Full citation.

Abstract

Experimentally based research within developmental psychology has suggested that the way children are taught art shapes their artistic growth. Thus, researchers have begun to acknowledge the importance of studying the wider contexts which shape children's experiences of art. This paper builds on previous educational policy based research by examining how art is taught in English Primary Schools. Ethnographic methods informed by social constructionism are used to investigate the ways in which Reception teachers work with 4 - 5 year old children during art lessons held in two English primary schools. Reflexive ethnography and a synthesis approach to discourse analysis are utilised to examine i) the positions adopted by teachers as they introduce an art activity and ii) wider art values drawn upon to conceptualise 'good' art. It is argued that teachers adopt differing approaches which promote realistic art. This is discussed in relation to curriculum policy and practice.

Key words: Art education; teacher training; the English National Curriculum for art; discourse analysis; the social construction of art in the classroom.

The relationship between education and children's artistic development

Research conducted within developmental psychology has begun to acknowledge the effect that art education has on children's artistic growth. Cox, Perara and Xu's (1998) cross-cultural research explored the drawing abilities of 5 - 12 year old state educated British and Chinese children and Chinese children who attend private weekend art schools. No significant difference was found between the quality of imaginative and observational drawings created by state educated children from both cultures. However, the drawings of Chinese children who received additional private art education classes were consistently rated as superior. This difference was attributed to private art education classes and exposure to an art school syllabus which "includes a greater range of technical skills and a wider range of styles" (Cox, Perara & Xu, 1998, p. 181).

The significance of art education is further supported by research conducted by Cox and Rowlands (2000) which examined the completed drawings created by children educated in English state run schools (which follow the English National Curriculum for Art), Steiner schools (which promote imagination, fantasy and developing children's creative potential) and Montessori schools (which emphasise observational drawing). Twenty 6 - 7 year old children – educated in each of the school systems - were asked to complete a free drawing task, a scene drawing and a picture from their imagination. Results showed that the drawings created by Steiner educated children were judged to be more creative and demonstrated the best drawing ability.

This body of research indicates that the ways in which children are taught art impacts upon their development as artists. However, a limitation of an experimental methodology is that it exclusively focuses on completed drawings in isolation from the educational context in which they were created. Typically studies involve adult judges using Likert scales to indicate how good drawings are. For example, in the study conducted by Cox, Perara and Xu (1998, p. 174) judges used a five point scale where 1 indicated "a very poor drawing" and 5 "an excellent drawing". Consequently, experimental research

is able to map out developmental patterns. However, it is unable to offer insight into the educational context in which children's drawings are created, the ways in which art lessons are delivered and how this might shape and limit children's artwork.

In response, Rose, Jolley and Burkitt (2006) conducted a large scale questionnaire study to examine how teachers (from English state schools), parents and children themselves influence a child's drawing experience. One of the aims of this research was to give a better understanding of children's educational experiences by exploring the kinds of support children receive during art lessons. Content analysis of open ended questionnaire responses collected from teachers indicated that during art lessons they (i) "set expectations through demonstrations and instruction" (ii) "encourage observational skills" (iii) focus on "technique and skills development" and (iv) provide "encouragement" (Jolley, 2009, p. 307). This was supported by the children's accounts of the type of help they receive.

Rose, Jolley and Burkitt's (2006) research is noteworthy as it symbolises a shift away from studying the child in isolation from the educational setting and begins to acknowledge the wider contexts in which artistic development occurs. As such their work has begun to offer insight into the educational systems which experimental research has suggested has an effect on artistic growth. However, as Jolley (2010) has pointed out, a limitation of this research is the use of a methodology which allows teachers to give socially desirable answers. Consequently, there may be a difference between what teachers report and their actual teaching practices. In order to overcome this limitation Jolley (2010) suggested that observational work is needed to explore how art is taught in the classroom. Following this argument the current paper locates the research focus in the classroom and examines how art is taught in English state run schools. This is achieved by first examining the English curriculum for art and then examining how teachers deliver the curriculum in the classroom.

Teaching art in an English primary school context

In an English primary school context children's learning spans three distinct Key Stages – the Foundation Stage (3 - 5 years); Key Stage 1 (5-7 years) and Key Stage 2 (7-11 years). At the age of 11 children leave primary school and complete their compulsory education at high school during which they work through Key Stage 3 (11 -14 years) and Key Stage 4 (14 -16 years).

Throughout their primary education children work to meet attainment targets for specific key stages. In the Foundation Stage children's creative development (which encompasses art, music, imaginative play and dance) is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) documents. These documents are created by a Government agency - the department for children schools and families – and outline progressively more sophisticated targets for children's creative activity. When working with children in the Foundation Stage teachers observe the child's creative activity and assess the child's progress using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Once children have completed the Foundation Stage their learning is shaped by the Art and Design curriculum for Key Stages 1 - 2. This involves meeting attainment targets in (i) exploring and developing ideas; (ii) investigating and making art craft and design; (iii) evaluating and developing work; and (iv) knowledge and understanding. When working to meet these attainment targets teachers utilise documents created by the QCA[1] such as *Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage* and *Schemes of work* which provide official guidelines on the correct way to teach art. Therefore, educational policy – in terms of curriculum documents - plays a key role in shaping and limiting how art is approached in the classroom.

An analysis of the presentation of art in the English Primary Curriculum conducted by Hallam, Lee and Das Gupta (2007) suggested that three teaching positions are presented in the primary curriculum for Art and Design: (i) expert, (ii) facilitator and (iii) philosopher. Each of these teaching

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[1] QCA – Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

approaches is aligned with (i) developing skills; (ii) allowing free expression and (iii) teaching art history and art appreciation. These positions are echoed in the *Early Years Foundation Stage* documents.

Hallam et al. (2007) argued that the teaching approaches of expert, facilitator and philosopher are given equal weight in the curriculum. However, there are no practical guidelines on how to strike a balance between these approaches in the classroom to ensure children receive a well rounded art education. This lack of guidance is particularly poignant for the majority of primary school teachers who feel embarrassed by their limited drawing ability and lack confidence in their ability to teach art (Cox, 1992). Such teachers have no formal art training and have argued that the Post Graduate Certificate in Education does not adequately prepare them to teach art (Clement, 1994). Therefore, primary school teaching professionals are placed in a difficult position where they are expected to teach a topic in which they have very limited knowledge, experience and formal skills. Indeed, many primary school teachers report that their limited artistic skill and expertise prevents them from delivering effective art lessons (O'Connor, 2000). This is reflected in Cooke, Griffin and Cox's (1998, p. 3) assertion that Her Majesty's inspectorate (1990) "was still lamenting the lack of any coherent and informed practice in primary schools" when it came to the delivery of art lessons.

Recent research conducted by Hallam, Das Gupta and Lee (2008) supported this observation by suggesting that there is a gap between the presentation of art in the curriculum and teaching practice. During interviews, a sample of primary school teachers - who work at each of the key stages - reported that they were dissatisfied with the art curriculum and their practice. Furthermore, these teachers suggested that they adopted the position of *either* expert or facilitator when teaching art. This implies that children get an inconsistent art education during which teachers exclusively focus either on self expression *or* the development of skills. In addition to this, these teachers reported that the position of philosopher is not adopted in practice. Consequently, children do not get the space to contemplate questions surrounding the function of art or develop an understanding of the aesthetic qualities of artwork.

The proposed gap between policy and practice is a case for concern. Prominent researchers and educators propose that a focus on teaching artistic skills and allowing free expression are essential parts of a well rounded art education. Barnes (2002) has argued that simply focusing on free expression creates an environment where only the most creative pupils can survive. He suggested that art should be taught like other curriculum topics such as Mathematics to prevent children from becoming bored and frustrated. Arnheim (1989, p. 33) on the other hand is critical of formal teaching methods which focus exclusively on skills. He argued these methods promote the "mechanical correctness of producing images" and encourage "mindless reproduction". Therefore a teaching approach which exclusively focuses on developing children's skills from a young age is problematic because it stifles creativity by passing on the message that 'good' art is a photographic copy of reality (Arnheim, 1989).

This paper builds upon previous research which has suggested that there is a gap between curriculum policy and practice by exploring the ways in which the English art curriculum is implemented in classrooms. A specific concern is to investigate if teachers adopt a balanced approach – specified in the curriculum - which incorporates the positions of expert, facilitator and philosopher when teaching art.

Methodology

In order to explore the ways in which teachers work with pupils during art lessons, ethnographic methods were used to collect a range of qualitative data from Reception, Year 1, Year 4 and Year 6 classes held in two Staffordshire schools. These year groups represent significant stages in the primary school system - Reception teachers' practice is informed by the Foundation Stage Curriculum; Year 1 teachers utilise the Key Stage 1 curriculum; Year 4 teachers teach the Key Stage 2 documents and Year 6 teachers focus on creating the end product of the primary education system. To summarise, a total of 8 teachers participated in this research (2 from each year group). The average class size for each of these teachers was 28

students and so approximately 224 children were also involved in the research.

Ethnography is a method aligned with interpretivism which aims to explore and develop an understanding of people's active experience of the world (Burgess, 1984; Denzin, 1997). This methodology is characterised by researchers locating themselves in the everyday context they are studying and collecting field data using a number of techniques such as observation, reflexive field diaries, informal conversations and formal interviews (Hammersley, 1990). In line with an ethnographic framework the first named author worked as a classroom assistant for approximately 6 weeks on art projects held in the classes listed above. During the art projects children in all classes received one art lesson a week during the afternoon session. This meant that a total of 9 hours was spent observing art lessons with each teacher involved in the research and a total of 72 hours were spent in the classroom during this project.

When working in the classroom the first author helped the teacher set up and tidy away art materials and worked with children who had queries during the lessons. This enabled first hand observations - which where written up as reflexive field notes - to be made from the position of participant observer. In addition, video and audio equipment were used to record the last art lesson of the project.

Analytic approach

The following analysis is informed by reflexive ethnography (Burgess, 1984) and a synthesis approach to discourse analysis advocated by Edley and Wetherell (1997). Analysis begins with an account of observations made as a classroom assistant during the ethnographic phase of the research. This is supported by the inclusion of a video still which allows an exploration of how the physical arrangement of the classroom enables and constrains interaction. The analytic scope then moves to the level of talk as discourse analysis is used to examine classroom interaction between teachers and children. Discourse analysis challenges the widely held assumption that words can be

viewed as a transparent medium through which psychologists can access the inner workings of the mind (Butt, 1999). Instead, language is viewed as having a performative function – it is used to achieve certain goals, to construe and present knowledge in certain ways (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, within this framework language becomes the focus of study (Abell & Stokoe, 2001). Discourse analysts work to "explicate the processes by which people come to describe, explain and otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live" (Gergen, 1985, p. 266).

The synthesis approach to discourse analysis incorporates bottom up and top down approaches to language. In line with a bottom up approach the focus of study is "the ongoing construction of meaning in everyday dialogues where discourse is used within joint activities or relationships" (Burkitt, 1999, p. 69). Within this framework analysts work with talk that is not created for the sole purpose of research e.g. counselling sessions, interviews, classroom interaction. Recordings of these types of interaction are analysed to investigate and describe the underlying mechanisms of interactions and methods used to accomplish conversational goals (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). For Heritage (2001, p. 53) this means the analytic focus lies in the "basic dimensions of conversational practice" such as turn taking (Goodwin, 1981); sequence organisation (Pomerantz, 1984); the overall structure of conversations (Schegloff, 1968) and word selection (Schegloff, 1972). To enable this type of analysis extracts are transcribed using the Jefferson system outlined by Wooffitt (2001) (appendix 1).

A top down approach is informed by the work of Foucault. It seeks to identify discourses (systems of meaning) available in a particular society and historical period and how these discourses shape and limit people's understanding of the world (Burman & Parker, 1993). It is argued that discourses represent the kind of language available to a society in a given historical period that are used to construct knowledge. Consequently, discourses shape understanding of phenomena by ruling in and defining acceptable ways to talk and ruling out undesirable ways of constructing knowledge (Hall, 2001). Following this discourses work to present certain

ways of *seeing* the world, through the construction of knowledge, and *being* in the world, through the production of subject positions (Parker, 1994). Therefore, discourses work to shape and limit people's experience. In summary a synthesis approach is advantageous as it enables a close examination of how teachers and children negotiate an art activity without loosing sight of the wider educational assumptions and ideology that guide these interactions.

The focus on language and the construction of meaning within discourse analysis creates an important distinction between this type of analytic approach and other forms of qualitative analysis such as content analysis and grounded theory. In contrast to content analysis discourse analysis does not seek to systematically identify a list of categories which can be used to code the data (Silverman, 2001). Instead, focus lies in exploring selected case studies in depth rather than counting or presenting the number of times a category appears throughout the entire data set. Moreover discourse analysis exclusively focuses on the construction of meaning in a *specific* context. Thus unlike grounded theory this analytic approach does not aim generate causal theories which can be applied across a range of contexts.

In summation, the goal of this analysis is to examine how art is co-constructed within a specific context rather than to create a coding system or theory which can be generalised to all English primary school classrooms. While teachers in other classrooms may follow the same interactional 'rules' and draw upon the same discourses explored in this analysis they will belong to a different school which has its own culture. Consequently, art may have more or less importance within the general school culture, be taught by specialists and non specialists and therefore will be presented in different ways. This makes it impossible to generate a blanket theory which can be applied across "time, situation and persons" (Gergen, 1992, p. 26).

Analysis

During ethnographic work it was observed that the teacher's introduction was a crucial part of the art lesson. Throughout the introduction teachers interacted with the children to present the focus of the forthcoming art activity and establish what the children were expected to do. When delivering art lessons it was observed that teachers largely adopted the positions of expert and/*or* facilitator. Furthermore, it was observed that expert teachers largely adopted what Edwards and Mercer (1987, p. 2) have described as a "traditional" teaching approach in which *"knowledge is not negotiable or open to question by the pupils. The intended end product of the process is the pupils' acceptance and understanding of what the teacher already knows".* In contrast teachers adopting the position of facilitator adopted what Edwards and Mercer (1987, p. 2) have described as a "progressive" teaching approach. In line with this approach facilitators offered *"offered more opportunities for pupils to negotiate common curriculum goals and incorporated pupils' wider experience and interests into what is taught."*

The preference for teaching styles (expert and/*or* facilitator) indicates that the gap between educational policy and teaching practice identified by Hallam et al. (2008) carries over into the classroom. In order to further investigate the gap between educational policy and practice the following case studies – taken from a larger research project - explore classroom interactions between Reception teachers who adopt the position of expert or facilitator and their respective classes during the introduction to the art activity. The Reception class forms the final part of the Foundation Stage and the children in this class are aged between 4 and 5 years old. Thus, Reception teachers work exclusively with children aged between 4 and 5 and are responsible for delivering the whole Foundation Stage curriculum outlined in the EYFS documents to this age group.

Art and the expert

Analysis begins by exploring the ways in which an expert Reception teacher co-constructs art with her class.

Extract one

The children of this class had been working on a dinosaur project. The teacher made a cross curricular link to this project by asking children to paint a picture of dinosaurs during their art activity.

In figure 1 traditional classroom relations are evidenced in the relative positioning of teacher and children. By sitting in her seat with the children gathered around her the teacher creates a physical hierarchy. The teacher is placed in a position of authority which requires the children to literally look up to her for knowledge. Furthermore, the position of the children on the carpet focuses joint attention towards the teacher. This limits the children's opportunity to engage with each other indicating that they should only attend to the teachers understanding of art.

Figure 1: Reception children and a teacher adopting the position of expert

1. **Teacher:** >What we are going to paint this afternoon < We are going to
2. think about volcanoe:s an:::d the landscape a little bit and what the earth
3. would look like, what ↑family ↓groups as well. So you might want to have
4. some (1.90) ↑ferny tree::s and you might want to have a family group of
5. dinosaurs (1.20). Perhaps a herd of BI::G lo:ng necked plant eaters (0.76)
6. °keeping their babies safe°. (1.56) What else might we have seen (0.58)
7. We talked about it very briefly before, (1.10) child one
8. (0.78)

9. **Child one:** er::m::: (0.77) the mill (0.96) the mill (1.56) the hundred million
10. trees.
11. (0.73)
12. **Teacher:** Yes >lots and lots of trees.< (0.7) <u>Child two</u> (1.56) what did Miss
13. Howard[2] talk to you about last week (8.96) Child three
14. (1.23)
15. **Child three:** Wh, when, when, when the dinosaurs come <u>out</u> and they are
16. not rea<u>dy</u> they <u>die:::</u>
17. (0.71)
18. **Teacher:** <u>Yes:::</u> .We did look at some fossils of baby dinosaurs. (0.5) What
19. did the dinosaurs do (0.71) Did they have live babies like we do (1.02)
20. Did they lay frog spawn in ponds (1.08) What did they <u>do</u> (1.47) Where
21. did the babies come from (1.08) child four
22. (1.61)
23. **Child four:** °From the ↑egg:::°
24. **Teacher:** <u>Yes::</u> ((evident excitement in voice)) eggs. You have got a nes:t
25. with <u>eggs</u> in and we found out that they put rotting vegetation over the top
26. to keep them wa<u>rm</u> and that <u>some </u>of them were (1.18) very, very good
27. mothers. Go on child five you are <u>desperate</u> to tell me something
28. (1.2)
29. **Child four:** We saw a fossilised bone outside.
30. **Teacher:** Did you? (0.4). Here That's wonderful. But they did have
31. fossilised eggs and some that had al::ready opened with baby dinosaurs in
32. (0.78) some (1.10) remember we saw the picture of that one holding a
33. fossilised baby dinosaur and it was only as big as a kitten and there would
34. be nests and maiasaura was a <u>very</u>, <u>very</u> good mother she <u>stayed</u> and
35. watched over her: babies and fed them on leaves and berries while they
36. were still in the nest. (0.9) °Don't pick you nose sweetie.° (0.96) So you
37. might want to do something like that but I want a <u>busy</u> <u>scene </u>with a
38. dinosaur family in (0.8) and you have got some little fine brushes to do
39. some nice detailed work, (0.84) <u>care</u>ful work.

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[2] All participants have been assigned pseudonyms

In this extract the teacher's introduction sets clear boundaries for the class. This begins in line 1 with the teacher's question "what are we going to paint this afternoon." It is important to note the lack of pause after this question does not give the children a chance to respond. Instead the teacher answers her own question. Use of this meaningless question places children in a passive position from which they are unable to share and discuss what they think the focus of the art activity should be. This begins to limit children's opportunity to be creative and asserts the teacher's position as someone who will decide what the children are going to paint. Indeed, in this opening section of talk the teacher begins to give the children instruction on things they could paint such as "a herd of big long necked plant eaters" (line 5).

Once the teacher has established the task focus she uses the method of elicitation to maintain control of the collective account generated by the class (Edwards & Mercer, 1987). The teacher's use of questions such as "What else might we have seen" (line 6) act as prompts to shape the focus of the discussion. As such the teacher establishes what Edwards and Mercer (1987) term an IRF (initiation, response, feedback) pattern of interaction with her class. The teacher initiates any interaction with a question such as "what else might we have seen we talked about it very briefly before." (lines 6/7). This is followed a response from child one "the hundred million trees" (lines 9/10) and then feedback from the teacher "yes lots of trees" (line 12). Once the teacher has completed her feedback the IRF sequence begins again with another question "what did miss Howard talk to you about last week" (lines 12/13).

Significantly, during IRF sequences initiation questions from the teacher are followed by a pause but no response from the children. During these pauses it was observed that children who wished to make a contribution silently raised their hand to gain the teachers attention rather than directly vocalising a response. This is evidenced in figure 1 as the teacher's gaze is directed towards a child on the left-hand side with their hand raised. This gave the teacher opportunity to select which child would provide a response. It is only when the teacher directly addresses child one in line 7 that the class members become involved in the discussion.

This ritual follows the traditional rules of the classroom that (i) only one child has the right to speak at any time and (ii) the teacher selects who will respond to her question (Edwards & Westgate, 1994). A context specific pattern of interaction is created where there is no overlap in the talk and the teacher is never interrupted; consequently the teacher's position of power is established - she organises turn-taking and chooses who can speak and when.

It is also important to note the function of teacher feedback. Edwards and Westgate (1994) argued that teachers use feedback to give the class members insight into the value of a contribution. Throughout this extract, suggestions which fit in with the teachers agenda of creating a family group of dinosaurs are heavily elaborated upon by the teacher. Other contributions such as "we saw a fossilised bone outside" (line 29) are cut short by the feedback "did you. Here. That's wonderful" (line 30) before the teacher steers the children's attention back to dinosaur nests and what they would look like. Moreover, the depiction of a family scene is linked clearly to the teacher's expectations for the task as in lines 37/38 the teacher asserts "I want a busy scene with a dinosaur family in". Therefore, instruction on what to paint comes directly from the teacher. This combined with the teachers' focus on "nice detailed work, careful work" (line 39) leaves the children in no doubt that in order to create successful artwork they must follow the teacher's instruction concerning composition and artistic style. A focus on detail and representational art can be traced back to the EYFS documents which state that children should "understand that they can use lines to enclose a space and then begin to use these shapes to represent objects" (EYFS practice guidance, p.111). Furthermore the EYFS documents also state that teachers should "teach skills and techniques associated with the things children are doing" (EYFS practice guidance, p.111). This focus on representational art and skill development means that the activity of painting dinosaurs is used to help children develop fine motor skills rather than express creative flair.

During the subsequent art lesson it was observed that eleven children created art which fitted in with the teacher's brief. Eight children created non-representational art or pictures which depicted one dinosaur rather than a family. When evaluating this artwork the teacher categorised artwork which met her requirements as being above average and artwork outside of her expectations as below average.

Art and the facilitator

The next extract exemplifies an interaction between a Reception teacher adopting the position of facilitator and her class.

Extract two

The children of this class had been working on a fairy tale project where different aspects of their learning had been linked to popular fairy tales and folk mythology. Following this learning theme the teacher read the class a story about a world which only had the colour grey until a wizard created the three primary colours through experimentation. Subsequently diverse colours were introduced in the book through colour mixing.

After reading the story the teacher moved from her chair and joined the class on the carpet to introduce the art activity. This movement physically removes the teacher from her 'seat of power' by bringing her to the same 'level' as her class. By positioning herself on the carpet - a space that is traditionally only occupied by children during discussion times - the teacher created an informal atmosphere by aligning herself with her pupils. This action symbolised a shift in traditional teacher/pupil relations. During her introduction the teacher discussed how to mix colours with the children and familiarised the class with the vase of daffodils they were going to paint. The extract below is taken from the end of this introductory talk.

Figure 2: Reception children and a teacher adopting the position of facilitator

1. **Teacher:** Have a little go _first_ mixing the colours (2.22) and experiment

2. like the wizard did mixing the colours and there is some paper on the

3. tab<u>le</u> for you to mix your colours <u>with</u> (1.14) to experiment and >when you

4. have got the colour that you want< you can paint lovely daffodils can't

5. ↑you? (0.71) Have a little experiment and have a go first of mixing your

6. colours. So you are going be the colour wizards <u>today</u> (1.26) mixing

7. colours. (1.24)OK?

8. (1.03)

9. **Children:** Good

10. (0.93)

11. **Teacher:** And if you can you <u>can</u> make a <u>painting</u> but perhaps you

12. just want to experiment for today (0.41) but if you do a painting of the

13. daffodils. (0.48) Sh::::::. ↓I don't want to see any purple daffodils↓ use

14. the <u>correct colours</u>.

15. (0.56)

16. ((General chatter))

17. **Child:** You have to draw what you <u>see</u> what you see.

18. (0.91)

19. **Teacher:** That's right you have to draw and paint what you see. Well

20. done.

21. (1.73)

22. **Child:** You have to draw what you <u>see</u> what you see.

23. **Teacher:** Oh::: You have all remembered. You have to keep having to
24. stop and have a look and a think and then have another go.=
25. **Child:** = 'cos if you don't you won't know what they look like.
26. (0.83)
27. **Teacher:** You won't know what they look like or what colours to use.
28. Have a go and remember what I said about washing your paintbrush
29. out in clean water. Right. OK then let's see who would like to have a
30. go. Who hasn't done this before? (Teacher selects children to start
31. the painting activity).

This teacher emphasises the goals of the forthcoming art activity and reaches a joint understanding about the process of creating successful art. Initially in lines 1 and 2 the teacher focuses on "experimentation" and its role in the lesson. Here, the children are positioned as "wizards". This combined with the teacher's provision of "paper" for the children to 'mix' their colours and "experiment" (lines 2/3) construes learning through experimentation as central to the lesson. Significantly, the teacher does not give direct instruction on how to mix the colours or uses directive questioning in her introduction. Furthermore, instead of asking specific children to make a contribution the teacher uses pauses (lines 5 and 7) in her speech to give all children equal opportunity to join in. When formally incorporating the children into her introduction the teacher asks if the proposed activity is "OK" (line 7). This open ended question invites the children to take an active role in shaping the focus of the discussion. As such the traditional IRF sequence exemplified in the previous extract is disrupted.

In line 11 the teacher's assertion that "you can make a painting but perhaps you just want to experiment" offers further opportunity for the children to negotiate their learning focus. Two options have been presented – one that centres on freedom and experimentation and another which centres on creating a representational painting. Hence the children can choose to create abstract, experimental artwork or a daffodil painting. However, use of the word "correct" in line 14 creates a distinction between experimentation, functional colour mixing and reinforces the notion of right and wrong artwork. The

teacher's emphasis on creating the "correct colours" needed to paint the daffodils (lines 14) stresses the importance of functional colour mixing. Therefore, the teacher begins to impose restrictions surrounding the creation of a daffodil painting as such she begins to subtly adopt the position of expert. Indeed, in line 13 the teacher construes "purple daffodils" as something she "does not want to see;" use of unrealistic colours is aligned with the wrong way to do art thus implying that good artwork recreates direct observation. This focus on correct colour use and realism draws heavily on the EYFS documents and the learning goals of "exploring what happens when they (children) mix colours" and "choosing particular colours for a particular purpose" (EYFS practice guidance, p.112). Therefore the learning objectives outlined in the EYFS documents constrain teaching practice and the conception of art presented to the children.

Significantly it is the theme of realism – not experimentation - which is expanded on from line 17 as a child shares their understanding of the processes involved in creating artwork. The child's interjection shows disregard for the rules of a traditional classroom where the teacher owns the interaction. In contrast to the previous extract the child does not raise their hand to speak - they simply enter into conversation with the teacher. This positions the child as someone who can engage with the teacher on equal terms and creates an atmosphere more conducive to debate and discussion. Indeed, rather than reprimanding the child for speaking out of turn the teacher agrees that "drawing and painting what you see" is the right way to do things and congratulates the child with a "well done" (lines 19/20). This reinforces the child's conceptualisation of art as "looking" and "drawing" what you see to the rest of the class – construing art created following these rules as valued.

The skills-based conceptualisation of art centring on the production of a representation of daffodils is expanded upon in line 24. Here the teacher shares the procedure - which is needed to create realistic artwork - of having to "stop and have a look and a think and then another go" with the rest of the class. In line 25 the child actively negotiates this conceptualisation of art from a shared instructor role thus removing him from the position of passive

learner. At this point the child works very closely with the teacher – almost completing her sentence - by elaborating upon why it is important to "have a look and a think" whilst painting. Significantly, the interaction between teacher and child exclusively focuses on the procedure children need to follow to "draw what they see". Therefore, the understanding of art as a subject where children utilise their skills to create a photo realistic piece of work is presented to the rest of the class as the right way of working. Consequently, the option of "just experimenting" introduced in line 12 is not elaborated upon or conceptualised as the right way of working.

It is important to note that despite this focus on realistic art eight children went on to create experimental artwork and three children created realistic daffodil paintings. When evaluating this artwork the teacher selected examples of both kinds of artwork to represent above average and below average artwork.

Discussion

This analysis has explored the ways in which art activities are negotiated between Reception teachers adopting different teaching positions and the 4 and 5 year old children in their class. As such, the ethnographic methods utilised in this research gave a valuable insight into how teachers deliver art lessons. Although this analysis draws upon a small sample the teaching positions of expert and facilitator also were adopted by the Year 1, Year 4 and Year 6 teachers who where involved in the wider project. Significantly, this observed imbalance was specific to art lessons. In other lessons such as Maths and English teachers would adopt a different approach. As such the different teaching approaches explored in this analysis support Hallam et al.'s (2008) argument that there is a gap between the curriculum requirement that teachers should strike a balance between the positions of expert, facilitator and philosopher when teaching art. Moreover, it further explored Jolley's (2010) argument that teachers focus on clearly setting expectations, promoting observational skills and general technical competence during art lessons.

Analysis of classroom interaction demonstrated that teachers are united in meeting the goals identified by Jolley (2010). However, these goals were met using very different teaching approaches. The expert teacher maintained control of the interaction ensuring that children closely followed her instruction. In line with this approach children were placed in a passive position and expected to conform to the teacher's conception of the right way to do art. Conversely, the teacher adopting the position of facilitator offered children opportunity to decide their own learning focus, take an active role when negotiating the planning of artwork and discover colour mixing through experimentation rather than following direct instructions. Significantly, this teacher also set strict boundaries concerning the use of colour choice in relation to the observational art activity.

It is important to note that when introducing art activities to the class both the expert and facilitator did not enter into discussion about art history and appreciation. Hence, the position of philosopher was not formally adopted in this study. Instead a conception of what constitutes 'good' art was implicit in the teachers' instruction. This is significant because despite adopting different teaching approaches both the expert and the facilitator almost exclusively drew upon a skill-based art discourse to construe 'good' art as photorealistic. This closed down children's opportunity to discuss different ways of conceptualising art and exploring what art is.

In this analysis the origins of a skill-based discourse were traced back to the EYFS documents. This highlights the role government regulations have in shaping the construction of art in the classroom (Olson, 2003). Indeed, teachers reported that the curriculum stifles and limits their freedom in the classroom (Hallam et al. 2008). Thus, teachers were not free to deliver any kind of lesson they wish to; instead their approach was limited to meeting curriculum requirements. Links between the teachers' focus on delivering skills and the curriculum indicates that these documents give a clear outline of the skills children are required to learn but little instruction on how to balance different teaching approaches when delivering these skills.

Future directions

The gap between educational policy and practice evidenced in this analysis goes some way to explaining the lack of coherent and informed teaching practice in art lessons identified by Her Majesty's inspectorate. As previously discussed teachers predominately adopted the position of expert *or* facilitator in the classroom and did not meet the EYFS requirement to strike a balance between the positions of expert, facilitator and philosopher. Given the importance of providing children the space to freely express themselves, develop their artistic skills and aesthetic sensibilities the unbalanced teaching approaches identified in this analysis are a cause for concern. They indicate that children are receiving an inconsistent art education as they could be taught by an expert in Reception, a facilitator in Year 1 and so on. This means that children receive different messages about what art is. For example children taught by the expert teacher in this analysis were offered little freedom to create personal art expressions whereas children taught by the facilitator were able to create experimental or observational artwork, and only after this were given explicit direction regarding colour use.

This lack of consistency indicates that teachers would benefit from guidance and support on how to develop a balanced teaching approach which supports children's artistic development in all three areas outlined in the curriculum. Movement towards this approach would allow for a more consistent art education for primary school children and could start during teacher training. As previously argued in this paper the majority of primary school teachers have no formal art training and do not feel as though their teacher training adequately prepares them to teach art. This suggestion was supported during informal discussions and formal interviews with all the teachers who took part in this research project. This implies that the delivery of specialised art courses during teacher training would be invaluable as it would equip teachers with the skills base needed to teach art confidently. Furthermore, specialist training would give teachers the chance to appreciate the importance of being an expert, facilitator and philosopher and help develop a teaching approach which incorporates each of these areas.

Prentice (2002, p. 79) has argued that successful teacher training should encompass workshops designed to give trainee teachers the opportunity to (i) work with a range of 2D and 3D art media, (ii) develop connections between subject knowledge and teaching practices, (iii) demonstrate understanding of the relationship between "intelligent making" and critical reflection and (iv) engage in discussion about art and design to develop a subject specific vocabulary which will enable them to discuss art confidently. Prentice (2002) has also suggested that these workshops would be supported by – (i) teachers' use of sketchbooks to develop their own ideas and written assignments in which teachers reflect upon their experience and contemporary issues in art and (ii) the opportunity to engage with the wider art community through museum/gallery visits, collaborative work with visiting artists/crafts people and networking with specialist tutors. The training proposed by Prentice (2002) would give teachers the chance to create their own artwork and encourage them to develop their skills and an awareness of art philosophy. As such it supports the positions of expert, facilitator and philosopher as well as emphasizing the importance of balancing these roles.

Research conducted in Australia has suggested that specialised art training helps support trainee teachers. Gibson (2003) reported that after completing two compulsory units on visual arts, trainee teachers who had no formal art training felt they could go on to teach art successfully. Further research connected to this project also highlights the effectiveness of art training for teachers (Hallam, 2007). During interviews conducted as part of the larger research project teachers requested art workshops to help support and further develop their teaching in this area. In response the researchers worked with the teachers involved in the research to design and implement art workshops. These half day workshops were held in both schools and led by a professional artist. Broadly speaking the workshops gave teachers opportunity to share good teaching practice and discuss their concerns about teaching art with the artist, create their own piece of artwork and then reflect on their art experience and what they considered the value of creating art. Preliminary analysis of the workshops indicated that the workshops enabled teachers to appreciate the importance of adopting a more balanced approach to art and supported their

teaching practices. Further research could build upon this by evaluating the long term effects of the workshops and the extent to which they change teachers approach in the classroom.

Changes in training also need to be supported by including practical advice on how to incorporate the positions of expert, facilitator and philosopher in the curriculum. As stated in this paper the EYFS emphasises the importance of allowing children to develop skills, freedom to express themselves and space to contemplate art history and philosophy. However, these documents do not specifically give guidance on delivering these in practice – i.e. how to adopt positions of expert, facilitator and philosopher - and lack instruction on how teachers can create a balance between these teaching positions. This could be overcome by clearly outlining and defining each of the teaching positions. In addition, curriculum documents would incorporate guidance relating to (i) how to teach certain skills through instruction, (ii) advising how these skills can be used to create a range of effects so children have the opportunity to develop their own style and (iii) a synopsis of the work of relevant artists and aesthetic/philosophical questions which maybe considered during the project. These changes to training and policy could transfer to greater confidence in the classroom and enable a move to a more balanced, stable art education for children.

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Appendix 1

The symbols used in transcription were taken from Wooffitt (2001) and are common to conversation analysis. They were originally developed by Gail Jefferson.

(0.5) Numbers in brackets refer to pauses in tenths of seconds

:   Indicate and extension of the preceding vowel sound. The more colons there are the greater the extent of the stretching.

(( ))   A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non verbal activity.

( )   Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.

(guess)   the words within a single bracket indicate the transcribers best guess at an unclear fragment.

<u>Red</u>   Underlining indicates stress or emphasis on the speech.

=   Indicates continuous talk between speakers.

↑↓   Indicates marked rising or falling in speech intonation.

º   Degree signs enclose talk which is lower in volume than surrounding talk.

><   Greater than and less than signs enclose speech which is noticeably faster than the surrounding talk.

BIG   With the exception of proper nouns, capital letters indicate speech which is noticeably louder than that surrounding it.

[Indicates over lapping talk.