as the rate of change increases exponentially through the development and wider adoption of emerging technologies. This context means we are presented with an ever increasing array of new challenges that need solutions; old ways of doing business that are swiftly upgraded and refined; aesthetic decisions about how we present ourselves through fashion and the latest gadgets; and the ways in which we communicate across the globe. Our ability to deal with this complexity and the challenges it brings requires sophisticated creativity and thought, albeit artistic thought. There is little doubt that those who are aesthetically arts literate are able to function more effectively than others in a world of such rapid change (LaMore et al., 2013). But there are other reasons why we need more productive and more aware of existing links.

The typical education discourse emphasises one concept over the other; for example, ARTS approaches to literacy learning, or the application of a LITERACY pedagogical/research lens to the arts. The nature of such relationships need to move beyond what we view as the current, somewhat sporadic and passive arrangement between the two concepts and associated literacy disciplines. What is required is an engagement of one with the other, drawing on the strengths and positive contributions of each. Moreover, the resulting fusion needs to be embedded within education systems, reflected in contemporary teaching practice, and resident in approaches to assessment.

In this sense it is important to refresh the arts-literacy relationship by offering more productive dialogues. If we take the notion that the arts and literacy need to 'stretch each other' (see Freebody's Chap. 16) in order for a more constructive connection to exist, then we need to acknowledge that each concept is dependent on, and interrelated with, the other. Moreover, arts-literacy dialogues are present and function in our lives daily.

As this book has demonstrated, the arts have much to offer traditional approaches to literacy learning. Similarly, the dominant literacy approach may, in turn, offer the arts a robust backdrop of practitioners, teaching resources and infrastructure against which to cement its value and relevance to addressing leading educational challenges, like lifting literacy performance. Rather than competing for curriculum time with the dominant focus on literacy, the arts may well be part of the next generation of solutions and interventions.

We acknowledge that the above represents an ideal and, if we compare it with the present, we are really only just beginning the journey of bringing arts and literacy together. To this end, the current volume represents perhaps a first step in establishing the agenda and tabling the possibilities. There is still further to go and we would suggest the next step might be encouraging opportunities for dialogue between arts and literacy practitioners and setting forth a platform for both to work collaboratively as part of an evolving arts-literacy practice encapsulating the sharing of perspective, planning, resources, methods, and assessment tools.

We could reasonably hope for some initial interest from practitioners, sponsorship from school administrators and leaders and resourcing in the form of curriculum space and teacher time to enable dialogues to occur. Ideally, the value of these dialogues will be seen not only within the classroom but at a systemic level. Such an aspiration will require support for the review and evaluation of results and, if proven effective, the dissemination of best practice, potential further investment, the development of relevant theories and practice models and professional development.

With productive dialogues in place as a starting point, further innovation will come in time. The ultimate goal, of course, is that we might witness systemic change whereby arts literacy is mainstreamed, resulting in an expansive view of literacy where teaching and learning embraces the arts; is multimodal in its conception, design and delivery; and draws more substantially on the sources of creative, aesthetic and expressive nuances and meanings the arts comprise.

Freebody, Barton, and Chan (2013) argue that literacy is 'about being in the world'. The premise that literacy takes in this book and in arts contexts is that, because the arts are intrinsically a part of what we do in everyday life, if one does not participate or become aware of arts-aesthetics and multiple communicative modes then they are not 'being in the world'. Being able to view objects from an aesthetic-artistic stance and also being able to articulate this effectively allows us to express what is humanly instinctive. Such an understanding may suggest that we need to start to rethink not only our current theorisations but also our application of literacy education and our aspirations for education in the arts. To be literate today is to be arts-literate or, as Greene (1991) puts it, 'wide-awake':

> People may be brought to watch and to listen with increasing wide-awakeness, attentiveness, and care. And they may be brought to discover multiple ways of looking at blackbirds and whales and riverbanks and city streets, looking at things as if they might be otherwise than they are. If this occurs, they will have learned how to move into the artistic-aesthetic domain; and they may have come closer to discovering how to be free (p. 160).

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