



BRITAIN

TATE

# IDEAS FACTORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

The Report of the Research Project

A Multimodal Approach to the  
Ideas Factory Project's Impact  
on Children's Literacy

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# Abstract

The Tate Britain Ideas Factory Action Research Project explored the impact that an 'integrated approach' to the teaching of literacy and art can have on children's engagement with literacy, placing a particular focus on children with English as an Additional Language (EAL). The action research ran from September 2005 to June 2006 in collaboration with two primary schools, one in Newham and the other in Greenwich. The Ideas Factory Project had been operational for several years in collaboration with several Newham and Greenwich schools, as an arts and literacy project, sponsored by Tate & Lyle. It was in the last year of the project that the research element was introduced, in an attempt to explore in depth the impact of the project on the children. The project involved Year 3 and Year 4 pupils and a wide range of practitioners: artists, writers, poets, gallery educators, classroom teachers, a Tate project co-ordinator and a researcher.

The main research question for the project was: 'How can working in collaboration with artists and writers in schools and the gallery help with children's literacy development, particularly those children who have English as an additional language?' The purpose of the research was to establish whether the particular teaching methodology (the 'integrated approach') adopted by Tate Britain, as a main approach to teaching and learning in the gallery, had a significant effect on EAL students' literacy work.

The main research method is that of the action research involving a wide range of participants as researchers. As regards the main interpretative framework for the analysis of the data collected, the focal perspective has been that of multimodal social semiotics and discourse analysis.

The action research team reflected on the 'integrated approach', as applied to the teaching of art and literacy, and pinpointed the elements that constitute this particular teaching methodology and render it successful. The research established that the context-specific integrations of expertise, spaces, practices and understandings of literacy constitute a unique resource that enhances children's literacy practices. Moreover, the 'integrated approach', as a pedagogy, facilitates a multi-sensory and multimodal engagement with literacy through the arts. This report frames instances from the integrated approach and explores the way that approach resourced children's literacy work.

The research problematised the notion of 'EAL children's literacy development', and directed the research focus towards the conditions that enable children's literacy work in the classroom and the gallery.

It suggests that the different institutional contexts of the school and the gallery, along with their distinct definitions of literacy, allow for different possibilities to emerge for EAL children's meaning-making in literacy.

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# **PART 1**

# **Introduction to the Action Research Project and its Methodology**

**Rationale, Methods and Ethics**

## Report Focus

The focus of this report is an enquiry into the impact of the ‘integrated approach’ of the *Ideas Factory* on the teaching of art on children’s literacy. It identifies salient features of the ‘integrated’ pedagogy in the gallery and the classroom that emerged within the context of a creative partnership between artists, poets, writers and teachers. It highlights the practices that constituted the ‘integrated approach’ and traces their links to the children’s literacy practices that the approach facilitated. It also foregrounds instances of children’s literacy work produced within the programme and illustrates how the written and visual work of the children can be used as indicators for learning.

## Plan of the Report

This part forms an introduction to the research focus, the rationale, the design and the ethics, as well as the limitations that were experienced. It attaches importance to the action research method, as well as the theoretical resources that informed the overall analytical and interpretative framework of this project.

Part 2 presents instances of learning in the classroom and in the gallery to show how the Tate’s ‘integrated approach’ is instantiated into children’s literacy work. One of the intentions of this report is to communicate a sense of what actually happened in the sessions of the *Ideas Factory* and the action research component of the project.

Part 3 focuses on several aspects of the children’s literacy production. It employs a multimodal, social semiotic approach to engage with the children’s literacy texts such as storyboards, picture books and their experiential accounts.

Part 4 provides a more in-depth understanding of the ‘integrated approach’ as a pedagogy that is realised through particular literacy practices. It explains how the approach integrates different understandings of literacy and how it is informed by the two dominant literacy discourses that permeated the project – those of the art gallery and the school.

## The Rationale of the Research Project

The *Ideas Factory Action Research Project* marked the last year of the *Ideas Factory*, a long-term arts and literacy project initiated at Tate Britain in collaboration with Greenwich and Newham schools. The following excerpt from the initial research proposal outlines the need and rationale for such a research project:

‘Museums and galleries are involved in a wide range of projects that explore creative ways of learning and accessing their collections. Valuable lessons have been learnt; however, as only a fraction of this work has been thoroughly researched and documented, the individual experience of each institution is lost to the sector as a whole. With this in mind Tate Britain’s Interpretation and Education Department intends to study the *Ideas Factory Project*.

Tate Britain has been involved in a wide range of projects with a variety of learners including early years, school and community groups, and over recent years has been working specifically on the contribution galleries and museums can make to literacy education through working with specialist educators and works of art in the gallery and classroom. *Ideas Factory* follows on from the success of projects such as *Visual Paths* and through funding from Tate & Lyle works specifically in the borough of Newham, which is a priority area for Tate & Lyle’s community strategy due to the vicinity of the company factory and as an area of inner-city deprivation.

Newham is also an area affected by high levels of EAL and Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils in each class, so creative learning strategies have been adopted by a number of schools in the area, and training groups have been set up in the Local Education Authority (LEA) to challenge traditional teaching styles and improve academic results.’ (Tate Britain Ideas Factory: Research Proposal)



The design of this research project responds to the needs articulated by Tate education staff: to research elements of good practice identified in the project; to provide an understanding of the impact of the *Ideas Factory* approach to art on children's literacy; and to evaluate the success of the programme.

The *Ideas Factory Art and Literacy Project* had been running for four years (2001-2005) prior to the start of the action research project. This research component was introduced in the fifth and last year of the *Ideas Factory Art and Literacy Project*, in an attempt to 'ensure the sustainability of the project's impact' (*Tate Britain Ideas Factory: Project Overview*)<sup>1</sup>. It could be seen as a research project developed within another art and literacy project, and running in parallel to it. The action research strand focuses on the activities in two schools only. There were three other arts and literacy projects running under the umbrella of the *Ideas Factory* where similar 'integrated' pedagogies were applied. For the purpose of clarity, this report uses the term '*Ideas Factory Action Research Project*' to refer to the action research, whereas the '*Ideas Factory Art and Literacy Project*' will be referred to either as '*Ideas Factory*', or '*Ideas Factory Art Project*'.

The *Ideas Factory Art Project* provided 'a programme of gallery and classroom based workshops' aiming to 'enable the National Literacy Strategy to be delivered in a creative and effective manner ... through collaborative cross-curricular learning strategies' (*Tate Britain Ideas Factory: Project Overview*). The underpinning philosophy and assumptions of the *Ideas Factory* are articulated in the following excerpt:

*'Ideas Factory, sponsored by Tate & Lyle, is based on the principle that words and images are intrinsically linked and that working with visual imagery can develop language and literacy skills.'* (*Tate Britain Ideas Factory: Project Overview*)

## **Building on the Experience of the Visual Paths Research Project: a Rationale for an Action Research Project**

As a research project, the *Ideas Factory* research component could be seen as a follow-up to the *Visual Paths Research Project* completed in 2004. This researched the relation of art and literacy in the similarly-named project run by the Tate in collaboration with artists. The research project identified a link 'between young people's involvement in looking at artworks and their writing development' (Meecham, Carnell 2004, p.77) through the method of appreciative enquiry. In an effort to avoid replication of the research focus, the Tate research planning team proposed to shift the attention to a different target group: that of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

*'The intended focus of the research is to provide evidence of the impact of the Ideas Factory Project and contribute to the future development of this project. The research will place a particular emphasis on measuring the enhancement of skills of EAL students and developing the classroom practice of the participating teachers.'* (*Tate Britain Ideas Factory: Project Overview*)

It was also considered important to address the claim in the initial research proposal about the Newham area, which was seen as 'affected by high levels of EAL and SEN pupils'.

The inception of a similar research project with a slight shift of focus would at least necessitate a different perspective to literacy. This consideration is linked to the adoption of the view of literacy as social, as well as the introduction of the interpretative and analytical framework of multimodal, social semiotics.

This research project offered another opportunity to develop ways to engage with teachers more than had been the case in *Visual Paths*, where the practitioners seemed to have been the key figures in the learning partnership. This project proposed to research the impact of the Tate's 'integrated approach' in a context where the teachers enjoyed a stronger presence and participation in the creative partnership while equally informing the approach with their contribution. More importantly, the teachers were encouraged to be in a dialectical relationship with that pedagogy and its initiators, and in a position to reconfigure it in the most apt way to address practical issues.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tate Britain Ideas Factory: Project Overview* is an unpublished, internal document

The Visual Paths research precedent provided the rationale for the introduction of action research as a means for:

- Following up the instances of good practice that the Visual Paths foregrounded, allowing for a longer term reflective practice;
- Enhancing the possibilities of engaging the teachers and developing an ‘integrated approach’ that is relevant to the agendas of all participants;
- Elaborating on the Visual Paths’ ‘propositions’ regarding children’s learning, foregrounding the possible link between the ‘integrated approach’ of the Ideas Factory and children’s literacy;
- Moving in the direction of EAL and narrowing the research focus.

## Research Methods

The main research method adopted for the project was action research.

‘Action research is a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention.’ (Cohen, Manion, 1994, p.186)

Apart from informing the research design, the action research method was the reflective framework that informed the various designs for the arts and literacy programme. The following sub-section on Action Research discusses the way action research is defined for the purposes of this research and how it has informed the choices and practices of the action research team.

This report does not serve only to report the action research project; rather, it builds on the reflections and findings of the action research team, as well as data from the children’s literacy production during the course of the research project, in order to view them from a critical distance in the wider context of gallery education practices. This introduces another layer of methods that have to do with the analysis of the bigger picture: the ‘integrated’ practice, as it is mediated through action research and its link to the children’s literacy. These methods stem from the realm of discourse analysis and multimodal, social semiotics. This interpretative and analytical framework, which has been chosen as the most apt for the purposes of this research, has informed the thinking about what qualifies as data for this project. The rationale behind this thinking and the discussion on how it resources this report is discussed in the subsequent section on ‘Resourcing our approach to the “integrated” pedagogy and children’s literacy work’.

## Designing the Action Research Project: Resources and Practices

The action research was designed as a researcher-led one. This reflects several of the ‘hybrid models’ that appear in the field of action research. One such hybrid model that served as methodological precedent and informed the design of this project was the *Enquire Project*, which pursued a non-typical process of reflection in action. The researcher’s role in this model developed at the intersection of two other roles: the role of a participant observer and that of an action researcher. This allowed a distance necessary for developing a reflective stance both towards the art and literacy project and its institutional practices, but also towards the action research as a method for exploring the impact of the Tate pedagogy.

The initial process of designing a research component within the *Ideas Factory Project* was long term, involving collaborations and brain storming sessions with several individuals, and receiving feedback from different sources, ranging from members of staff from the Tate Interpretation and Education department to the Arts Advisor from the Boroughs of Greenwich and Newham and the Heads of the schools.

There were certain requirements to be met, limitations to be attended to, and the rationale for such a research project on a well-established programme to be clearly explained. The key concerns revolved around the benefits of a research study for the *Ideas Factory Project* and the selection of an appropriate method of research that would shed light onto the process of teaching literacy through the arts in the gallery and classroom space. Through the preliminary discussions, it emerged that the main area of interest for research lay with the actual educational approach to the teaching of art and literacy that constituted the Tate's pedagogy. The success of the approach and its importance for the teachers and children were 'common knowledge' for the participants over the years. The need was felt, however, to foreground what these elements of success were and document how the approach impacts on children's literacy practices and learning in the gallery and the classroom.

What constituted the pedagogy for the teaching of literacy through the arts was embodied in the practice of the gallery educators at the Tate. Gallery Educators are a group of arts practitioners linking gallery-based education to the school curriculum.

There were no expected concrete outcomes or particular objectives to be met in the *Ideas Factory* research project. The participants:

- Engaged in an exploratory process;
- Redefined the initial research questions based on the context specific problems they wished to address;
- Interpreted the feedback they received as participant observers in the sessions;
- Implemented different solutions for improving children's literacy skills.



Fig. 1. An introduction to action research workshop © Tate 2006

The *Ideas Factory Project* also worked as an effective in-service training. The idea of professional development also determined the choice of action research as the research method. The ultimate objective of any action research project is to improve the participants' current practices with a view to initiating change. This type of research offers them the opportunity to:

- Analyse their practices and their relation to the particular context of the pupils;
- Challenge their current perceptions about learning;
- Become reflective practitioners;
- Develop new skills as well as an enhanced understanding of the links between art and literacy;
- Concentrate on experimenting with new approaches to teaching art and literacy;

Participants had a chance to reflect upon the actual processes linked to action research in the first stages of the project, locate themselves in relation to the particular practices that any reflective method involves and, more importantly, discuss the impact their participation in this project had on the actual design and delivery of it.

The thinking that informed the research process used as its point of reference the notion of 'the action reflection cycle'. The team acknowledged that the action research is a continuum, which includes the following stages within each phase:

- Statement of problems;
  - Imagination of a solution;
  - Implementation of a solution;
  - Evaluation of a solution;
  - Modification of practice in the light of the evaluation.
- (McNiff, 1991, pp.58-59)

Each one of these stages was linked to particular practices from the inception to the completion of the research. Thus, the action research cycle formed a constant point of reference towards which the action research team oriented their work in every twilight session and other informal reflection opportunity.

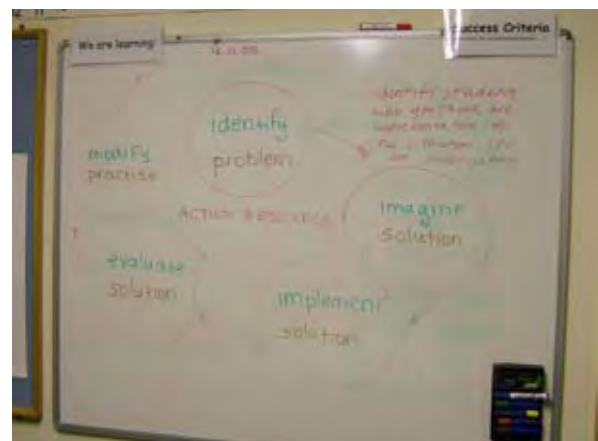


Fig.2. A mind map elaborating on the concepts entailed in action research © Tate 2006

Fig. 3. Reflection on the action research cycle in a twilight session © Tate 2006

Another important aspect of the rationale for conducting an action research in that particular context was an understanding that the most apt way to explore the pedagogies and the impact of a creative partnership would be to involve the participants fully by immersing them into reflexive research. The nature of the action research would facilitate such an exploration:

'Action research is participative research ... A participatory perspective asks us to be both situated and reflexive, to be explicit about the perspective from which knowledge is created, to see inquiry as a process of coming to know.'  
(Reason, Bradbury 2001, pp.1-7)

The action research brought together people whose identities are sustained by the different communities of practice to which they belong. By the term 'communities of practice', Herne suggests we mean practitioners who are engaged in joint enterprise and share a repertoire of practices (Herne 2006). Within that frame of thinking, the practices linked to action research, such as the twilight sessions for example, as well as the notion of reflective practice itself, could all be considered 'boundary events' (Herne, 2006) marking the intersection of the various professional communities that the participants represent.

This is another dimension that enables a possible link between reflective practice and the development of literacy. Despite the fact that this has not been the focus of this research project, it definitely invites the question of whether the two main communities with their characteristic literacy practices, discourses and understandings of literacy actually introduced another level of 'integration' in the approach to children's literacy development.

Integration emerged from the gallery educators' design of a programme that aligned with the practice of the teachers. To achieve this, the gallery educators designed learning activities after initial consultation with the teachers and maintained a constant interaction with them. This was different from their normal practice of commanding a key role in designing the activities. The teachers on the other hand, although eager to delegate the role of the expert to the gallery educators, had a very strong background in the understanding of literacy within schools.

In our case, the 'boundary objects' that normally provide a 'mutual focus of interest around which communities of practice can co-ordinate and enterprise' (Herne 2006, p.4, quoting Star 1989) are not the artworks only, but primarily whatever counts as a manifestation of literacy, i.e. children's writings. The teachers are the ones who are more conversant with the dictates of school literacy and the particular literacy practices of children. The gallery educators, on the other hand, are the ones who can initiate and feed into the design an understanding of the possibilities of the artwork as a resource that can potentially enable a range of literacy practices to flourish beyond the usual school activities but always within the curricular framework.

Action research as a way of looking at literacy through art entailed breaking away from the established practices that permeate the rest of the sessions of the *Ideas Factory Project* running concurrently alongside the research ones. One of these practices was the initial pre-planning of all the sessions, bearing in mind teachers' objectives and priorities, and coming up with resourceful multimodal solutions drawing from the gallery educators' integrated backgrounds in the arts and art education.

The gallery educators that participated in the research project had to override their established practices in order to comply with the action research methodology. They had to reflect on their decisions, practices and courses of action, and design new ones according to aptness for purpose and in response to the growing awareness of the context as they got further involved with the project. The following quote from a twilight session highlights a moment indicative of this constant negotiation and resistance inherent in action research – a negotiation between the established professional practices and the new ones that a practitioner has to engage with:

Researcher: 'How would we design activities accordingly, so that the theme of literacy and that priority permeates the activities and supports and promotes this imagined solution, in such a way so that it brings results?'  
Gallery educator 1: 'Don't forget that we have already planned!'

## Resourcing our Approach to the 'Integrated' Pedagogy and Children's Literacy Work

The research takes as one of its starting points that meanings about children's literacy are visible as representations once they are realised materially. Here, 'materiality' refers to the actual modes and media involved in the representation of meaning. As Kress tells us, modes, such as visual (writing, drawing), oral, kinaesthetic, gestural etc. and media, such as paper, crayons, paintings etc., are culturally available resources that the children engage with, making meanings within the realm of what is understood as literacy (Kress 2003).

These modes do not operate in isolation but in conjunction with others, forming multimodal ensembles. The term 'multimodal ensembles' refers to texts where writing is articulated with image and other modes for the purpose of representing the meanings made. This term is used interchangeably with 'visual or graphic ensembles'. Even the texts that are predominantly 'scripted', emphasising the presence of one mode only, actually employ other modes, such as layout, in order to make meanings emerge. The practices within the *Ideas Factory Art and Literacy Project* particularly favoured the emergence of such texts.

A similar understanding informs the researcher's view of the 'integrated approach' as a multimodal pedagogy that is realised through the speech, action, and gestures of the gallery educators. This would require apt theoretical tools that address all aspects of the approach in terms of the way it is realised, i.e. verbally, visually, as action and gesture, and more importantly in terms of its potential to provide resources for children's literacy learning.

The above considerations that inform this research, coupled with the specific characteristics of the children's multimodal texts dictated the use of an analytical and interpretative framework allowing for both writing and image to be looked at in conjunction with each other along with the social context that generates them.

The working tools that resourced this approach to the literacy practices provided a perspective for looking at children's meanings and their link to the overarching discourses that facilitated them. These stem from the area of social semiotics (Hodge and Kress 1988) and 'visual grammar' (Kress, Van Leeuwen 1996), discourse analysis (Fairclough 2003), multimodality (Kress, Van Leeuwen 2001) and new literacy studies (Street 1999). All these merge to constitute a multimodal, social semiotic theory of representation (Kress 1997) for understanding literacy. This new whole provides the research with a descriptive language and a range of interpretative possibilities.

## Understandings of Literacy

In an overview of the literature on definitions of literacy, Brian Street outlines four main disciplinary traditions within which the debates about literacy develop. One is linked to theories of learning. A second approach is a cognitive one, within which assumptions about literacy are linked to school writing. In keeping with this, government programmes would often regard literacy as the acquisition of a set of skills.

A third tradition views literacy as a social practice and is linked to the field of new literacy studies. Thinkers from that field (Street 1984; Barton and Hamilton 2000; Gee 1996) focused on literacy in everyday situations and talked about a range of literacy practices linked to various social practices and realised through literacy events. Brian Street distinguished between autonomous and ideological models of literacy, while linking literacy to the cultural and social practices in the world.

'Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relations and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others.' (Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic 2002, p.12)

A fourth tradition, according to Brian Street, is viewing literacy as 'text', and is linked to the New London Group and theorists within the field of Multiliteracies (Cope, Kalantzis 2000).

As Street suggests this approach sees literacy practices as ones set amongst many communicative practices at the same time applying the social, ideological and functional interpretations that have been developed with respect to discourse based studies of communication (Street 2006).

Foreseeing the developments in the field, Brian Street sees the 'marriage of the last two as a useful approach' that views literacy as a social practice and as a component of multimodal communicative practices. Such is the approach that this report adopts as an interpretative framework. By so doing, it enables the theoretical, multimodal, social semiotic approach of the researcher to be conversant with the perspective of the new literacy studies, as the latter foreground the notion of practice – a key notion in the discourse of gallery education as well as in school art education.

## A Multimodal, Social Semiotic Theory of Representation and Communication

This theory that develops within the tradition of semiotics, takes as a starting point the understanding that meanings are made through a process of semiosis. Meaning-making is a process of material realisation of signs and transformation of available resources into new signs. This notion of sign as a 'motivated conjunction of form and meaning' (Kress 1997, p.13) is central to this work. All meanings are materially realised as signs through different modes (e.g. visual, verbal and actional) and media (paper, screen etc.). The notion of multimodality (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001, Van Leeuwen 2005) that is employed here, brings our attention to the fact that there are other possibilities for representation beyond those entailed in language. A multiplicity of modes are involved in communication and, as a result, children's representations emerge as ensembles of different modes (writing, drawing) collaborating and recruiting a range of media (paper, colour, graphics) as resources through which they are realised (e.g. picture books).

Children and adults draw on the different possibilities (affordances) of each mode to create meaning. This suggests that everything the children do is significant and meaningful, since there is no arbitrary relation between their meanings and the forms they choose to represent them.

The driving force behind meaning-making is the notion of interest (ibid. p.11), out of which the signs and the 'criterial' aspects of the representations arise (ibid. p.15). The meaning-makers represent what needs to be communicated in the most apt form for the purpose, always within the context of the available resources that the different modes and media provide.

Signs arise out of our interest at a given moment, when we represent those features of the object which we regard as defining of that object at that moment. The interest is always complex and has physiological, psychological, emotional, cultural and social origins. It gets its focus from the factors in the environment in which the sign is made. We never represent the 'whole object', but only ever certain criterial aspects.' (Kress 1997, p.11)

Children's interests seem to be the catalyst for transformation in Kress's work, which sees 'learners as agentive in their own interests' (Kress 2007, p.29). This is traced in children's representations, where interest seems to define the selection of the elements that are chosen to be represented and transformed.

Understanding the communicational and the representational meanings of the children's graphic (visual) ensembles (Mavers 2003) relates hypothetically to recovering the interests of the meaning-makers and the resources they draw from in order to transform them. Such a 'reconstitution' of meanings through this approach has the potential to help us establish links with the various discourses that partly condition the children's representations as they filter down to them.

A multimodal, social semiotic analysis begins with the description of the semiotic resources and a further description and the explanation of their use (Jewitt, Oyama 2001). This is taken further by discourse analysis, which has the potential to uncover 'the dialectical relationships between discourse (including language and other forms of semiosis) and other elements of social practice.' (Fairclough 2003, p.205)

## Discourse Analysis

The theoretical tool of discourse presupposes an understanding of discourse as a 'socially constructed knowledge of some aspect of reality' (Kress, Van Leeuwen 2001, pp.4-5) and can be 'realised' in many different ways, and in many different modes.

These discourses can actually make themselves available as a resource, which is put at children's disposal for transformation into visual ensembles. The institutions of school and art gallery produce their own discourses as particular 'configurations of knowledge' (The New London Group 2000, p.21).

The 'integrated approach' in particular, as a pedagogy that is discursively regulated, can be documented across the modes, at the interplay and in the combinations of available media. The analysis here has particularly focused on the linguistically-realised aspects of practice and the overall pedagogical design, rather than a multimodal analysis of other aspects of communication (i.e. gesture, movement etc.). The data selected here are drawn from transcriptions of speech from the teaching and the twilight sessions.

## Literacy as Multimodal Practice

Kress argues that significant changes in our world today, like the dominance of technology and the medium of screen, changes in the forms and functions of writing, necessitate a new definition of literacy, one that would encompass all of its aspects and uses (Kress 2003, p.1). Even though 'literacy remains the term which refers to [the knowledge of] the use of the resource of writing' (Kress 2003, p.24), it would be too detached from reality to talk about literacy in terms of written texts only, given that we are in an era where images abound.

This report views literacy as a social practice that can take place in a variety of settings, through the use of different resources. This understanding of literacy is juxtaposed with the view of literacy as a set of skills, which is usually dominant within school.

Central to a multimodal, semiotic theory of literacy are notions such as the ones mentioned above: mode, medium, discourse, affordance, materiality, conventional and motivated sign, genre and discourse. Literacy is a social practice that is realised across different modes, but predominantly through those of writing and image. These modes are characterised by their own distinct logics and affordances.

'The organisation of writing – still leaning on the logics of speech – is governed by the logic of time, and by the logic of sequence of its elements in time, in temporally governed arrangements. The organisation of the image, by contrast, is governed by the logic of space, and by the logic of simultaneity of its visual elements in spatially organised arrangements.' (Kress 2003, pp.1-2)

Both modes represent relationships in the world and meanings but through different affordances, i.e. the possibilities and potentials for making meaning allowed for by each mode and medium. Writing represents things about the world through words that are ordered in sequence, whereas image represents similar relationships through particular spatial configurations of elements simultaneously presented.

Different genres serve these different modes, e.g. the genre of narrative or the genre of display. In the case of the 'picture book', in the creation of which the programme culminated, one could argue that it is a genre in its own right; an arrangement that transforms and merges the genres of narrative and display.

In order to shed light on children's engagement with literacy in the *Ideas Factory Project*, one would need to look equally across all the modes that mediate in a literacy event and practice, and identify points of view of the makers through the different 'reading paths' that the various modes dictate.



## Learning and EAL Children's Literacy Practices

The research focus on children's literacy development necessitates an understanding of what constitutes learning.

'[Learning is] a change in my resources as a result of the active transformative engagement with an aspect of the world on the basis of principles I bring with me to that engagement'. This definition 'acknowledges the agency of learners.' (Kress 2007, p.29)

Having a similar understanding of learning in mind, the gallery educators in the project attempted to allow children's own linguistic and cultural resources to surface by feeding into the project a wide range of other resources that enhanced their literacy practices. Focusing on EAL children allowed the participants in the *Ideas Factory Project* to address EAL student's literacy interests, and to establish some relevance to their lives by allowing their mother tongues to have a presence in the classroom through role-play, writing and discussions.

Pahl and Rowsell (2005, p.2) argue that 'by acknowledging our students' identities in their literacy practises, we can come to support and sustain their engagement with schooling'. Literacy practices for them bear an imprint of students' identities and, as a result, if students' literacy practices were allowed to emerge, this would facilitate students' identities to come to a foreground.

This perspective has implications for the actual teaching of literacy in the art gallery or through the resources of an art gallery. It also impacts on the choices we make for the places to look for evidence of learning.

Are the literacy practices we introduced as a means of design for learning linked at all to the children's agendas and their own literacy practices? This in turn raises another question: what is the relevance of the artworks to the children's lives?

## Art and Literacy Projects

Several projects and publications have documented and researched successful programmes that combine work in the creative arts with literacy, placing different emphases on the two elements and setting different priorities (art through literacy, literacy through art, art and literacy etc.).

The *Animating Literacies Project* researched the potential gains in children's literacy that might result from their involvement in creative arts work (Safford, Barrs 2005, p.180). This action research project raised expectations among teachers. It inquired into possibly favourable contexts and effective processes for children's language and literacy development in creative arts projects and established the importance of three parameters: a shared professional vision, a workshop atmosphere and the importance of thinking through talking. It further set out to assess improvements in children's writing as well as their attitudes and participation in literacy work after their engagement with various creative arts projects. The research used several assessment frameworks for children's texts and drawings.

The *Animating Literacies Project Report* has outlined some of the few studies available in the field in the USA and UK that provide evidence of enhanced achievement in language and literacy through the creative arts in general, such as the Southwark Arts Council's *Leave your mark before you go* and the work of the Creative Arts Education Partnership in the USA (ibid. pp.17-18).

'There is no quick or simple transition from creative arts to literacy, but the creative arts, because they are fundamental ways of symbolising meaning provide powerful contexts for developing language and literacy. In effective projects teachers and arts partners have created contexts from learning within which language and literacy develop and flourish alongside other ways of symbolising. Where reading, writing, talk and the creative arts in classrooms enable children to tell their stories, to communicate and make meaning in the real and imagined world, the literacy that emerges is complex and diverse. The challenge is to make this work count more widely. The interest currently being shown in creativity in education should extend to more creative approaches towards the curriculum and its assessment'. (Safford, Barrs 2005, p.199)

The uniqueness of the *Ideas Factory Project* and its preceding *Visual Paths Project* lies in the fact that it developed within the realm of gallery education and literacy, the arts partnership between schools and galleries and the work of artists as gallery educators in the service of school literacy.

## The 'Integrated Approach' as a Pedagogy

The 'integrated approach' as a pedagogy has been a key point of reference in this research project, especially as the participants sought to define its characteristics and its impact on children's literacy. This report looks at the Tate approach, which was defined at the start of the project as 'integrated': a pedagogy that actually materially realises a set of social forms, relationships and processes in the classroom and gallery space.

'Pedagogies are the instantiation of social forms, relations and processes in the classroom.' (Kress 2007, p.21)

Drawing from the experience of the *Critical Minds Action Research Gallery Education Project*, this report foregrounds the social and discursive organisational aspect of the Tate pedagogy as a research focus in order to further identify its possible links with children's literacy development.

'The social organisation of pedagogy is of particular significance to the ways in which learning can be developed within specific communities of practice. Through collaboration, *Critical Minds* set up a new possibility for a pedagogy situated somewhere between and across the school and the art gallery and in-between space extending both the role of the gallery education and its sphere of influence.' (Addison, Burgess 2006, p.78)

The *Critical Minds Project* investigated the partnership between schools, artists, and contemporary art galleries. It focused more on the conditions for enabling learning in the gallery and on the ways action research as a form of pedagogic collaboration promotes learning in gallery education.

'*Critical Minds* has demonstrated that conditions for enabling learning in the gallery context can be enhanced by collaborative partnerships between professionals from different institutions and fields ... We argue that what is distinctive about *Critical Minds* revolves around the combination of intervention and collaboration, principles that are recognised as central to the idea of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). These communities are sites of shared experience that enable members to develop as critical thinkers through mutual engagement in common activities.' (Addison, Burgess 2006, p.78)

## Research Ethics

The conduct of the research and the writing of the report follow the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) ethical guidelines. In order to ensure confidentiality of the participants, the schools and the individuals are not identified by name. All participants, or their guardians or parents where necessary, provided their voluntary consent and their permission to use transcribed data from the recordings of the twilight sessions, video recordings and images. Participants' views are identified by their respective roles within the project only, e.g. teacher, researcher, gallery educator (the latter includes the artists, writers, gallery project administrators and other gallery education staff when present).

Tate Britain secured written permission from all participating schools and their head teachers regarding the use of children's work and of images of the children producing that work, acquiring copyright over the use of images that included children. Additional written permissions were sought from the parents, so that the researcher was allowed to conduct one-to-one interviews with the children. The participants' identities are protected even though the study does not tackle sensitive and controversial issues. Provision has been made to secure the children's identities in their literacy works. Names are used only in instances where the name is an integral part of the literacy work and ascribes meaning to it.

The action research team agreed to participate in the project and collaborate with a researcher. They also authorised the use of their views and comments, as they were transcribed from video or audio data, or recorded in the researchers' participant observation notes. The team's reflections and thoughts were used as complementary research data that helped contextualise the Tate's 'integrated' pedagogy and its underpinning literacy practices, as well as the children's literacy production and practices.

The research participants – namely, the art gallery educators (whether writer, poet, painter, film maker etc.), the teachers, the Tate Britain education staff and the various *Ideas Factory* co-ordinators – are not themselves responsible for the research findings, the theoretical perspectives, the analyses or the recommendations that are included in this report. This report is not the kind of report that the action research team would usually write at the end of a project of this nature. Instead, it is the researcher's report, based partly on the process, observations and reflections of the action research and partly on the analysis of the data through the theoretical perspectives described above.

Informed by the underpinning assumption that meanings are made multimodally, there is an understanding of the following limitation: we could not possibly reconstruct the context of the learning session by focusing only on the analysis of the 'oral' aspect of the 'integrated approach' in the teaching. A detailed analysis of the 'integrated approach' is not considered necessary, however, as the focus is placed on the children's literacy production..

The researcher in this project has been more than a participant observer: she has also been a member of the action research team, assigned the role of maintaining a critical distance and reflexive stance on the research process. The latter is seen as a requirement for researcher-led action research.

## Concerns and Limitations in the Research Design Process

There were several limitations to the process of investing a strand of the *Ideas Factory Project* with a research element. An important limitation was the fact that the interests and concerns of different parties fed into the project rationale and the actual research question at different stages. Another concern had to do with the various levels of aims and objectives that had to be met, since the research would need to develop within the framework of the objectives of the *Ideas Factory*, the Tate's overall educational aims, the educational objectives of Tate & Lyle, and the participants' individual agendas at a later stage. This dimension of diverse feedback to the project, with all the benefits and challenges it entails, added to the circumstances of the frequent turnover of Tate staff and hand overs between such staff during the year of the project, created an extra challenge.

A key concern linked to the above consideration also stems from the phrasing of the research question in such a way that it actually implies an assumption that visual literacy leads to written literacy. This poses another question, which could be the focus of a different research project, namely: Can art and visual literacy mediate and help shape linguistic competence? Such a research question – no matter how much oriented it is towards literacy as a 'set of skills' – would at least have elaborated on the conditions involved in achieving this competence, if any.

In a discussion about the kind of research questions that are most appropriate for an action research, McNiff mentions that a question would begin with 'How do I ...' and would then continue with questions that have an educational intent (McNiff et al 2003, p.1). In the context of the above consideration, an action research question could be rephrased to: 'How can we help EAL children to write using the gallery?' or 'How can we use images to develop children's written or verbal literacy?' Rather than looking for a link between visual and written literacy, which *Visual Paths* and the *Ideas Factory Project* took for granted, the key question in our action research could be: 'How do we learn from paintings/sculpture?'

This presupposition of a link between the 'integrated approach' and children's literacy is a reflection of the initial interests of the Tate team that envisaged the development of a theoretical research project to endorse retrospectively the successful practices observed in the *Ideas Factory Project* over the years. The professional experience of the educators involved in the project over the years led to an empirical knowledge that the educational approach the Tate had developed had had an impact on children's literacy. This legacy filtered through to the practices of the *Ideas Factory Research Project* and diverted the research group's attention away from inquiring into whether there was a link between the 'integrated approach' and writing and whether there were any in-between stages that mediate in this process.

The fact that the research project was a strand of the *Ideas Factory Project*, running alongside other similar art and literacy projects without a research element, did not allow for any differentiation between the practices in the action research strand and the others. The overall *Ideas Factory Project* had particular objectives to meet, including producing children's work for a public display and celebrating the children's achievement in an Open Day. This posed an extra challenge to the participants, as they had to vary their practices and the intensity of their reflexive stance from one strand of the *Ideas Factory* to the other.

The parallel running of different arts and literacy projects alongside a research one was an obstacle particularly at the early stages of the research project design when there was a difficulty in discerning the difference between the notion of an action research project and the *Ideas Factory* as an arts and literacy one.

An extra challenge for the research project was the withdrawal of one of the two schools at a critical stage in the *Ideas Factory*. This had a tremendous impact on the research, since there was no access to the literacy work of the students from the school that withdrew. It also deprived us of the possibility of having a second complete set of data for comparison.

Despite the unforeseen circumstances above, and the limited number of sessions allowed for by the final budget for the project, the action research project made the most of the available resources and possibilities.

## **Tate Britain Ideas Factory Project: an 'Integrated Approach' to Art and Literacy**

The action research project looked into the impact of the 'integrated approach' in the teaching of literacy through the arts. This approach integrates expertise, spaces and practices in the service of school literacy. The aim was to contribute towards meeting the learning objectives – concerning writing – that the teacher defined at the beginning of the project. The gallery educators, who performed a series of four or five sessions with two classes of Year 3 and Year 4 primary school children from London, used a variety of approaches to enable children to engage with the artworks in order to maximize the possibility for a range of literacy practices across the board. Key characteristics of their teaching methodology were the engagement of all senses and the use of imagination and visualisation.

Children engaged with art through enquiry and discovery, relating art to their own lives and experiences, and using their senses in an environment that would validate all of their emergent meaning-making. In the figure above, one can actually observe how the children's bodies are immersed in the gallery space, and how the literacy work that takes place there entails the potential to be mediated differently through the body than it would in the classroom where the resources available are different.

Role play, drama, miming and freeze frame all featured as means that helped children incorporate, embody and integrate what they read visually. This visual engagement was the entry point into creating characters that served as protagonists in the subsequent narratives, through, for example, drawings that pictured them disguised as scary monsters (fig.6). Similar activities took place in the classroom. Once in the classroom, however, the established practices of literacy actually framed most of the activities. This was true even in those cases where the gallery educators pushed the experience to the edge by introducing drama and role play activities in a space normally identified with writing while sitting at a desk.

The choices made by the educators regarding the artworks and the type of visual engagement that was pursued, were all linked to the subsequent activities and the school targets: to improve written literacy, celebrate its achievement and produce 'testimonies' through an illustrated picture book that the children would create. These would be displayed in the Tate Britain in a small exhibition of all the *Ideas Factory* work.

The framing of the activities in the *Ideas Factory Art and Literacy Project* enabled the children to use image as the main resource for representing the meanings they wanted to make about their stories at different stages of production: from conceptualisation, to drafting, to the final emergence as a picture book.

Underpinning this teaching methodology, there is the practitioners' experience, as well as the assumption that children's learning is facilitated through these means. This was put to the test and reflected upon through the action research element of the project.



Fig. 4. Children in role play, using the ventilation grid of the gallery floor as a harbour © Tate 2006



Fig. 5. Children are entering the world of monsters in front of Francesco Zuccarelli's *A Landscape with the Story of Cadmus Killing the Dragon* 1765 © Richard Eaton 2006

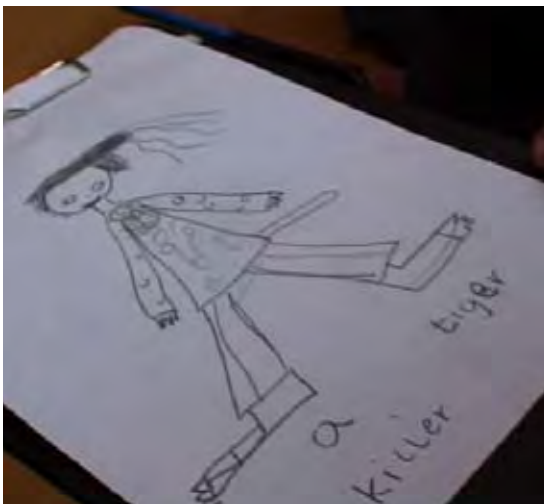


Fig. 6. Scary monsters from a drawing and role play activity © Tate 2006



Fig. 7. Display of children's picture books in Tate Britain © Sara Haq 2006



Figs. 8 and 9 Activities on the Ideas Factory Family Day © Richard Eaton 2006



# **PART 2**

## **Understanding the 'Integrated Approach' in the Classroom and Art Gallery:**

**Literacy Events,  
Designs and  
Practices**

## Designing the 'Integrated Approach' in the Classroom and the Gallery: Introduction

This part of the report aims to foreground the 'integrated approach' by allowing the reader to access some excerpts from the participant observation notes of the gallery and classroom sessions, and from the transcriptions from audio and video recordings.

The aim is to frame some instances of what constitutes an integrated design for teaching and enable a description of its resources, practices and discourses. These are a result of attending to the verbal and actional interaction between the gallery educators and the children.

The six 'literacy events' from the classroom and the gallery that are represented in this section also provide a useful context within which we can 'read' the children's literacy production that is presented in Part 3 of this report. A description of the approach is necessary in order to have some meaningful insights into understanding the conditions it creates for enabling children's literacy practices to emerge and develop. It will further allow a more in-depth understanding of what is actually being 'integrated', as it is discussed in Part 4 of this report.

There are selections of three classroom sessions from one school and one from the other. There are also excerpts from two gallery sessions. The transcript excerpts are interspersed with the researcher's comments, observations and subsequent reflections, as well as quotes from the action research team.

The final section of this part presents the conceptualisation of the 'integrated approach' by the action research team, foregrounding their own comments and reflections on their practice. This is further analysed and framed discursively in the last section of Part 4. It is followed by a section that refers to the children's representations of the Ideas Factory approach.

## Insights into Classroom and Gallery Sessions School A – Classroom Session 1

In this classroom session the gallery educator invites everyone on an imaginary trip. The session introduces the children to the theme of their project which is based on boats and pirates. This will be the point of reference for most of the literacy and art activities in the gallery and the classroom.



Fig. 10. The gallery educators are introducing the activities © Tate 2006



'We are going to go on an imaginary trip on a boat. We are going to use our imagination and we are going to be sailors or pirates. We are going to make props. You as sailors, all need a prop, a thing to carry, that makes you think like a sailor.'

'Lifeboat', 'rope', 'surf boards'.

'How about the props pirates would need?'

The introduction of the theme of pirates immediately raises the spirits and the excitement in the class:

'Swords, eye patches!'

The resources for that are: black paper card, glue and scissors, string and templates. The children create telescopes, eye patches, catfish and pirates' hats. They try their new props on and from that point onwards they engage with the role play, writing and singing activities that follow with great excitement.

Having completed the prop making session, the educators are helping the children build further linguistic and writing resources, using the theme of the pirates, their practices and journeys as a point of reference.

'For this trip we have got transport and we need a song to go on a journey.'

The gallery educators introduce the sea shanty: 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor early in the morning?' The children all listen with enthusiasm and try to learn the song. Then they combine singing with movement, enacting:

'... some 'actions' that sailors would do while doing their work.'

'You are going to write the next verse to tell me what we shall do with the drunken sailor. We need a line that matches that rhythm. What could we do with the drunken sailor?'

The children clap according to the rhythm of the verse and music. They shout out ideas for completing the verse:

'Stab him!'

'We don't want to do anything horrible to him. It must be something funny!  
You might want to get him wet!'

'Push him in the water', 'chuck him in the water'.

'Yes, but how can we make it fit that pattern?'



Fig. 11. Showing their new pirate props © Tate 2006



Fig. 12. Testing the pirate's telescope at the end of the prop making session © Tate 2006

The children now have to build a sentence that would not only carry an appropriate message, answering the question, 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor?' They would also need to make sure that the number of syllables of that sentence would fit the music pattern. They then copy out their shanty onto a cut out paper boat.

Here are some of the sentences that the EAL focus writing group children wrote:

- 'Make him srub the decks'
- 'Put him in the kitchen'
- 'Make him kiss my cheesy tows'
- 'Poot him in the chuk intil tige soldu'
- 'Make him sweep the floor until he gets older'
- 'Make him take a bath in very cold water'
- 'You will get so wet today'

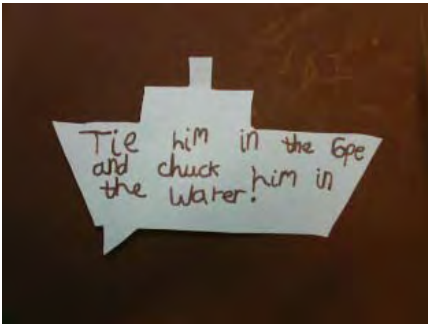


Fig. 13. An example of a cut out boat with the shanty written on one side © Tate 2006



Fig. 14. Examples illustrating the visual character of writing in multimodal ensembles © Tate 2006

The writing skills involved in this writing activity are not any different from the ones required for any sentence building activity within the literacy hour tasks. This writing task, however, is so meaningfully located within a wider richly-resourced context of role play, singing, make-believe play, handicraft and story telling, that the overall task actually appeals to the children more than a usual writing activity. The team does not claim that such an 'integrated approach' to writing would necessarily improve their writing and spelling skills. Nevertheless, it enhances their perception of writing as a socially-located practice that serves specific purposes: in this case, the purpose is to record a verse that carries a narrative of what actually will happen to the drunken sailor, who is aboard with them on SS Britannia, while they are performing their daily chores on the boat.

Further to the completion of that task, the children gather around in a circle and try to enrich the original sea shanty with their own transformations, getting to sing them straightaway, one at a time adding the usual chorus: 'Hurray and up she rises (three times), early in the morning'. Children read out from their notes and what they recite is slightly changed or rephrased by them, the educators or the group in order to fit the rhythm:

'Push him off the boat.'  
 'Get the catfish off the sea.'  
 'You'll get pushed in the shower.'  
 'Wrap him in a string and drop him in the water.'  
 'Tie him with a string and chuck him in the water.'  
 'You will get so wet today.'  
 'We are gonna make him wash the dishes.'  
 'Put him in the cold water.'  
 'Chuck him in the water and choke him gently.'  
 'Throw him in the dangerous water.'  
 'That's what we do with the drunken sailor, early in the morning.'

A role play activity follows the shanty-writing one:

'We are going to end today's session with acting. It's time for our boat SS Britannia to sail. We are sailing somewhere we don't know and we are dressed as sailors and pirates. We are going to shipwreck on a strange island. We can imagine our whole classroom is aboard SS Britannia. When I say go, you are going to be sailors with your props. You are going to pull ropes, scrub floors. When I say 'shipwreck', you will all go shipwreck ...'

'Everybody in the water! You are very cold. What do you do when you are shipwrecked? Try and swim. You can look for land. Does anybody see land?'

A pupil shouts: 'Found land!'

'We have spotted land. We are stranded on a strange island. When we meet you in Tate Britain next time, we are going to be on that strange island. Next time we will meet in the gallery, you are going to meet some very strange people that you've never seen before.'



Fig. 15. Singing their shanties in a circle © Tate 2006

The end of the session also addresses children's expectations about the art they will see in the gallery.

'What kind of art do you know?'

'Painting' 'using a lot of dots to create a picture', 'pointillism', 'sketching', 'photography', 'art attack', 'drawing', 'modelling', 'mosaic' 'sticking things', 'collage', 'making films', 'photography'.

The overall pedagogy in that session evoked the use of all the senses through the imagination. There was a kinaesthetic approach that was facilitated by the selection of a range of activities, such as handicraft, singing, moving, and different kinds of role play and visualisations.

The session served the purpose of introducing the children to the theme of boats and pirates that would be further explored in the gallery visit through a more direct encounter with the art. It also offered the children a taster of the extra-curricular possibilities that working with a gallery educator in the classroom entails, i.e. access to different pedagogical practices and resources.

Different aspects of literacy are addressed in the programme: oracy, written literacy and reading. The activities and the prompts by the gallery educators, working in close collaboration with the teachers, offered multiple stimuli for the imagination, and for the children's creativity and potential to transform what they encounter. The session got them engaged with writing in an enjoyable way. The activities employed literacy strategies and practices that are actually available in the usual classroom practice, such as sentence writing in text books, speaking and role-play. The difference was that these activities were re-contextualised in a new integrated whole that neither the teacher, nor the children, could easily identify within any of their available school subjects and associated practices. This is discussed further in Part 4, under the heading 'Integrating School Subjects and Literacy Practices'.

## School A – Gallery Session

At Tate Britain the gallery educator establishes a link with the introductory work done in the previous classroom session.

'Can you remember when we came to school, what did we do?'

'We made hats and we sang a song.'

'Pirate stuff and a pirate song.'

'Sword and telescope and a catfish.'

'Eye patch.'

'Saw a mysterious island.'

'We went on S.S. Britannia.'

'We went to a mysterious island.'

'We got stranded.'

They get together and sing the shanty:

'What shall we do with the drunken sailor (3)

early in the morning,

Hurray, and up she rises (3)

early in the morning.'

'We had all these pirate stuff. We sang a song about going on a journey and we all went on the journey... on the SS Britain. And what happened at the end of the journey?'

'We sunk', 'We saw a mysterious island.'

'What happened when we hit the island?'

'We were stranded on a magic island.'

The preliminary session helped build rapport with the children and also introduced them to the function of the gallery and the rules for conduct in this space. The children were then taken on an interactive tour of the gallery stopping at a number of artworks and doing visual, verbal and making activities.

## Boat-making Activity in the Gallery

Activity linked to Edward Wadsworth's *Seaport*.

Resources: Drawing boards, coloured card, pencils, scissors, glue, crayons.

'Before we set off, we have to make a boat. You will make your own boats. You are going to draw it and then cut it out. You can be as imaginative as you want. Each child will make a boat, so that everyone's boats will form a flotilla. A flotilla means lots of boats together.'



Fig. 16. Edward Wadsworth *Seaport* 1923 © Tate



Fig. 17. Working with the whole class in the gallery © Tate 2006



Fig.18. Sketching the boat for the activity © Tate 2006



Fig. 19. A paper boat © Tate 2006



Fig.20. A pupil showing her paper boat © Tate 2006

Some children created cut-out boats, whereas others opted for folded-up paper ones. The interaction and collaboration between pupils, and between pupils and adult participants and assistants, were constant. There was a free flow of suggestions, ideas, advice, requests for help and approval, as well as for extra resources. Once the children finished their boats, they showed them around with a sense of pride, playing with them and engaging in play with others who had just finished their boats.

The children were seated in front of two paintings with boats. These formed a point of reference, a reminder of what boats look like and a resource at the disposal of the children during the activity. The gallery educator chose an apt space for the activity to develop: a small room with paintings depicting scenes of harbours with boats, the seaside and relevant sea themes (fig. 17).

'Georgia's boat is called "Georgia". The captain is a lady on heels. Her blouse has a "love" heart on. She has added the details of an observatory on the boat, as well as a steering wheel on the left. There are also flags behind the girl that is stuck on. When I asked Georgia about her observatory, she said: "I don't know what it is called". What do you do with this? I asked. "I don't know", she replied.'

Working within the gallery space that includes several other artworks linked to the theme of boats, allows the children to observe closely details of boats, e.g. masts, ropes, oars, flags and sails, which actually then feature on their paper boats in great detail. The artworks, as well as the guided discussions with the action research team, provided the children with an important resource that they could draw from heavily, in this as well as in other subsequent representations of boats.

The gallery educator guides them further and prompts another written literacy task, by adding:

'If you have a boat, you've got to give it a girl's name.'

This was taken up by the children who seemed quite confident in finding names for their boats.

After finishing the task, the gallery educator invites the children to join her in a circle. Children gather around a wooden ventilation grid on the floor, which eventually serves as a harbour in the best possible way. The atmosphere is quite imposing. The children are silent and the educator's voice is captivating as she invites every one to let their boats float in the harbour (figs. 4 and 22).

'I want you to bring your boats to the harbour. It's got water here.'

The children gather around the wooden ventilation which marks the boundaries of the harbour and the water space. They all anchor their boats on the inside space of the grill boundaries. They all sing the shanty in a mysterious, whispering tone that builds up an atmosphere of excitement in children.



Fig. 21. 'The Georgia' boat © Tate 2006



Fig. 22. Gathering the boats in the harbour © Tate 2006

## Monsters and Dragons

Artwork: Francesco Zuccarelli, (1702-1788), *A Landscape with the Story of Cadmus Killing the Dragon*.

Resources: Paper and crayons.

'Time to go and find the monster!' This is the monster one. We've got a dragon and a man. What happened to the men?'

'Three men who have been killed by the dragon.'

'How come the man has got more power?'

'He is got a very sharp stick', 'He is brave', 'He eats vegetables.'

'Have you seen what he's got around his head?'

This encourages a closer observation and everyone approaches closer to the painting.

'He is using it like a wig, but what is it made of?'

'It is a lion's head', 'the skin'.

'If you dress up as somebody who is not you, how do we call that? You are in disguise. He is dressed up as a monster to scare the dragon.'



Fig. 23. Francesco Zuccarelli *A Landscape with the Story of Cadmus Killing the Dragon* exhibited 1765 © Tate



Fig. 24. Georgia making a 'Georgilion'  
© Richard Eaton 2006

'I want you to choose an animal that you think would give you courage. I want you to draw a picture of yourself in disguise.'

'What qualities in an animal would make you brave? I want you to come up with a name for that new creature.'

A boy disguises into 'a killer tiger' and a girl called Jacqueline transforms into 'horseline', which is her self portrayal in a horse skin. Another girl after an encounter with a 'Pufaffis', becomes a *cat woman*.

Most of these drawings tell the story of the transformation as they develop into a conceptual representation of themselves – of the animal they will kill and then of themselves in disguise in that animal's skin.



Fig. 25. A Year 3 girl showing the 'horseline monster'  
© Richard Eaton 2006

Conceptual representations do not really tell a story the way a narrative would do. Lauren's and Georgia's graphic ensembles represent an instance where their drawings work across these analytical boundaries.

Georgia talks about her drawing:

'This is me, this is the lion suit and this is me wearing the lion suit'.

The name of the new hybrid creature she has disguised herself into is 'Gelion'.



The gallery educator introduces the children to the word 'hybrid' and uses it to describe the new creatures and words that were created, as a fusion of other previous known ones.

The end of the exercise is marked by a plenary session, where children are prompted to share their work, show it to others, and explain about the creatures they turned into. The overall session was designed to support literacy in the gallery and to underpin the follow-up activities in the classroom, which were oriented to sentence and paragraph building. It served to elaborate upon the theme of pirates and monsters that became a rich and stimulating resource to be used in building mystery and suspense in narrative.



Fig. 26. A girl presenting her 'Puffaffis' monster © Richard Eaton 2006

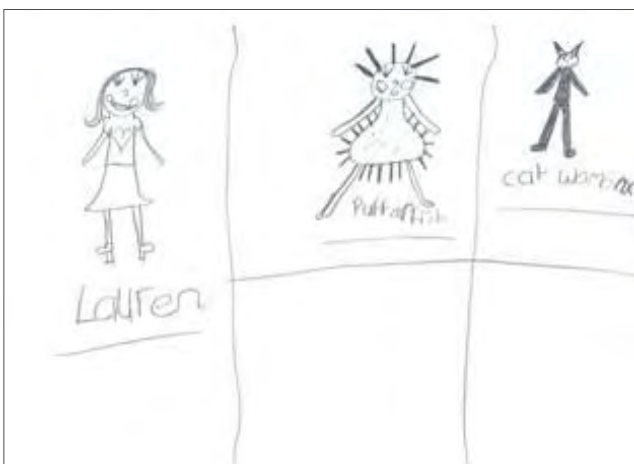


Fig. 27. The subsequent transformations of Lauren to a 'Puffaffis' and then a cat woman © Tate 2006

## Exploring a Mysterious Island

Artwork: Vanessa Bell's *Studland Beach* 1911-12.

Resources: Paper, crayons.

'Imagine an object you found washed out on the beach of the island you got stranded. You are going to draw the things that you find. They will give you a clue to the people that live on the beach.'

The children are lying on the floor, as if lying on a beach, drawing images that the following figures present. They engage in lively conversations with the adults of the group explaining the things they find:

'I found lots of stuff.'

'A necklace.'

This exercise ends with a plenary session again, where children talk about the things they have found on the beach to help them guess the kind of people that live on the island.

The underpinning story gives a sense of purpose as the children need to get clues about the people they will possibly encounter on the island and try to establish their identity.

'I've got a skull, a T-Rex, a pistol, a sword, a knife and hook.'

'A hat, a top, a skirt, a bracelet, a necklace and a teddy bear.'

This remark leads the educator to make a comment about the dangerous people that probably inhabit the island.



Fig. 28. Vanessa Bell *Studland Beach*. Verso: *Group of Male Nudes* by Duncan Grant circa 1912

© The estate of Vanessa Bell



Fig. 29. Drawing the objects they found on the beach © Tate 2006



Fig. 32. Drawing of clothes and valuables left on the beach © Tate 2006



Fig. 30. Drawing of jewellery on the beach © Tate 2006

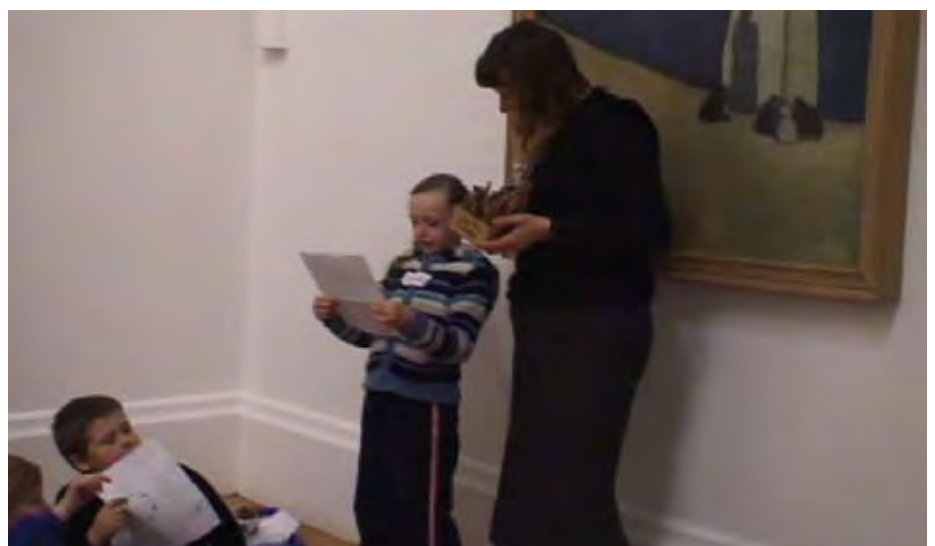


Fig. 31. A child is presenting her work to the group with the help of an educator © Tate 2006

## Observing and Recording People

Artwork: David Bomberg, *The Mud Bath* 1914.

Resources: Paper and crayons.

'We have landed at the island and found some clues about the people we are meeting. We have got some rather odd people. We can begin to imagine some strange people. This picture has people in, believe it or not. It is called *The Mud Bath* and it is supposed to show lots and lots of people.'

The children are excited with the prospects of discovering human figures in David Bomberg's painting. They stand up and take turns pointing at the body parts they can see in different parts of the painting.

The artist has shown as a way of putting people in there without really looking like people.'

The activity encouraged a closer look at the painting and the possibility of making meaning about the presence of elements that would not otherwise be easily discerned.

This painting made an indelible impression on many children, since they cited it as their favourite in their accounts of the gallery visit; that it featured in their literacy work so strongly was evidence of its popularity amongst them.

In the twilight session that followed the gallery visit, the group reflected again on the issue of the link between the pedagogy of the Tate and the possibility of developing literacy, in terms of developing writing skills:

'One of the focuses of this session was sentence building, 'cause that was one of the focuses the teacher wanted. I don't think it should be the only focus. I think the whole *Ideas Factory* process is about marrying art and literacy and getting children in contact with different people and so I think although one of the outcomes we want is that they will do work on sentences, there are a range of other outcomes as well. And that this session wasn't really about that. The next session that we planned is about that.'  
(Gallery educator)

What holds importance is the space that frames and contextualises the activities. In the presence of the two paintings, the gallery educator did not need to go into details about how the boats and their different parts looked. The children were thus helped by the details in the paintings.

There seems to be a general assumption that serving particular literacy targets (the way schools define them) is not possible through interaction with art in the gallery or through any kind of programme, since it cannot be seen as a cause and effect case.



Fig. 33. David Bomberg *The Mud Bath* 1914 © Tate

## School A – Classroom Session 2

This session links to the theme of pirates and boats that was previously developed in the gallery session. It revives the make-believe situation of the shipwreck. The children had left the gallery at the point they were going to meet the exciting people of the island on which they got stranded. This thematic framework is relevant to the ideas that will be explored in this session, which revolves around the notions of cultural and linguistic difference and communication. This is also seen by the action research team as most apt for the purpose of inviting a more active participation from the EAL children, since it frames their difference as an advantage.

‘We have shipwrecked and we have met the people on the island. What differences do you think there will be between you and the people that live there?’

‘They will have different clothes, like a silk wrap’, ‘they might be cavemen’.

‘What else might be different except clothes and houses? What might you notice?’

‘Camping.’

‘We are going to meet those people that we don’t understand and imagine a word they will tell us when we meet them. We will write it down, write its meaning.’

‘I would assume they would live in a new type of house.’

The gallery educator brings the children’s attention to the fact that they may be speaking different languages and wonders if there are children in the group who speak any other languages. Several children eagerly raise their hands and volunteer to say something in another language.

The EAL children utter some phrases in their language, whereas other non- EAL are showing off their knowledge of other languages by trying to count in French, Spanish or Japanese. The discussion session works as a platform for children to talk about aspects of their identity or about other people who they know as speaking another language in the school or beyond.

‘We all have come across the experience of meeting people whom we don’t understand. And of course we have to remember that our language is foreign to them. I thought we should all invent a word. We are going to imagine that we meet these people who live on the island. They are going to walk up to you and they will say one word.’

‘Could you write that word they will say? When you write that word, I want you to tell me what this word means in this person’s language. You are going to think how you will spell it and then next to it, write its meaning.’

A girl, who probably speaks some Arabic, tries to write ‘asalamu alekum’, which she writes as ‘Aslamarlacom’. She very proudly presents and writes her words on the flip chart. She then goes on and writes a whole list of words with confidence. At this point, the EAL children encounter the challenge of finding a system for transcribing the sounds of the words of their language into English.

Another girl from Nigeria writes down ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye’ in Nigerian and informs with pleasure that her mum speaks Nigerian. A Polish boy writes the word ‘Chest’ (Czesc), on the board. ‘This means hello in Polish,’ he remarks with pride. He tells the class that he speaks Polish at home and takes the initiative to share with the classroom some more Polish words for ‘bye-bye’, ‘yes’ and ‘no’. When he comes on board to write, he shares another word with the class ‘pincin tick’ which means ‘hello’.

Pupils in the group had to attend to different problems. Particularly for the EAL children, the issue was of transferring an existing sound or word in their own language to the English orthographic system. For others, the difficulty stemmed from ascribing meaning to an imaginary assemblage of sounds that they encoded into letters/ standard script.

A girl from Latin America, who was still under the impression that they had to write an imaginary word, struggled with the task. She said to one of the gallery educators:

'I am trying but everything I come up with comes out in Spanish.'

The gallery educator creates with the help of the children a new resource: a collection of new words which in the case of the EAL children foreground another existing resource – that of their mother tongue. This new material and perspective towards a foreign language informs the next stage of story writing.

'We are going to use these words in our story.'

## **Integrating Story-writing Practices: a Writer Introduces Children to Writing Stories**

One of the gallery educators, a writer, draws extensively from her professional experience and introduces the children to the requirements of story building and to the process of editing.

'When we are writing we often think that we all want to get it done in one go.'

She introduces the notion of 'first draft' and 'editing'.

'Writers are never satisfied with the first thing we write. It's the first draft. It's the first version of the story and we edit it. What does this mean?'

'Correct it', 'look for mistakes and better words'.

'There is always something to change.'

The writer/gallery educator talks about the stages of her writing and links it to the requirements of school narrative writing. The Literacy Strategy and National Curriculum foreground the notion of beginning, middle and the end and other useful notions linked to the genre of narrative and story building, such as character, setting, action etc.

The children are really interested to hear about the process a professional goes through, and they are very quick to pick up the differences between what they are told to do at school and the way the writer presents it in both the discourses used and those employed.

'Whenever I write something, I write very quickly at first and then I look. I keep going back to edit it.'

The different language and approach used here to describe story building, prompts an obvious question to the group:

'Do you do your planning first?'

This gives the writer a prompt to link to the idea of 'stages' and 'planning', which is closer to school requirements and the prescribed ways of dealing with story writing.

'The stages I go through ....then I plan it in sections and then ...'

'We have got a lot of different stages.'

A child intervenes to ask the professional writer:

'When you are ready to write, do you read story books?'

This reflects the importance that the teacher and the school assign to reading. Reading is presented as a practice that helps build a resource material for writing and is seen as a prerequisite for writing a good story. The child is curious to find out whether the success of a professional writer is at all linked to what they are usually taught at school.

'What we are going to write is a story about the new people you meet on the island. We are going to do it in a particular order. We will first have an opener. What can go in an opener? Without thinking about your actual story, what can be an opener?'

'Once upon a time', 'long long ago in outer space', 'a long, long time ago in China', 'long ago in a far away land'.

'Give me a detail about the island that makes it creepy. We will open up our story and also after we have written that, we have to put some details of the island. As you look around and begin to explore, you need to describe the island. What kind of words could you use to describe the island?'

'It's a creepy, creepy island.'

'Once upon a time, in a very scary jungle, a very scary wolf.'

'We are going to open up our story by describing what's going on. What is the next part of the story?'

'The trouble.'

'The next stage is the...trouble. I am going to say trouble or a problem. What is the problem?'

'We don't understand their language.'

'Then we meet the people there and we don't understand them. Here you are going to use your word (referring to the imaginary word they created). This is going to make it realistic for us. You are not going to say that they didn't understand us; you are going to show why they didn't understand us. Here is where you are going to use your language. You won't just say they didn't understand us. The ending is how we understood it. How would you come to understand their language?'

'I would do an action to show them what I am doing.'

'I would say Hula (the child waves his hand) and they would say hula back (shaking his hands, shaking their hands again).'

'Maybe someone in your family speaks that language and they will tell you.'

A girl says that she is going to do sign language and makes a demonstration about which sound could be identified with which movement of the hands.

'We are going to do some writing now. You are going to start planning your story. That's our first stage. So you can use these headings and decide what you are going to write. So think about how you are going to open your story. What is the problem going to be? And then...the ending.'

'I would like you to put a plan first using these headings and then we will try our first draft.'

This preparatory task is the basis for further work in the classroom led by the teacher only. It involves several stages of editing and proof reading before the final emergence of the text into a picture book.

The writer integrates her own practice with the understanding of what the school practice of writing dictates. The words she chooses to refer to the story parts (opening sentence, action and end) and the writing process (editing and drafting) are different from the ones the teacher would use. The latter reflects the word choice found in the Literacy Strategy (beginning, middle and end). The children are able to gauge the difference and they often add to what she says from their own understanding or ask a question for clarity.

The writer in the role of gallery educator in an outreach activity in the classroom forms a trajectory between different professional spaces, practices and knowledge about acceptable standards. She integrates the discourse of a professional writer, a gallery educator and a teacher into a new whole that is made available to the children, and is used to frame and regulate the literacy practice that is expected of them.

## Verbalising and Visualising the Story

This part of the session led by the other gallery educator, who brings with her the professional experience of being an artist and film maker, is designed to give children an opportunity to explore two more ways of narration; using the interpretative framework of this research, through the visual and oral mode. She starts off by recapping the story that they have experienced so far through the role play of the shipwreck, emphasising the aspects of order and sequence. She also encourages children to use movement and sound in order to remember the sequence. The other means she employs at this stage, in order to give children cues for reconstructing the story and to prompt them for the correct sequence, are: gesture, facial expressions, voice modulation, speed variation and making sounds, etc.

Further to the verbal re-enactment of the story, she introduces the children to a way of visually representing it, selecting a scene from the beginning, middle and end. She resorts to the example of comic strips and picture books that illustrate particular instances of a story. She invites visual externalisation of the different parts of the story. A sketch of a frame with three different parts is drawn on the flip chart, as an example of a framework that can accommodate three important scenes from the beginning, middle and end of the story.

‘Visualise what happens at the beginning and in the middle of the story and draw a simple picture. The third square is about what happens at the end of the story. Then in the next stage we will recreate the pictures.’

The storyboards created by the children are discussed in detail in Part 3, as one of the literacy tasks the ‘integrated approach’ facilitated.

The action research group’s plan for a subsequent drama performance was not carried out due to classroom management problems on the day. This was planned to make the children’s stories interact with each other in such a way that they would have performed as film directors and actors in a new story with another beginning, middle and end. This new story would have blended different storyboards that had been created by the children previously. This was envisaged as another creative and imaginative approach to reinforce the objective of building a strong sense of structure, as well as the sense of a beginning, middle and an end. This was one of the major concerns of the teacher around which this programme was designed.

## School A – Classroom Session 3

The morning session was designed as a kinaesthetic approach to address one of the key difficulties children in the classroom had, namely that of punctuation. This was seen to impede the development of writing.

‘We are going to look at punctuation. Can you tell me what punctuation is? What sort of marks you use at punctuation. What does it do?’

‘When you write a sentence you have to take a big breath, cause your readers will get bored.’

The gallery educator explains that when we speak we pause and take breaths. She demonstrates a continuous speech.

‘When do you use exclamation marks?’

‘When you shout.’

‘When you want something to really stand out.’

‘We use it when we are surprised. What do we use after the exclamation mark at the end of the sentence?’

‘We use a capital letter.’

‘We are going to be thinking about three punctuation marks: full stop, comma, and exclamation mark.’



She draws these on the white board:

'I am an artist. I like things that are pictures. That's all well, but they are a bit dull for an artist.'

At that point in the session, one pupil from the EAL group raises her hand to say what these punctuation marks are called in her language. This is one of the many occasions during the *Ideas Factory* action research that the children want to contribute knowledge that is unique to them, due to their diverse cultural background. The conditions that enable such a contribution gain strength by the overall teaching approach. The children recognise that their additional linguistic and cultural resource is acknowledged in all of the sessions. Such recognition feeds their confidence in using their languages where required.

The gallery educator introduces some kinaesthetic work, prompting the children to engage with the shapes of punctuation marks by means of acting them out. In so doing, they manipulate their bodies to take the shape of a particular punctuation mark.

'Who can come to the deck of S.S. Britannia and act out being a fullstop?'

A boy promptly comes forward and moves to the deck of SS Britannia. He kneels down, curls up his body with his head down. The class shouts directions about how he should pose in order to make the representation more accurate, suggesting he should do it sideways.

The gallery educator makes the most of the eagerness of the class to contribute and asks:

'How can we turn him into a comma?'

Another boy comes up and rolls him to the side.

'How would you add yourself to make it into a comma? How could two people work together to become an exclamation mark?'

A boy quickly runs forward and turns himself into a straight line, stretching out his arms and legs as much as possible.

The punctuation marks come to life when the children invest them with human qualities in the make-believe game. Facial expressions are another way of bringing them to life.

'Can you pull me a face that a full stop would pull?'

A boy pulls a face. His expressions are stiff and tense with no evidence of breathing or moving.

'Can someone pull us the face of a comma?'

A boy sticks his lips outwards

'Who can do an exclamation mark face?'

A boy covers one eye with one palm and pulls his lips out with the other hand.

'We want to use this artistic ability to help punctuate our story.

I know that if we all try to recreate full stops there will be chaos and our boat will crash. We have a plan and some resources. What art did you see at Tate Britain?'

'The Deluge', 'The Mud Bath'.

'What do you call a piece of art you can walk around? That is three dimensional?'

The gallery educator turns her pose into a freeze frame and asks:

'If I were a piece of art what would you call me?'

'Sculpture.'

'What sculptures did you see at Tate Britain?'

'A monster', 'it looked green and red and yellow'.

'We had a sculpture that looked like a monster.'

Few children remembered the sculpture, however ... The *Standing Mobile*, by Alexander Calder was projected onto the white board.

The artist and writer lend their own meanings to an artwork and share it with the class. The red circle stands for the full stop, the yellow is the top of the exclamation mark and the green is the comma.

'If I asked you out of the green, the red and yellow, which one looks more like a full stop?'

'The circle.'

'It looks like it's shining!' a boy exclaims after Sarah draws a red circle around it, leaving within it a bit of empty space that is interpreted as the 'shine'.

'The yellow one is going to be our exclamation mark. The yellow is the line of the exclamation mark and the red is the stop. We have templates.'

The gallery educators hand out the templates.

'Everybody will get a template of each of these. They look a bit dull at the moment and we want to give them a bit of character. You are going to turn each of your templates into a face. We have got to use the colour cards of right colour ... red for the full stop, yellow for the exclamation mark and green for the comma.'



Fig. 34. Punctuation marks displayed on an A3 sized paper © Tate 2006

'First you cut out the template and you stick it into your card, the right coloured piece of card. We are going to turn them into characters and see them separately. We now have to transform them into faces. The punctuation has to be the right way round. Each one has to be the right way up and include a face.'

Children start cutting out and work on their imaginative transformations. They invest them with their own meanings – shapes like human figures, houses, animals, guns or monsters.

One girl says to her group 'this is like the head, the body and the hands', as she assembles all the cut-out pieces together in a shape that resembles a human figure. A boy makes his exclamation mark look angry and turns his comma into a cheeky face: an alien with three eyes.

These new props are used as tools in an interactive editing process:

'Read each other your story. One person reads, the other is using punctuation, when you think fit. The other person will hold a punctuation mark, when needed. Then look back at the story, look at the marks that the partner has suggested and rub out what you don't need.'

Summarising the main aspects of the 'integrated approach' in this classroom session, we can say that these involved:

- Using an image of a sculpture as a resource for representing punctuation marks;
- Transforming the punctuation marks into artworks, attributing to them human qualities and linking human qualities with the actual functions of the real punctuation marks;
- Enabling children using their creative and critical thinking skills to transform a punctuation mark into a meaningful entity;
- Using children's artworks as tools to help edit the story;
- Kinaesthetic work, i.e. using movement and props to punctuate an oral and a written text;
- Demonstrating the importance of punctuation as a drafting and editing technique.



Fig. 35. A gallery educator is helping a pupil with making her punctuation marks © Tate 2006

## School B – Gallery Session Experiencing Colour and Expressing Thoughts

The gallery session for the second school group was strongly oriented towards a diverse exploration of colour. It started off with an encounter with a painting by Lubaina Himid, *Between the Two my Heart is Balanced* (fig. 36). The children were already familiar with the painting because they had worked on a reproduction of it in their preparatory session at school. The gallery educator invited the children's comments and observations as they stood before the painting. They then explored a series of other artworks.

### Building Adjectives for Describing Colour Writing Activity

Artwork: John Brett, *The British Channel seen from Dorsetshire Cliffs* 1871 (fig. 38).

Resources: paper, pencil, colour charts.

'Imagine you could fly into this picture. What would you see if you were gliding over?'

'I would see waves on the water', 'hear the ocean moving.'

'How does it make you feel?'

'Happy.'

'Frightened that I might fall in.'

'Happy because the sun is out, but sad because it is deep and I may not be able to swim.'

'Has anyone had their bedroom decorated recently? Did the colour remind you of anything? These colour charts are what people would use to choose a colour. Here are some of their names: e.g. "dark emerald green".'

Further to this introduction about creating words that describe colour according to what it reminds them of, the children are handed a strip of paper and a pencil, and they are asked to create their own labels for colours.



Fig. 36. Lubaina Himid *Between the Two my Heart is Balanced* 1991  
© Tate 2006



Fig. 37. Discussion on Lubaina Himid's painting  
© Tate 2006

'I want to have a really good describing word, an adjective for that colour and then the colour... three words. It might be something like a dark emerald green...or a light misty purple.'

The children sit on the floor in various arrangements and they either work on their own or talk to a person next to them. Then they share their work with the rest of the group:

'Light sky blue.'

'Darkish midnight blue.'

The children are encouraged to create their own combinations of adjectives and nouns and link them to the existing names of colours. Seeing this from a semiotic perspective, children are prompted to do this using the principles of 'provenance and experiential meaning potential' (Kress, Van Leeuwen 2001, pp11-12). Children are actively drawing from their own experiences and are importing a very personal way to describe colour, discovering new descriptive possibilities. It is a task aimed at reinforcing the idea of the adjective as a describing word, as well as that of the compound noun as 'lexical' (available form) and grammatical' (a form that is subject to rules that regulate its use).

This gives rise to further possibilities for personal meaning-making and encoding the current visual experience into words (a new compound that brings together an available form and a personal meaning). Colour can obviously be experienced, seen, described in many words that have personal meanings for each one. Metaphor is implicitly introduced:

'Misty blue', 'shy pink.'

The inspiration for this task comes from the descriptive system found in the colour charts of companies (e.g. Mansell charts, Dulux catalogue) advertising different colours.

'Choose a colour in the picture and think of three words, that can describe it. Think of describing words (adjectives) for that colour, suggesting/indicating also whether it is light or dark.'



Fig. 38. John Brett *The British Channel Seen from Dorsetshire Cliffs* 1871 © Tate 2006

## Drawing Activity

Resources: a piece of paper, coloured pencils, a black view finder, colour charts.

'I would like you to pretend that you are one of those little boats, looking at the sea. The boat is here. So you are in the boat, you are looking at the sea, as if you have got some binoculars in your hands.'

'I would like you to choose a little bit of the sea that you really like. If you hold your viewfinder out like that, you can select a little patch. If you get it back to your eye you can get a slightly bigger patch.'

The children are really engaged. They are holding the carton black view finder in one hand, and are looking through it meticulously, searching for details. They hold it with the other hand too, experimenting with the distance, closing their eyes and trying out different positions. The children use the view finder to zoom into a particular part of the sea and then draw what they see, using coloured pens. They are keen to get the right crayon that will allow them to depict their observations as closely as possible.



Fig. 39. Exploring the colours of a painting © Tate 2006



Fig. 40. Working with black view finders in the gallery in front of a painting © Tate 2006



Fig. 41. John Singer Sargent *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* 1885-6 © Tate

## Evoking the Senses for the Description of Colour

Artwork: John Singer Sargent, *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* (1885-86).

'We've got two sisters in the painting. They are called Polly and Dolly.  
Turn to your neighbour and discuss where these children are and what they are doing.'

The children are really excited and are keen to interact with each other in a lively, engaged manner.

'They are in the garden.'

'How do you know they are in a garden? What do you see?'

'I see flowers and plants.'

'Lots of grass.'

'They might be having a celebration. They are decorating things.'

'What are they doing?'

'They look as if they are decorating things.'

'They are having a celebration.'

'What made you think "celebration"? That's a fantastic idea!'

'The clothes.'

'They are decorating for a special occasion with lanterns. It's almost night time.'

'What is your favourite celebration of the year?'

'Christmas.'

'It is a special occasion.'

'It's a special occasion and they are decorating the garden. What are they decorating the garden with?'

'They've got lanterns.'

'They are lighting candles in lanterns.'

'They are actually lighting the lanterns. It's as if they've got little candles inside them. What is it about their dresses that made you think they are celebrating?'

'They are special dresses.'

'Could you imagine touching the material of these dresses? What would it feel like, do you think?'

'Smooth.'

This is a kinaesthetic prompt aimed to evoke the 'felt' sense in order to encourage the children to come up with words that describe the experience (adjectives linked to the tactile sensation).

'Can anybody think of any describing words, adjectives to describe the feel of those dresses?'

'It will feel like velvet.'

What does velvet feel like?

'Smooth.'

'If I touched it, it would feel soft and silky.'

'These children lived more than a hundred years ago, in Victorian times, and that's what little girls wore, quite a lot of the time ... dresses that came just below the knee. They often had little aprons or pinafores. What colour are their dresses?'

'White.'

'They are white, aren't they? But the more you look, the more you can see more colours. Make your eyes really concentrate.'

'Creamy.'

'What makes them look creamy?'

'The light from the lanterns coming on them.'

'What colours can you see in the shadows?'

'The person on that side is as if she has a lantern on her dress. The artist made the dress look like there's a reflection of the lantern. It's like they are in their night dresses.'

The gallery educator uses a torch against a white paper to demonstrate the different hues that can be seen on a white paper and exemplify how our perception of colour depends on the light available.

'The paper gets a yellowish kind of light.'

She also takes further the discussion to address a pupil's perception that the girls look as if dressed in night gowns.

'I am very interested in this idea of night. Is there anything about the garden that suggests night?'

'At night time the wind gets cold and the flowers are moving.'

'A little bit of breeze.'

'What time of the day is it?'

'It's eight o'clock.'

'Just before you go to bed.'

The intention is to bring up existing vocabulary and enrich it with the words 'dusk' and 'twilight'. The children are unable to guess the words.

'Do you think it is the dead of the night?'

'No!'

'It's that special time of the day, when the sun is going down ...'

'Sunset.'

'That's a very good word.'

'Midnight.'

'Midnight is when it's dark.'

'Evening', 'sunrise', 'moonlight.'

'It's the time that the sun is still down, it's quite light. Who has heard of twilight? Put your hands up if you have heard of twilight. Put your hands up if you have heard of dusk. What colours can you see at this time of the day? For example ... dark rich pink.'



'Beige', 'lightish red', 'peach', 'greeny blue', 'pink', 'greyish white', 'fuchsia'.

'Are yellow, orange, red and pink cold or hot colours?'

'Warm.'

'I would like you to tell me some colours that you can see in those lanterns.'

'Beige', 'lightish red', 'peach', 'green'.

'Actually there is quite a lot of green, blue...'

'Pink', 'creamy pink', 'whitey greyish', 'fuchsia'.

'What colour is fuchsia?'

'Dark rich pink.'

## Evoking the Senses through Visualisations

Artwork: Chris Ofili *The Upper Room* 1999-2002 (fig. 42, 43 and 44).

An introduction took place in the darkness of the connecting corridor, building a sense of anticipation.

'What can you smell?'

'Wood.'

The exhibition space had an impressive effect on children. They showed great amazement as they entered.

'Do you remember all these words for feeling? What did you feel when you came in?'

'Scared and frightened.'

'I was amazed.'

'I don't know what it is, but I was amazed.'

'Everyone is all glitter. It is very sparkly.'

'When I came in it was like finding a treasure. The paintings were amazing and exciting to see.'

'Surprised.'

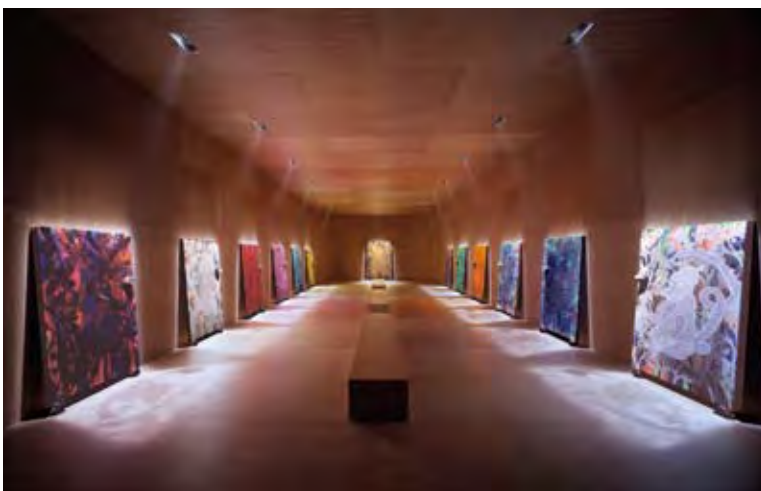


Fig. 42. Chris Ofili *The Upper Room* 1999-2002  
© Chris Ofili



Fig. 43. Chris Ofili *The Upper Room* 1999-2002  
© Chris Ofili

'I felt surprised, cause I saw all these pictures.'

'What do all the pictures have in common?'

'A monkey.'

'What do the monkeys look like?'

'Cheeky.'

'If you were to taste these paintings, what would they taste like? '

'Paint', 'fruity', 'orange'.

'Does anyone have a favourite colour that makes them think of eating anything? There is something in the picture that would stink. It is the base of the pictures and there is some thing stuck on them...something disgusting. It is poo.'

'Ughhh!'

'What animal do these come from? It must be from a big animal.'

'Horse' 'elephant', 'bear'.

'I think the monkey in the painting is a king or a leader.'

'Turn to your neighbour and think of a place you may have been to, that may have made you feel quite and peaceful.'



Fig. 44. Chris Ofili *The Upper Room* (detail) 1999-2002 © Chris Ofili

'A limousine and a jacuzzi.'  
 'A zoo.'  
 'Theme park, seeing all those rides.'  
 'Beach, smell of air.'  
 'Beach.'

The excitement of the experience is well articulated in the comment of one girl as the group was leaving the room:

'This is my favourite place now. I like it cause it's peaceful and it has bright colour.'

Upon their return to the room, 'the special place', the children were asked 'to remain silent, look and feel'. The atmosphere of suspense and magic was intensified by the task set, which was to look through the paintings of a 'being' and think 'what the being is saying to them'. Children were asked to 'be quiet to hear our hearts beating and breathing'. This seemed to be an exploration of the notion of contemplation in front of an artwork.

The children were walking around the room freely, stopping in front of different paintings, without verbally interacting with each. One child said to himself, as he approached one of the paintings, 'Ughh, stinky!' He was linking this with the discussion about the lump on the painting being an elephant's excrements.

Some children were asked about the painting they liked and the reasons for their choice:

'I like that one (golden), cause it's big and reminds me of caramel and chocolate.'  
 'I like the light blue one cause it does not have many colours and patterns.'  
 'She also took me to another one (black in blue background) for which he said: "I know it's got many colours. I like the colours that the person uses. It's like this one brings all the light in the room."'

They also describe the feel as:

'Speechless', 'ecstatic', 'relaxed', 'taking away', 'flashing', 'magical', 'revealing'.

The children also discussed which colour they liked and why.

'It looks like the king of all the monkeys and I like kings' (pointing towards the golden monkey).  
 'I like the yellow, cause it felt taking me to another dimension. It drew me towards it. I touched it but Mrs (teacher) pulled me back.'  
 'The red one. He was a rebel.'  
 'I like the pink but the red talked to me. It said, "come near me and I'll bring you danger."'

The gallery educator, along with the children, recapped the list of attributes that the monkey has:

'Entertaining', 'cheeky' and 'awesome'.

'The monkey is a special one. It is very loud, entertaining, very intelligent and compassionate.'

'What is this monkey saying to you?'

'You should shine.'  
 'Go away.'  
 'I am the king and I will do everything for you.'  
 'Leave me alone, go away!'  
 'I am calm and I'll be generous.'

## Looking for Evidence

Artwork: Robert Braithwaite Martineau, *The Last Day in the Old House* 1862.

Resources: paper and pens.

'What is it that you are drawn to? Tell me one detail.'

'Very realistic', 'facial expression of the lady', 'upset', maybe frightened'.

'What is the focus of this painting? What is your eye immediately drawn to?'

'The right side is happy, the left is sad.'

'The fireplace.'

'What will happen to the fire?'

'Burns out', 'burning down'.

'What happens then?'

'Feel cold and miserable, cause the house might not have any heating.'

'What does the title say? What is it suggesting?'

'They are moving house.'

'What kind of colours are there?'

'Woody', 'burgundy'.

'Give me information about the house.'

'Dying trees.'

'Why did the artist choose autumn?'



Fig. 45. Robert Braithwaite Martineau *The Last Day in the Old Home* 1862 © Tate

'So that the people get vivid pictures in their mind.'

'Trees are falling, dying.'

'What are the tags on a lot of objects? What is their significance?'

'They are giving it away. I think the man did something bad.'

'How does the man feel?'

'The man feels happy.'

The gallery educator invites the children to participate in freeze frame and role play. A boy comes forward and assumes the posture of the father with great expression and confidence.

'Who can be this man? Assume the posture and the mood. What is he thinking?'

'He is happy that he is moving', 'happy because he thinks that his wife will not be sick anymore, as he may not have the money to pay for her'.

Four more children join them to assume the postures and characters of the daughter, mother, father and son. The educator uses prompts to allow children to engage with the characters and get further involved in the role.

'What is the mother thinking?'

'She is sick and the father does not have money to pay the doctor.'

'What is the mother thinking about her son? Why is he drinking champagne?'

'She is thinking, "Why is he following the footsteps of the father?"'  
'They might be looking at the tree outside.'

The role-play activity leads to an exchange of ideas of what the characters of the painting might say to each other. This offers useful resource material for the children as their next task is a writing one:



Fig. 46. The gallery educator and two girls acting out a scene from the painting © Tate 2006

‘Choose one character and write five things they are thinking or feeling. Decide on one phrase that each character is saying.’

In the gallery session, the children responded to the tasks in a multimodal way; drawing the scene in most cases and inserting speech bubbles or thought bubbles.

Looking at the approach that developed in an encounter with the paintings, we can see a sequence and a pattern in the design for learning. This provides for the following levels of practice:

- Visually engaging with the elements of the painting;
- Describing;
- Enquiring;
- Collecting evidence;
- Responding to the questions;
- Engaging the senses through visualisations;
- Developing empathy with the characters;
- Re-enacting an empathetic understanding;
- Re-contextualising the painting in a new narrative.

As regards the literacy work the children were involved in, we can argue that the whole encounter was a literacy event that occasioned a gradual shift from verbal literacies to written ones. We can trace an underlying assumption in the ‘integrated approach’ that written literacy is the final stage and an end product in a longer process of engaging with the world through the senses, empathy and imagination. In the social context of the gallery or school practices, this process is externally and materially realised, and that is the reason we can observe it.

There also seems to be a shared understanding in the established practice of the *Ideas Factory* about the conditions that enable the development of literacy. These are linked to the cumulative effect each level of practice contributes to this collective resource from which the children draw in order to progress with their written literacy.

## School B – Classroom Session 2

### Building Linguistic Resources

This classroom session is the first follow-up after the gallery trip. The gallery educators start off with a discussion session. They negotiate with the children concepts like the ‘horizon’ and the ‘compass points’ in order to use them as points of reference in building a thesaurus of nouns, adjectives and adverbs. This reinforces the grammar that children learn in the school subject of English and forms a basis for the creation of poems and of other creative, artistic transformations.

‘What do the initials “E”, “W”, “S”, “N” stand for?’

‘Compass points.’

They all relate to the physical orientation of their classroom and their bodies in terms of these points. Then the educator pins a large sheet of paper on each wall to indicate the directions.

‘What things do we normally associate with these directions?’

‘Dawn.’

‘What do we associate dawn with?’

‘Dawn is in the morning.’

‘East.’

'Can you write the word "dawn" on the paper saying east?  
What do we associate dusk with?'

'West.'

'Midday?'

'South.'

'Twilight? It's quite the same, like dusk.'

'West.'

'Midnight?'

'North.'

The next stage of the discussion brings the colours into the word game of association.

'What direction do we associate the colour yellow?'

'East.'

'Red?'

'South.'

'Blue?'

'West.'

'Brown?'

'North.'

The session facilitator continues building up words on the sheets, bringing in the four elements into the discussion.

'Fire?'

'South.'



Fig. 47. Working with the Tate paintings in the classroom through a whiteboard © Tate 2006

'What is the collective word for these things? Fire, earth, water, air?'

'Elements.'

This free, associative thinking takes on another dimension as more personal and cultural associations are invited by eliciting the children's response to several abstract notions.

'What do we associate flying with?'

'West.'

'What about death? Think about times of the day.'

'North.'

'Midnight.'

'What about curiosity?'

'What does this mean, Miss?, "suspicious".'

'It means when something is going to happen, so they are being warned, when someone is curious they have a funny feeling.'

The gallery educator explains that curiosity is when you want to know about something, then you are curious and the noun is curiosity. Children are now able to discuss their association of 'curiosity' with the compass points.

'West, cause that's where the twilight, that's the time of day you get curiosity.'

'I think, like, east, like, if you are curious about someone and you really wanna know, dawn, early in the morning is a good thing.'

'The East is about new things, new day, new beginning. So curiosity goes with the East. Let's go back to one of the paintings now.'

'We are going to pick five words from the West.'

(That is the paper on the wall with the list of words associated with west.)

'Splashing, ancient, powerless, mystify, hijacked.'

'Combine these words in an interesting way.'



Fig. 48. An instance from the workshop in a Year 4 classroom © Tate 2006



Fig. 49. Chris Ofili *Mono Naranja* 1999-2002 © Chris Ofili



The educator prompts them with the words 'play' and 'experiment'. She also gives an example: 'anciently powerless, powerlessly ancient'.

A painting of *Chris Ofili* comes up on the whiteboard and generates great enthusiasm.

'What did you think?'

'It was smelly.'  
'Glitter.'

'Sometimes we can associate words with different areas. What other words would we associate with this painting?'

'Artistic.'  
'I think the person that took a picture, is someone that knows.'  
'It's like an archaeologist is searching for gold.'  
'Is curious.'

The educator adds on the word explorer onto one of the charts. She shares with the children that she would not associate the painting with one direction only, as it evokes so many things at the same time. This contributes to everyone's understanding that the association process is something personal, subjective and not linked to an evaluation that is right or wrong.

One of the children adds to the gallery educator's point:

'I think it's quite special, when we went out, we were talking what the paintings were saying to us.'

'What did it say to you? How about the image of the blue painting? Do you remember what you associated with blue?'

'The ocean.'  
'Sky.'  
'Overwhelming.'

'What words come up, when you think of the image of the golden painting?'

'Golden ring.'  
'Caramel.'  
'Honey.'  
'I associate yellow with the desert.'

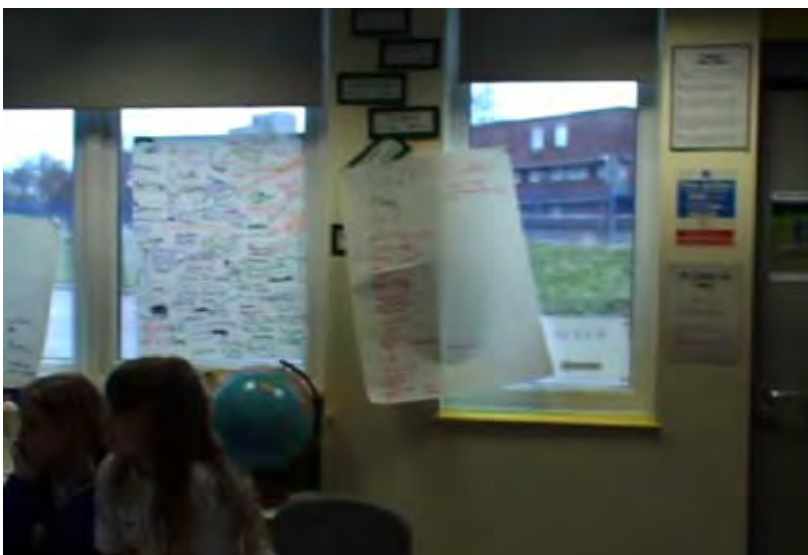


Fig. 50. Writing the new words onto A2 sheets and displaying them in the classroom © Tate 2006

The educator invites children's impressions of Chris Ofili's paintings. She prompts children to share the different words that come up in relation to the different colours of each painting and further associate them with the compass point that they think each colour could be linked to.

The activity that follows on is done in pairs. Children are asked to look at the words referring to the senses – taste, sight, smell, touch and hearing – as well as explore and discuss personal feelings and memories the senses evoked. The gallery educators write words on the board. The children share their personal experiences with the rest of the class:

'I said it before, but I will say it again, the yellow monkey was telling me to go inside the picture, but I felt someone pulling me back, someone I didn't want to see, saying: "come in to see how we live."'

'I felt overpowered.'

The gallery educator introduces the word '*overwhelmed*' and adds the word '*energy*'. A girl says, '*energized*'. The gallery educator turns it to '*recharged*'.

'I heard the blue monkey telling me to brighten up and sparkle.'

'It reminded me of going to a nice place like Disneyland.'

'I smelled and tasted wood.'

'Pearls.'

'Some people said they smelled droppings.'

'Dung.'

'I saw drops of paint.'

'I smelled paint.'

'Me and my partner felt magical.'

'We were touching wood we felt wood.'

'I smelled and tasted chocolate.'

'Can you think of words to describe the monkeys?'

She reminds them of the words she used and asks them to recall them, using quotes.

'What is the word I used to describe the quality of the monkey?'

'Fearsomely intelligent.'

'Compassionate.'

'Friendly.'

'Overgrown.'

'Safe.'

'Cheeky.'

Children split in four groups and use one of the compass points as a point of reference in their work. They will fill in the charts with words that the paintings they see bring up.

'I will show you four paintings. Look at the paintings and write all the words that come up as associations. Relax and breathe to allow thinking.'

Some pupil from the EAL target group responds: '*I felt miserable, depressing, uncomfortable, sorrow*'. She then very proudly points to the words on the chart where she sees the words she contributed during the group activity.

'It looks like desert.'

The gallery educator prompts them to write the word 'deserted'.

'It felt windy.'

'It felt uncomfortable.'

'I smelled fire, wood burning.'

'I smelled seaweed.'

'I hear water splashing.'

'Scary,' says a boy very reluctantly, after much prompting.

'It is big and the colour is so overwhelming.'

'Petrified.'

Most of the children agree with the response 'petrified'. A girl from the same group explained:

'It's overwhelming because of the colour; it's like a firework cracking.'

The children work at length with associative thinking and they do not draw directly from the images that are projected. They prefer to engage further with the discussion on associations within their groups.



Fig. 51. Chris Ofili *Mono Rosa* 1999-2002  
© Chris Ofili



Fig. 52. A pupil is adding more words onto the word bank created on the sheets © Tate 2006

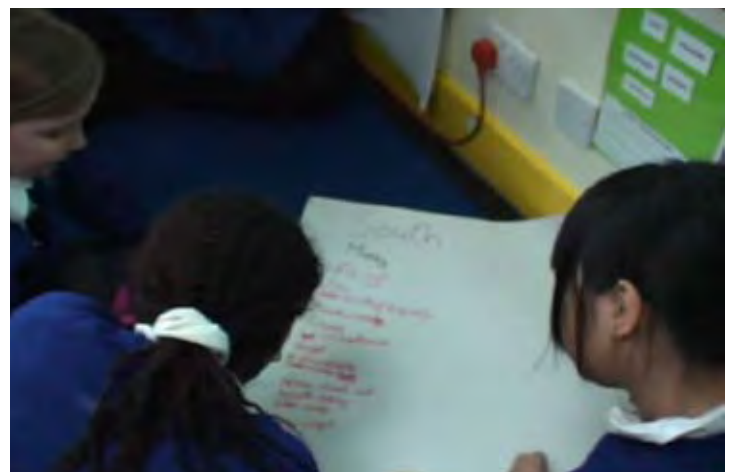


Fig. 53. Working collaboratively to make compounds of adjectives and nouns © Tate 2006

During the session, the educators do not attempt any close observation or analysis of the actual work of art. This remains a point of reference that feeds the memory with the initial experience of viewing it in the gallery. The educators enable the children to elaborate on their initial reaction and further take this as a starting point for a series of associations that facilitate interaction within the group and builds on each other's words.

The children are encouraged to work within their groups and choose the words they like the most from their lists. The next step is to identify one of the artworks that is projected on the board and relate it to the words they have chosen.

## Poem Writing and Art Workshop

The afternoon session with the same class includes two parallel workshops: one with a poem and the other with an art activity. The first one builds on the morning preparation and furthers the experimentation with adverbs, adjectives and nouns.

'We are going to pick five words from the West.'  
(That is the paper on the wall with the list of words associated with west.)

'Splashing, ancient, powerless, mystify, hijacked.'



Fig. 54. Further collaborative work on word and sentence building © Tate 2006



Fig. 56. The artist/gallery educator engaging with the pupil's work © Tate 2006



Fig. 55. The poet/gallery educator interacting with a pupil © Tate 2006

'Combine these words in an interesting way.'

The educator prompts them with the words 'play' and 'experiment'. She also gives an example: 'anciently powerless, powerlessly ancient'.

The children are encouraged to take turns and share their combinations of three words, this time put in a sentence format:

'You are a splashing ancient mist.'

This phrase-building work is taken further in smaller groups and is then followed by the actual writing of a poem. The gallery educator reads out a poem she has written on 'The Monkey of the North, South, East and West'. The children are given suggestions to use a format with four verses and four lines each. The first line of each verse is meant to address each of the 'Monkeys of the four compass points', e.g. 'The Monkey of the South ...'. Examples of the children's production of poems are presented in Part 3, which studies the children's literacy work.

The drawing activity complements the poem-writing workshop and integrates the literacy work into an artistic framework. Leaves are used as templates for cutting out transparent or opaque sheets of paper. These are used either to frame the poems or design a new format for the poems around the leaves. This provides an opportunity for further editing of the poems and engaging with different possibilities for presenting and displaying the work to the public.

In this classroom session, which lasted a whole day, the poet and the artist worked closely together, using their particular expertise in their fields to build on the children's gallery experience and their engagement with the visual images through the senses and imagination. The presence of a poet and a painter in the institutional roles of gallery educators had a significant impact, according to the reflections of the action research group. The integrated expertise contributed immensely to making available resources that a classroom teacher could not possibly have.

The session that these two practitioners designed aimed to show the children a way to enrich their vocabulary and enhance their own linguistic resources. This was achieved through prompting the children to express verbally their experience of immersion into the world of images, in terms of colour and themes ... and into the display of these artworks in the gallery space.

The first part of the morning session helped build a rich resource of nouns and adjectives that were associated with the compass points. This was further enriched by other adjectives that corresponded to the felt senses, especially those that described the children's feelings evoked through the encounter with *Chris Ofili's* work.

The large white charts, titled 'north', 'south', 'west', 'east', were respectively pinned up on the north, south, west and east walls of the classroom. This created a different sense of space, a clearly defined position of the children's bodies and their classroom with reference to the compass points. The words on the lists reminded each child of the associations that they had come up with during the discussion. This way the experience of being within the 'Upper Room', surrounded by Chris Ofili's work, was transported into the classroom space. The projection of the images on the classroom board contributed immensely towards this effect.



Fig. 57 & 58. Two phases from planning the layout of the elements in the poster © Tate 2006

The children looked really excited and contented with their achievement of compiling such a rich linguistic resource on the charts. With great pride, they tried interesting combinations with these words. They were further motivated to use the dictionary to explore abstract nouns or adverbs related to their adjectives. The gallery educators prompted the children to be as creative and as transformative as possible with all the words that the children themselves made available to everyone.

The choice of poetry as a means of experimenting with adjectives, nouns and adverbs proved to be a very apt tool for the purpose, as the action research team discovered. The children had to create a literacy work that was subject to as few conventions as possible, except for some rules pertaining to writing poetry such as verses, lines and rhyme. Examples of that work are discussed in Part 3 of the report, under the chapter 'Poetry'.

Describing their teaching methodology and their strategies for engaging children, the gallery educators referred to their approach on the day as:

'Interacting, relating the work to their own experience.'  
 'Going back over their work and adding to it, revising.'  
 'Encouraging close observation of Chris Ofili's work.'  
 'Making the experience exciting, connecting with body, involving senses ... making it kinaesthetic.'  
 'Evidence-based, looking for clues to support argument.'

## Reflections on the 'Integrated Approach'

The term 'integrated approach' came up as a response to the need to describe and name an educational approach used in Tate Britain, in order to explore further its possible impact in the service of school literacy. It was perceived as 'holistic', bringing together different practitioners with diverse arts backgrounds and resources for the teaching of art and literacy within the *Ideas Factory Project*.

Researcher: 'Thinking about the integrated approach ... reflecting back on the methods you used, your strategies ... the way you formed your approach to writing and art ... How would you describe it? What was integrated about it? And how do you think this integrated approach helped children today?'

Gallery educator 1: 'I think ... I mean ... it's integrated in the sense of ... we know that we are leading to a common purpose, because we are now separated.'



Fig. 60. Writing a poem getting inspiration from the poet's original model-poem © Richard Eaton 2006



Fig. 59. Children adding final touches to their display © Richard Eaton 2006

Researcher: 'You are now working separately.'

Gallery educator 1: 'We started off a team and now we are separated and then we sort of come back together. So at the moment, in that sense, being integrated is just a case of ... trying to make sure we are both heading in the same direction.'

Gallery educator 2: 'I think it is more integrated than that. I don't think that's coming at the end. I mean, I think you are certainly integrating much more in the previous session, than what we are doing in the next session ... But in this session, not to the same extent.'

Gallery educator 1: 'It is more like it is a journey ... I hate that phrase, but it is a journey, so what we are both doing is sticking with the concept, but we are kind of doing different parts of it ... at different stages, but the two are meant to actually ... there is not meant to be a division between the two. They are not ... hopefully, they are not gonna say ... and now we've got (gallery educator 1) who is doing art and next we've got (gallery educator 2), therefore, we are doing literacy. That would be deadly.'

Gallery educator 2: 'Yeah, that in fact ... we are very integrated in that sense, that we are both, you know, using both areas.'

Gallery educator 2: 'The approach is integrated, it has collaborative work. I would say that it is partnership and it's not just partnership between us. It is everyone, partnership of teacher, artist and writer because all three bring different experience and skills and I think we have said this before, that even though we have kind of used artworks ... it is more using art, bearing in mind that lots of art is using literacy anyway. It is not teaching artworks as a resource of literacy. It is teaching art and literacy together and seeing how sometimes the literacy can promote the art and sometimes the art can promote the literacy and sometimes it is invisible, there is no difference.'

The paintings and the gallery space are used as a resource in the service of story making. One of the implications that arises from that, as it has been mentioned in the Visual Paths project, is the selective use of elements from the artwork as a visual stimulus to create a story. The paintings are de-invested from the several historical contexts and are treated as a compilation of visual elements that are meaningful only in the present.

Despite the possible losses, there are many gains that are evident to all the participants. This approach indicates an entry point to the world of art that is enabling and empowering all participants, pupils and teachers alike, as it shows a way for a personal stimulation of all the senses via imagination, as well as foregrounds the view that meaning-making is a very personal matter.

The fact that the artworks and gallery resources are so explicitly put at the service of literacy and particular learning objectives, does not make it easy for the gallery educators to expand the possible interpretative framework that they can build around a painting in directions other than ones that are in line with the school literacy discourse.

Moreover, research could be initiated to explore the possibility for an integration of elements of the artworks' history and context into the Tate Britain 'integrated pedagogy' in ways that relate to the interests of younger audiences.

## **Working Within, Between and Across Two Spaces: an Integration**

A discussion about the relevance of the gallery space to serve the literacy school needs raised the issue of the different possibilities and limitations each space presented.

Researcher: 'You think that the gallery space is restrictive?'

Gallery educator 1: 'Yeah, it's not an appropriate space for it, cause children need to be much calmer than their actual set of mind is in a gallery ... cause they are excited ... a trip. I think you need to be sitting down properly with paper and pen in front of them, and I think they need to be in a very controllable environment. I wouldn't have attempted that in the gallery space. I don't think it's part of the deal. The hard work starts when we go back, actually.'

Researcher: 'So, you see the writing, as practice linked to classroom only...'

Gallery educator 1: 'Um ...'

Researcher: '... or predominantly.'

Gallery educator 2: '... we do writing stuff in the gallery.'

Gallery educator 1: 'I wouldn't want to try to do that in the gallery, because I don't think I could deliver it very effectively in the gallery. It's not the right environment. And at the same time, the gallery is a nice environment for doing something that feels different ... that feels qualitatively different from the classroom environment. And it is a nice opportunity for them to work in a slightly freer way.'

The gallery educators and the team found the gallery unsuited for extensive writing tasks that could possibly satisfy the school; the school would still expect quality work according to their own standards of literacy practices.

Gallery educator 1: 'We often forget. But it is very difficult to encourage neat, tidy, sensible handwriting if they are doing it on their knees. And I think a desk is a really important part of that for small children ... particularly for kids who are struggling with language ... We talked about EAL, but the kids are for example dyslexic and have difficulty to collect information, you know. Also, it's the age of the children ... only Year 3. The older children will attempt more writing and you know... expect higher things... and sentences and things like that.'

The action research team reflected upon the significance of the gallery space and its affordances and possibilities that affect written literacy. One of the key aspects that emerged is that the gallery space, with its richness of visual stimuli, is the most appropriate space to first start building literacy through oracy. Reflecting upon the potential of the visual image to invoke rich language, one gallery educator said the following:

'It's a good opportunity to encourage them to use really nice descriptive language, to be doing things like symbolism and metaphors. 'Let's have a metaphor that describes this person' for example, that's the kind of thing you can do.'

The team also identified a difference between the gallery and the classroom space in the design and instantiation of written literacy activities.

Researcher: 'How about the sentence writing activity within the classroom ... the pirates ... How different would that be if we came up with the shanty in the gallery?'



Fig. 61. Drawing and writing resting on the floor  
© Richard Eaton 2006



Gallery educator 2: 'Noise would be a problem ... frankly ...'

Gallery educator 1: 'And control ... it was a bit of overexciting activity.'

Gallery educator 2: 'And we did do it upstairs in the gallery, cause we had a very quiet lovely group. That was lovely!'

Gallery educator 1: 'It was because they knew it, they had a loud go, they were in control of it. It wasn't something new, it wasn't something exciting.'

This refers to the affordances, possibilities and restrictions that each space provides, as each is regulated by different sets of rules and knowledge about how literacy should be practised. The education programme in the gallery cannot use the gallery exclusively as a classroom space due to the obvious limitations of other people using the space. It has to be an enriched version of the movement that a guided tour would allow for: flow.

The programme actually pushes the practices of educational programmes in a gallery to an edge, as it allowed children to engage in noise-generating activities that would occasionally overwhelm the space they were in, sometimes for a long period of time – even up to 30 minutes within a particular space.

The gallery educators have an understanding of the range of levels within an age group. In the school discourse this realisation is linked to the practice of differentiation of activities and the obligation to provide appropriate material to each child according to individual needs. This differentiation in activities is not usually the case in the gallery education world. This raises the issue of what would happen if literacy, in the school sense of the word, was pursued within the gallery space. Would it affect its established teaching practices? Would it ever be possible to sustain a compatibility with the perception of school literacy across the board in the gallery education, or would such a shift impact on what is considered to be good and innovative practice in the field.

'What you tend to find in a Year 3 class, is that there will be some kids that can still barely write, and there are some kids that are writing beautifully and sentences and spelling words and all of that ... and so that's another reason why I tend not to do writing with Year 3 because it is too differentiated and it's not actually fair on the kids that aren't very good at it ... who just don't get to engage with it. I tend to stick with ... you know ...'

## **Integrating Practices or Crossing Over Practice Boundaries Between Different Communities of Practice?**

This sub-section reflects on the notion of integration in relation to session 3 or School A. The gallery educators take on the role of a teacher by introducing children to the idea of a beginning, middle and end in the story; prioritising a written account of the story; and following it up with building a visual narrative.

This part of the session does not necessarily integrate the diverse resources as intensely as other parts of the project. The gallery educators are drawn into the teaching of writing a narrative, using the resources of the school and the notions available to them. The role of the visual is secondary to that of writing and serves to strengthen the actual writing.

The usual practice of the *Ideas Factory Project* is to recover the story through the visual, verbalising it first and then writing it down. The work of art in that classroom session remains a distant point of reference and is not foregrounded in any way. The gallery educators are drawn into the dictates and objectives of the school literacy hour, feeling the need to deliver and to complete. They enter the practical domain of the classroom teaching practice.

This issue of the gallery educators introducing a pedagogical practice for teaching is underpinned by different understandings about the role of art, as ancillary in the teaching of literacy or as a basis for subsequently understanding written literacy.

## Literacy through Art, Written Literacy via Visual Literacy or the Other Way Round?

In the subsequent reflection at the twilight session after an encounter with the children, there was the general realisation of a forced intensity in delivering this kind of work in such limited time, and an understanding of a division of roles and labour. There was the belief that there are particular things that are better done by teachers and others that are better done by gallery educators. The session worked as a wonderful stimulus for reflection on what each practitioner contributes within the partnership.

Gallery educator 1: '... we are the resource actually!'

Gallery educator 2: 'That's the thing, because actually we are doing two things ... as ... very much as a resource. One is that we are a new face and some of them will be fairly excited and they might engage just on the basis that we ... they meet people who are different. And the other one is that we will be doing a project with them, that we can then listen to what the teacher ... we have spoken to the teacher already and will feed into it ... those themes that the teacher is addressing, as opposed to just doing that. So, we are not just doing grammatical work. We are actually writing a story and we will be drawing attention to grammatical work during that.'

Gallery educator 1: 'Because if they just wanted someone to come in and teach them how to write a sentence, they could get hold of a teacher.'

Gallery educator 2: 'There are people who can do it a lot better than us.'

Researcher: 'The teacher comes into this with the knowledge of 'how to build sentences and how to teach reading', the other one is the visual, the resource-based approach, and it's a time for all of them to come together.'

Gallery educator 1: 'I think it's an opportunity to teach in a kind of "non- sledge-hammer" way as well. The kids are fed up of learning grammar ... we are actually saying: "Alright, you are not doing grammar, you are writing a story". "But oh, It would be good, if that sentence was a bit crispier". It's a different way round it.'

Gallery educator 2: 'I do worry about the literacy side of it, because it is a really short project.'

Gallery educator 1: 'She is the point of reference in what we are doing. We come as outsiders. And you know ... there's only so much ... We've got to be really realistic about what we can expect to achieve through this. And it is actually very little, in terms of actual concrete, grammatical learning. We can't teach them that.'

## Children's Understanding of the 'Integrated Approach'

There are many aspects of the children's literacy work that can shed more light on what the 'integrated approach' is about. This report foregrounds three types of children's multimodal texts as significant for our understanding of the *Ideas Factory Project* teaching approach. This part explores the assumption that the 'integrated' teaching methodology has filtered through the children's visual representations (textual and image based).

Evaluation forms are the first useful source of information about what the children liked in the *Ideas Factory Project*. Even though they do not form a part of the action research and were administered separately by Tate Britain Education, the written texts have been taken into account, particularly in terms of their understanding of what the teaching methodology involved.

A second important source is the children's images, as they particularly appear in their accounts of their visit to the Tate. Another area of literacy practice that can contribute more data to help us define the 'integrated approach' comes from another set of multimodal texts. These were created by the children as a response to a task the teacher set, asking them to explain what school subject the project was linked to and what they liked about it. This last most important source locates the 'integrated approach' within the school subjects and shows the difficulty the children and the teacher have in identifying which curriculum area it serves. This is discussed in detail and from the teacher's perspective in Part 4 under the section 'Integrating school subjects and literacy practices'.

## The 'Integrated Approach' in Children's Evaluation Forms

At the end of the gallery trip all pupils were handed a standard Tate Britain *Ideas Factory* Pupil Feedback form. The children were required to respond to eight questions by circling one of four smiley faces available. These represent four different emotional levels and could be read as: very happy, happy, average satisfaction, unhappy.

Almost all children's feedback forms came back with the most positive feedback. Almost all of them encircled the most smiley face. Their answers show that they really enjoyed working with the artists in the gallery and they were very pleased with the visit to Tate Britain. They felt that they learned to do new things. The overall excitement was obvious amongst all the participants throughout the project, due to the uniqueness of the gallery visit and the different learning opportunity it offered.

The responses to the following three questions are significant for reinforcing the point about what stood out as the most important and interesting to the pupils in the whole gallery experience: Which activity did you enjoy most today?; Why did you enjoy it?; What was the best thing about Tate Britain? The children were not able to differentiate their responses to the first and third questions. The dominant response replicated the answers to questions about the activities they enjoyed on that day:

'looti at pichs'  
 'drawing picters'  
 'the people the most'  
 'drawing and coulring'  
 'looking at pairting'  
 'making boats'  
 'I enjoyed when we got to look at the art'  
 'staring at pictures'

Only a few children explained why they liked the *Ideas Factory Project* experience:

'because it was fun and the paintings were beautyful'  
 'lot off expreshor'  
 'I just grew up to like art'  
 'bkose I did'

The phrase 'staring at pictures' is also significant in terms of the use of the participle 'staring' instead of looking or seeing. It could be suggestive of an engagement with the picture with awe and excitement; a captivating gaze that develops during the encounter with aspects of the artwork. It was a general observation for all of us in the project that the children's gaze was actively engaged.

Facilitative observation of paintings and an engagement with the artworks were seen as key aspects of the 'integrated approach', as it can be deduced from statements in children's discourse, such as: 'I enjoyed looking at paintings'. Also the presence of verbal nouns, i.e. words such as 'drawing', 'colouring', 'making', 'seeing', are all suggestive of action. The children thoroughly enjoyed the wide range and diversity of the project activities.

## The Integrated Approach in Children's Images

This report looks at children's visual ensembles of image and text in order to explain the impact of the 'integrated approach' on the creation of these literacy texts. The children's multimodal ensembles, and particularly the images, can also be used as complementary data to support this section of the report that describes and analyses the teaching methodology of the *Ideas Factory Project*.

The following points summarise how the children experience and understand the approach particularly through the images that they used in several of their responses to literacy tasks. The methodology for analysing children's images is illustrated in more detail in the subsequent parts. These key points are accompanied by some excerpts from children's drawings that are seen as representations of the teaching methodology in the gallery and the classroom:

- Having gallery educators leading a session while the teacher is present;
- Using the gallery space in different ways than the school classroom (e.g. lying or sitting on the gallery floor while drawing and writing);
- Talking about their work;
- Getting encouraging and enthusiastic feedback;
- Using all the senses, but predominantly that of sight;
- Using pictures as a resource for all sorts of activities;
- Talking, writing, sticking, gluing, drawing, making;
- Engaging with the artworks;
- Exploring the unknown, vast space of the gallery;
- Having fun!



Fig. 62. A group of pupils and their gallery educator in front of *The Mud Bath* © Tate 2006

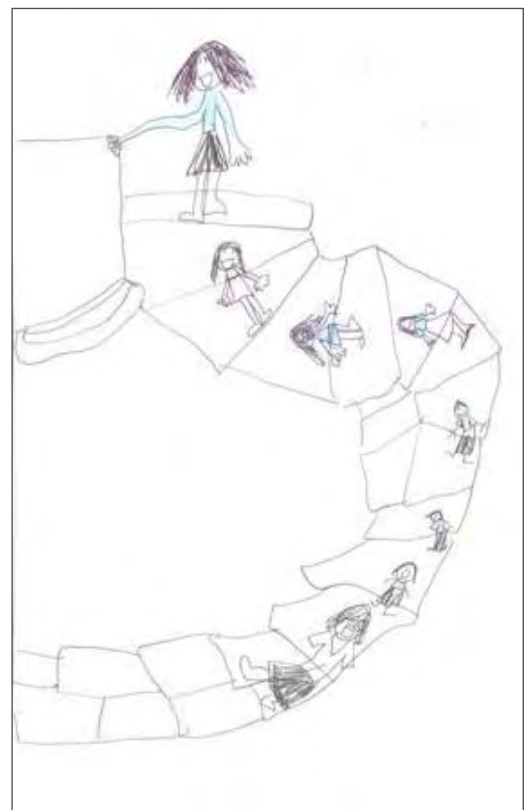


Fig. 63. Children climbing up the winding staircase of the Education Department to enter the gallery space © Tate 2006



Fig. 64. Plenary session in front of Zuccarelli's painting with children presenting their 'monster' drawings © Richard Eaton 2006



Fig. 66. A teaching session sitting on the gallery floor in front of *The Deluge* © Tate 2006



Fig. 65. A representation of the session depicted on the image above. The painting of *Cadmus Killing the Dragon* features at the back © Tate 2006



Fig. 67. The *Ideas Factory Project* in the classroom space © Tate 2006



## **PART 3**

# **Understanding Children's Literacy Production:**

**Multimodal Practices and Transformations**

## Understanding Children's Literacy Production: Multimodal Practices and Transformations

This part of the report frames specific instances from children's literacy production. It particularly presents some of the multimodal literacy genres that emerged as a response to specific tasks within the *Ideas Factory Project*. Such multimodal texts are: the children's picture books, their storyboards and their written accounts of the gallery trip. The report predominantly presents and analyses selections from literacy work of the EAL children.

The 'integrated approach' as presented in the previous part seems to favour the emergence of particular literacy practices and multimodal texts. This part foregrounds the children's engagement with literacy and attempts to recover the possible traces and impact of the *Ideas Factory* pedagogy, as a multi-resourced framework, on the actual choices the children made.

There is an understanding that there are many parameters, beyond the 'integrated approach', that mediate in the creation of children's multimodal texts, both in the process of designing them and in their final emergence as texts. The priority to explore the link between the integrated pedagogy and the children's literacy work, informs the decision to select the above as research data and figure out the potential for transformation that the *Ideas Factory* teaching approach enabled.

There is also an acknowledgment that there are several other locations where children's literacy work emerges within the project, e.g. other supporting writing activities at school, which were not part of this study.

The last chapter within this part looks across the children's literacy data and discusses the emergences and transformations of the Tate Britain paintings in the children's literacy work.

## Storyboards: The Literacy Practice of Building a Visual Narrative

The *Ideas Factory* 'integrated approach' facilitated different possibilities in the children's literacy production. It enabled different combinations of image and writing on a range of media and materials, like carton, paper, leaves, transparencies, watercolours, pencils, crayons, etc. More importantly, it helped design resourceful combinations of several literacy genres that are already available in the school, e.g. written narratives, illustrations, picture books, poems. The storyboard represents one of these constructed genres within which the children's literacy work emerged. It is also a site where we can possibly evidence the impact of the *Ideas Factory* design for learning.

Figure 68 illustrates a visual storyboard that the children had to develop in the classroom in preparation for the book-writing activity. It was done on A3-sized white paper that was divided into three sections. The gallery educators asked the children to think of the three sections of the storyboard as the equivalent to a narrative with a beginning, middle and end. The convention that was introduced and agreed with the children dictated that the first part would narrate visually the beginning of the story, the central section would refer to the middle, and the last one would show the end of it. The children were prompted to foreground the visual as a dominant mode for the production of meanings, whereas the text could have a complementary or ancillary role.

The approach that this research uses to unpack the meanings children made in their story boards is mainly informed by the multimodal, social semiotic approach. This views the children's storyboards as texts interspersed with signs. Reading the children's signs is an attempt to recover the complexity of their initial interests and the resources they draw upon.

The storyboards form a multimodal text: a visual, graphic ensemble of image and writing. Each one of these modes merges with the other in these storyboards, although the dominant mode through which meanings are realised is the visual. Children design their visual narrative drawing on the different affordances of each mode, i.e. the possibilities and the potential of image and writing to create meanings (Pahl, Rowsell 2005, p.127). Each mode is served by particular media (e.g. paint, paper, line, colour, letters, words, speech bubbles) which themselves present their own limitations and potential for building a representation.



This part looks closely at two story boards made by two EAL students Georgia and Arcange. Their storyboards exemplify the hybrid literacy genre, as well as the common literacy practices the children usually employed. These two storyboards are discussed here in terms of the process of designing and making them, as well as in terms of the meanings that can be made about the role of the ‘integrated approach’ in creating them.

In figure 69 we can see how Georgia responded to the task, and how she employed the notion of a beginning, middle and end that is such an established way of ordering the narratives in the literacy hour at school. This way the educators aimed to secure a reading path that was expected to function similarly in the visual domain as in the writing. This turned out not to be the case for most of the storyboards, however, since the children do not appear to have conformed to this suggestion and their narrative comes across as inconsistent with the framing that the task dictated. Most of the first two boxes refer to instances from the beginning of the story and in only a few cases is there an end to the story.

Georgia fills in the sections with what seem to be particular instances from the beginning and middle of the story. The first part shows three girls, Clover, Alex and Sam in a place titled ‘Bevely hills’. The girls are placed at the bottom of the first section, looking straight at the viewers and as a result demanding their attention. The second part depicts a scene from the middle of the story showing Alex in a room next to a box labelled ‘girls bin’. She is depicted throwing something into the bin. There is some text that runs over Alex’s head that reads: ‘sucked everyone in’. The sentence has to be read in conjunction with the image and the writing on the bin. In the third part we see Alex and a ‘gient’ standing next to a house. The scene is outdoors and it is raining heavily. There is a speech bubble next to Alex’s mouth that suggests she is talking to the giant.

As it emerges from a subsequent interview with her, all the action starts in the third box. The interview gives her a chance to renegotiate an end to the story that is not evident in the visual narrative. Here follows an excerpt of the interview between Georgia (G) and the researcher as the interviewer (I).

- G.: First there was three girls and then one of them went to put something in the bin and then the bin sucked her down into... into a wonderful island with strange people.
- I.: So that’s what’s happening at the beginning of the story. And this is the middle and the end of the story ... What happens next in the story? What’s happening here?
- G.: She saw a weird ... giant.
- I.: (reading the name of the girl on the picture) Alex was the name of the girl. And she saw a giant. What was the giant called? What does it say here?
- G.: Giant.
- I.: What does a giant look like?
- G.: Big ... and ... strong
- I.: Does it look like a girl?
- G.: It’s a girl giant.
- I.: A girl giant! And this is her hands ... (Georgia moves her hands behind her back) ... are hidden?

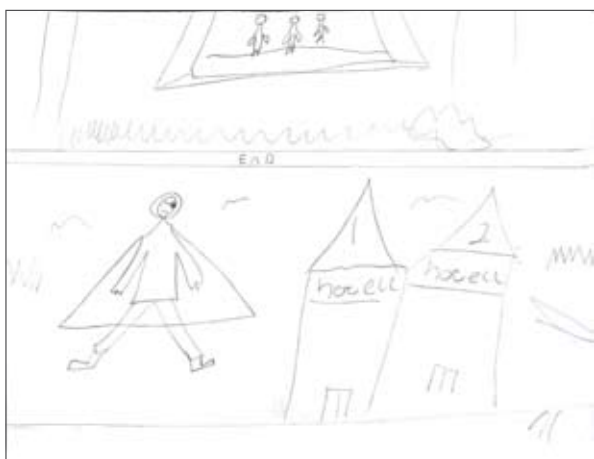


Fig. 68. An example of a storyboard © Tate 2006

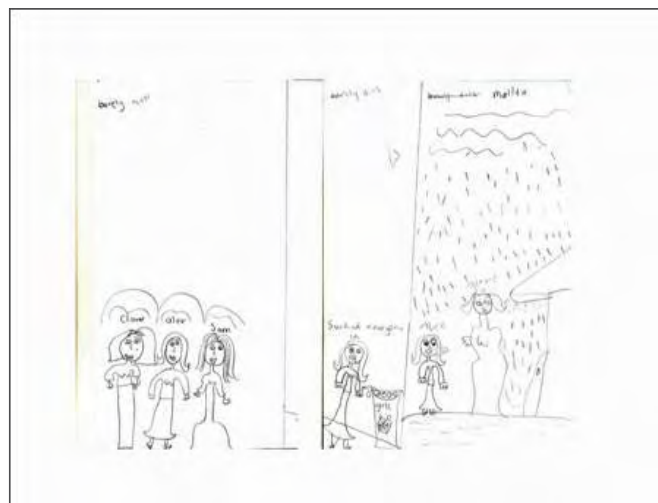


Fig. 69. An A3-sized visual storyboard by Georgia © Tate 2006

G: (Nods yes.)

I: What's happening in the story ... here?

G: She meets the girl giant and then the girl giant ... says 'what's your name like?' ... and told her about how she got there.

I: Right, so what is she saying here? You've got a speech bubble.

G: She is saying, 'I got sucked from the bin and I came here'.

I: Is she scared?

G: No.

I: No...really, she seems to be enjoying it.

G: She is a brave girl.

I: She is a brave girl. But what's this over here? This is a house.

G: That's where the giant lives.

I: The giant lives there! This is the end of the story though. Does the story end here? ... or is there something else is happening in the story...

G: Something else is happening.

I: So it's not quite the end of the story. It's sort of the middle. What happens in the end of the story?

G: The giant tells her to go home because something bad is gonna happen there.

I: Oh really? Like what?

G: Like... a volcano.

I: Oh! ...A volcano is going to erupt? Oh my goodness! That's really scary. So did Alex follow her advice?

G: Yeah.'

(Excerpt from a transcript of an interview at school.)

This alternative verbal account of a visual representation, as another literacy event taking place within the interview frame, offered an additional possibility for making meanings not only about a visual narrative that is already there; it also prompted the child to create a consistent version of a verbal narrative with a very clear temporal sequence.

In a usual narrative representation of a story, there is no clear indication about temporal sequence, as the elements co-exist spatially. Here the drawing task set in the classroom created a hybrid form that employed resources from the teaching of visual and written literacy. The school usually uses the mode of writing as a main resource for teaching the writing of a narrative while the art gallery employs the modes of speech and images to 'read' or recreate a narrative.

This imposes a particular sequence to the narrative representation by trying to get the children to create a visual equivalent to the 'beginning, middle and end' structure of the narrative as it is taught in the literacy hour. The gallery educators here attempted to respond to that school literacy convention of structuring a narrative. This created new possibilities for representation that develop beyond the usual 'logic' of a narrative representation.

An important aspect that emerges is that the representations that children make and re-make are negotiated with other individuals in their environment and in accordance with the dictates of the most dominant literacy discourse. Meaning-making is not only framed and regulated by those overarching discourses but it is further negotiated by the maker in apt and meaningful ways and it is resourced according to particular interests and intentions. There is an open dialogue and interaction with the environment, whether this is the school or the art gallery.

Observing the children during the process of making their storyboards can offer additional evidence to support the view that meaning-making about a visual narrative is context specific. The classroom context seemed to have helped the children define their interests, priorities and choices. At the time of drawing her 'giant', for example, Georgia had to resist strongly the pressure of her peer group, who wanted her to turn the giant into a Cyclop with one eye, a proposition to which Georgia protested by saying: 'The giant is saying, "I am not bad" '.

When we asked Georgia to narrate the story she was drawing, while still being in the process of making it and interacting with the other pupils and teachers, she only commented:

Three friends at the beginning, Clover, Alex and Sam  
Then Alex looks for something she lost in the kitchen bin and the bin  
sucks her hand in and then she goes to an island.'

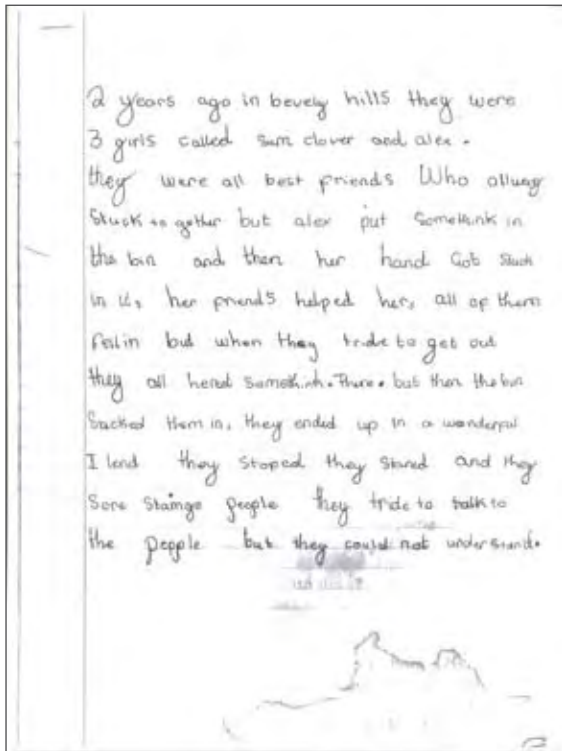


Fig. 70. Georgia's written narrative © Tate 2006



Fig. 71. A storyboard by Arcange © Tate 2006

It was the verbal prompting during the interview that actually made Georgia think of how the action developed and how the story ended. In a follow up task in the classroom, Georgia had to 'tell' the story of what her visual narrative was about. The task set by the teacher in the classroom was a writing one, designed in response to the visual building of a narrative on a triptych that the gallery educators had introduced the day before.

'2 years ago in bevely hills they were  
3 girls called sam clover and alex.  
they were all best friends who allway.  
Stuck to gether but alex put somethink in  
the bin and then her hand Got stuck  
in it, her friends helped her. all of them  
fell in but when they tride to get out  
they all hered somethink. There. but then the bin  
sucked them in, they ended up in a wonderful  
I lend they stoped they stared and they  
sore strange people they tride to talk to  
The people but they could not understand.'

This different version of the visual narrative introduces a different end, where the girls encounter some strange people they could not understand. It is characteristic that this ending is based on another part of the *Ideas Factory Project* where the gallery educator introduces in a role play the idea of meeting strange people on the island after they have been shipwrecked. The visualisations from that part of the teaching session are considered and employed by Georgia as a more relevant and appropriate ending. The presence of the giant in her initial drawing is not necessarily contradictory with the introduction of 'strange people they tried to talk to, but the people could not understand'.

Another storyboard offers us a different insight into the framing of the literacy event of visual representation of a narrative. Figure 71 by Arcange is an instance of a constant renegotiation of the story during its making. The child is investing his visual narrative with added layers of meaning, and resorts to different verbal framings of his meanings every time he interacts with the pupils and adults around him. The following analysis of the meanings he made is based on observations of him in the process of making his storyboard, as well as on subsequent, informal, verbal interactions of him with the action research team.

Arcange's initial story board included one main figure in each of the frames (a criminal, himself and a priest) and a house with a man at the bottom left-hand corner of the first part. The rest of the elements that appear in his final storyboard emerged through a process of negotiating meanings with the adults and children in the group. This brings our attention once more to the catalytic impact of the social context in the unfolding of any literacy event.

When Arcange was asked to explain what was happening in his story, he pointed straight to the second picture of 'him with a dog on lead going to save the world'. After prompting to explain the reasons for that, he pointed to the man in the first part. He grinned cheekily and said, 'He is the bad one ... 'the evil man has a smile on his face'. The third person within the same frame is 'a priest who is going to call for help to save the world'.

A few minutes later, following an interaction with another member of the action research team, he started negotiating his story again differently, trying to comply with her expectations. He realised that it was probably not very obvious to everyone who the bad person was, so he decided to add on a label on the hat of the evil man, which read, 'bad'. The educator's attention was drawn to the leg of the bad person and she asked whether this was a wooden leg. He did not reply immediately, but hastened to add a couple of pencil stokes on top to make it more obvious that it looked like a wooden leg.

We could also see him adding on some more details in the first frame: a car and some heavy smoke around it, suggestive of an explosion. He explained that such an incident had taken place and that, 'the bad person has just escaped from the car that s on fire. There is another girl trapped in there. He went in with her to get the gold that was locked in'. This information explains why the guy is bad and how ruthless he is, a thing that necessitated his personal intervention to save the world.

An addition that suggests further parallel action is the 'robot that has come down from an aeroplane to save them'. There is a small man next to the bad one who says, 'you'. He explained that the man was pointing to the guilty one who did all that. He is the same small man who has already been drawn next to his house. He is twice present in the same frame. The first instance of the man's appearance represents the setting, where he quietly lived in his house before the action started. The second appearance suggests his involvement. This is a resource that Arcange employs to suggest temporal sequence and different phases within the 'beginning', since he was not given the option to break the 'beginning' down into different parts, as would be the case in a comic strip. This seems to have been the only way for him to describe all the action that took place at the beginning of this hybrid storyboard.

This replication would not necessarily be the case in a conventional drawing of the story where all the elements would co-exist simultaneously and it would be up to the child to frame either one particular instance in the story or several ones together. Arcange also needed to converse with the new conventions of the storyboard and accommodate these to meet his needs. Such conventions are: the notion of temporal sequence from one part to the other; the need to condense the action of the beginning, middle and end in three different drawings; and the necessity to conform to a reading path from the first part to the second, and then to the third.

There is more action condensed in the first part that cannot be deduced from the image only: 'Then the man gets the aeroplane and goes to our school to give us the gold the next day'. This suggests an involvement of the school in the crime, but excludes the actual hero of the story.

A pirate boat named 'SSS' appears in the second frame, sailing in the sea. Arcange told us that the bad man was in there. Arcange is depicted with his dog, 'waiting for the boat to get there the following morning'. The last picture with the priest includes the sunrise. 'It's the sun rising.' This signals the time that the gold will be delivered. Even so, Arcange was not interested in complying with the instructions to represent one instance from the beginning, middle and end. His first picture is a whole story its own right, contrary to the expectation to represent the extensive part of action in the middle.

This study of a storyboard and the close observation it involved along with the subsequent interview with the child, reinforced the understanding that oracy is a first level of negotiating the themes, the characters, settings and the sequence of events in the action within a story. It is the first material realisation- an external voicing of the children's design. It is through verbal reasoning and interaction with others that the child's ideas get a more concrete and consistent form that can then be elaborated and renegotiated differently into writing and drawing.

The team observed that the transformation of thinking into images on a blank A3 paper, in addition to complying with the rule of articulating their story into three parts, proved to be a challenging task for most children. Their exposure to the social context of the classroom with the verbal prompts of adults and fellow pupils, facilitated a clearer understanding of the task. It also offered a second opportunity to reflect on what the storyboard possibly communicated to others. This new, informed understanding, and the stronger sense of sequence, is reflected in most children's second layering of the storyboard with extra images or words. This was clearly illustrated in Arcange's case.

Arcange got conditioned to attending closely to the details of his visual representation. Further to the verbal encounter with others, he chose to alter some elements in his drawings, or reinforce the points he wanted to make, by adding on layers of information to the existing forms or by introducing new resources that were apt for the new purpose to create a representation that, when displayed, would communicate meanings similar to the ones he initially made.

The action research team reflected on this meaning-making process and used observations from the making of storyboards to problematise the ways that the writing of a narrative is approached at school. It also allowed us to reflect on the limitations and possibilities that the use of writing and drawing entails, when it comes to building a narrative.

Despite the fact that the team was not in a position to make claims about the impact of this approach on children's literacy development, there was an acknowledgment that using image in this manner opened up a wealth of possibilities. The storyboards showed that the approach enabled both the teacher and the children to use a different way to engage with the teaching and making of a narrative.

## **Making Meanings about Literacy through a Picture Book**

In order to shed light on children's engagement with literacy in the *Ideas Factory Project*, one would need to look equally across all the modes that mediate in the realisation of the literacy practices and identify the makers' points of view through the different 'reading paths' that both the modes of image and writing occasion.

The picture book as a genre, in particular, merges the two modes of image and writing and accommodates them in an integrated manner. At the level of descriptive analysis, one could argue that the 'picture book' is a genre; an arrangement of its own, consisting of a combination or a transformation of the genre of narrative into the genre of display.

The genre of narrative is predominantly mediated through writing in the school domain, whereas the genre of display is identified with the visual literacy that the art gallery facilitates. Within the school perception of 'building a narrative', the image is normally absent or, if present, it usually illustrates or reinforces a point made in the text. The 'integrated work' of the *Ideas Factory Project* enabled those two understandings of literacy to come together, and allowed the emergence of texts as visual entities and the images as narratives.

The children who took part in the project did not treat image as a mere illustration of their texts but as a carrier of meaning, equivalent to that of a written paragraph. There are things that happen in the texts that are not represented in the image and vice versa. This is the case with the picture book in figure 73. In this case, we notice that the image stands for a chapter. We also observe that the notion of a chapter, which is normally used as a tool to break down a written narrative into logical units, is actually applied to the image as well.



Fig. 72. A picture book on display © Sara Haq



Fig. 73. Two-page spread from Georgia's picture book © Tate 2006

The text reads:

She looked around and then she saw some people looking at her. They said to her biga lap that ment what are you doing she did not talk back because she did not know what it ment'

The image on the right page of the picture book shows the girl facing the reader with an expression of disappointment, while in the background there is a hut with its door firmly shut. This door-shaped black space could also be suggestive of an opening that allows the dark interior of the hut to show. Either of the two readings of the image would be meaningful, as two different versions of the story can emerge.

In this case, the image does not complement the written narrative, telling the story in a similar or different way. Neither does it connect with the text on the next page, which actually starts a completely new chapter in the plot. It functions as a new 'paragraph; a new 'information entity'. If it were to be transferred into writing, it would probably be saying something along the lines of: 'After the girl met the natives, she left puzzled and disappointed. The natives went back into their hut and left her on her own'.

This is one of the many possible readings one could embark on in order to bridge the gap between the previous and the following texts. The emphasis is on how the girl feels. This is rendered by a facial expression suggestive of disappointment, puzzlement and sadness. The picture actually adds more to the mystery and the suspense, which gets resolved two chapters further down when one of these people appears in another image.

What is worth attending to in the written text is its visual form, much more than simply looking at it as a transcription of speech. There are choices made that are significant: colour, shape, size, layout, relation to image. The gallery work encouraged the appearance of products as visual texts.

The placement of these elements on paper secures a particular reading path for the reader. It is within that reading path that a point of view is encoded by the meaning-maker and decoded in a possibly different way by the reader. No matter what actually happens, the children thus secured a reading path in their work in a range of ways.

The choices the children made in order to secure a reading path are significant. In the cases of these picture books, what seems to happen is that children order the narrative and break it down into chunks following the conventions of chapters. They also introduce a table of contents with page numbers. This is done despite the fact that the reading path is given, since the story develops within a bound booklet, where the standard western writing conventions would apply: from left to right within the page, and from the left page to the right page.

This is not a literacy practice usually associated with a picture book but rather with academic essay writing. Here we have an instance where the discourse of 'academic writing' filters through to children's work. The above practice also represents the teacher's particular reading of the literacy strategy and the curriculum, with regard to the teaching of the structuring of a narrative and the creation of a logical sequence. It aligns the children's picture books with the conventions found within the genre of novel writing for adults, rather than the conventions of children's picture books.

Due to its attention to the multimodal character of writing, the 'integrated approach' encouraged the production of multimodal texts. In the following figure, from a two-page spread of a picture book, we have another example of a multimodal text where the written text and an image complement each other and reinforce meanings that each of these modes carry within this graphic ensemble. More importantly, the visual aspects of writing are a key to understanding children's literacy needs and the basis for exploring ways forward.

The text reads:

'there was something very strange about this island The coconuts were huge! they were arrows every were and there were scratch trees but they were very short.

he was as big as the trees it sornded very lonely and looked lonely he was half way through the island when he heard something from the trees... it was plain mum ad best friends "you scared me Jack" Peter said "sorry" said mum "we were looking for you".

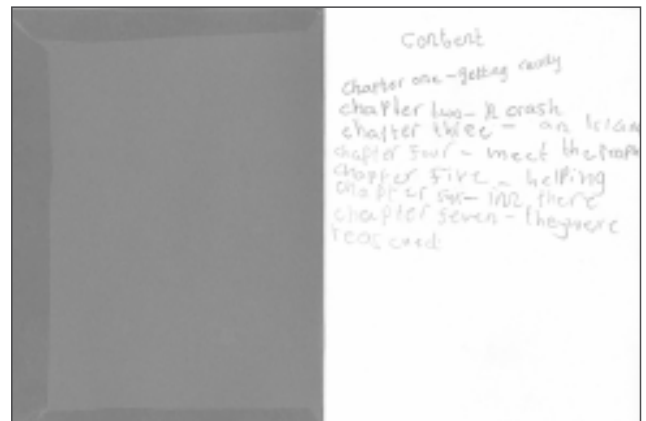


Fig. 74. Table of contents in a picture book © Tate 2006

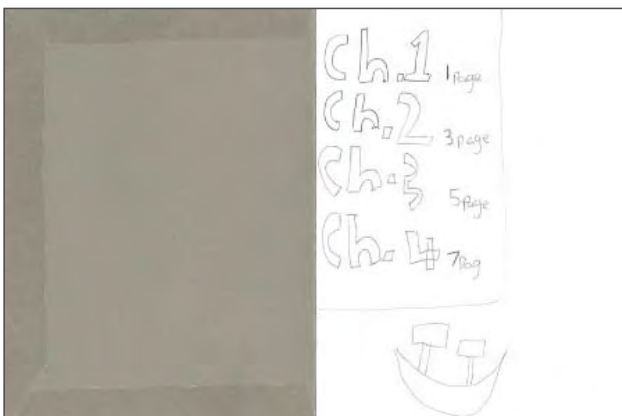


Fig. 75. Planning the picture book into chapters © Tate 2006



Fig. 76. A two page spread from a picture book © Tate 2006

If we attempted to read the narrative through the 'lexical' part of the text only, we would be missing out on a lot of information that is carried in the way words are formed as shapes, or they are present in the image. The latter is actually the background onto which the words fit and adjust spatially, filling in the gaps between elements of the image or aligning with its outlines, e.g. the line of the hill.

The use of punctuation is not consistent, but there are full stops, speech marks, an exclamation mark and three dots at key parts of the text. There is also the notion of a paragraph that is communicated through the placement of the two chunks of text on two consecutive pages. The single use of the capital letter 'T' on the second line signals the change of paragraph.

If we attend to what is not there, e.g. proper punctuation and correct spelling, we could argue that an 'integrated approach' to the teaching of art and literacy cannot possibly help in developing children's literacy, as it simply justifies the appearance of 'mistakes'. The approach actually makes sense of them and explains such deficit either as lack of interest or resources.

The 'integrated approach' allowed the children's texts to be invested with another possibility: to enable meaning-making in another mode that can actually index the intentions of the child in relation to the written text. Even though the approach could not possibly develop children's written literacy within the short course of the programme, it enabled a different perspective for looking at children's writing, and offers a starting point for further literacy development work.

The first page of the two-page spread of the figure above, for example, communicates very eloquently the fact that the child wants to place emphasis on how huge the coconuts were. This is done through different ways: the image with the disproportionately large coconuts, the enlargement of the print in the word 'huge', its different font with double outlined letters, as well as the presence of an exclamation mark that is very intensely drawn filled with black colour. These are the resources available to the child to emphasise something that would be a lot easier to communicate verbally through a different emphasis on the vowel 'u' and, possibly, the prolonged utterance of the word.

The 'integrated approach' legitimises the emergence of children's meanings in a multimodal way whereby the literacy development potential is in turn strengthened by the approach itself. This is to capitalise on the other possibilities to illustrate the concept of 'huge' through the use of adjectives. The gallery educators demonstrated in the poetry workshop, which was presented in Part 2, an approach for enriching children's vocabulary in terms of adjectives.

## Children's Accounts of the Gallery Trip

The children's impressions from the visit are another multimodal text that the integrated teaching approach occasioned. These accounts form a hybrid genre that combines image and text to manifest additional possibilities that the marriage of two modes can provide.

These literacy texts are children's accounts of their visit and show how the children chose to deal with the task differently. Very few children actually wrote an account of what happened on the day, whereas most of them reduced the whole visiting and learning experience to an encounter with their favourite painting.

As with any other literacy text, these ones provide another opportunity for the children to practise an aspect of the school literacy work. This would mean recruiting the vocabulary that is apt for the purpose, using the correct spelling and punctuation, writing correct sentences grammatically and syntactically and responding to the questions asked.

Having an effective engagement with these school practices is the sole criterion for the assessment of these texts. One would assume that the teaching approach did not create favourable conditions to address these literacy issues and to enhance the children's literacy development. The children's accounts are far from accurate in terms of spelling and structure.

On the other hand, they provide a wealth of information about the children's understanding of the world of the art gallery and their preferences in terms of activities and learning styles. More importantly, they form a site where the children have mapped out all the new resources that were accessed as a result of the networked interactions that the *Ideas Factory Project* enabled. Navigating through such a site can function as an effective working tool for the teacher. It can help her/him address the skills aspect of literacy through a context that is dramatically enriched with knowledge about artists and paintings and the experience of a new learning space with different literacy practices.



The appendices that follow over the next two pages show a representative range of the children's accounts of their visit. The children's actual text is reproduced and inserted below the figure for purposes of clarity. It is accompanied by a brief description of what the image shows.



Favourite  
I luvd all thpicks But my favat is the Deluge

(A transformation of The Deluge. People on land and sea in agony!)  
© Tate 2006



My fravite activertie was... when we got to dress are selfs' up as an animal. What I didn't like was... my behaviour. I enjoyed my morning with Sarah. I did not enjoy... my behaviour at ol and now I now now it feels to be a nasty behaviour!

(Image of kids and adults in a gallery.)  
© Tate 2006



On the trip. My favorite put was wen wy went up to the utgalrey but it was disponing that wyhat. To go dan the sters I like't it wer wy got to gr are pichs

(Picture of children going up the winding staircase of Tate Britain.)  
© Tate 2006



My favourite thing on Friday was when we made the boats. We drew pictures of us in animal costumes. I liked the picture of the Mudbath And the deluge (also known as noah's Ark the mudbath by David Bamberg And I made a sailor too.

(Sketch of group of children and an adult before *The Deluge* painting.)  
© Tate 2006



When we went on the school trip I didnt like it because when I got there my legs where herting. What I did like about it was the picters where great. I liked the picter with all the zigzags that made stick men. I was trying to find picters with amaxing coulers the picters where beituful. lw as looking at the picters somutch that I nearly fergot to do my work.

(A group of kids in the gallery next to *The Mud Bath*.)  
© Tate 2006



On the trip to the Tate Britain the picture that I hated was the Deluge by Francis Danby Because it made me sike and made me sad. All the outher wons whra good but I did not like them that much.

(Image of a classroom with kids presenting their work to the adults there. In the background, there is a painting of a man killing a dragon.)

© Tate 2006



My favourite picture is *The Deluge* by Faancis Danby. Bickos it has a lot a expression. In the picture

(A version of *The Deluge*.)  
© Tate 2006



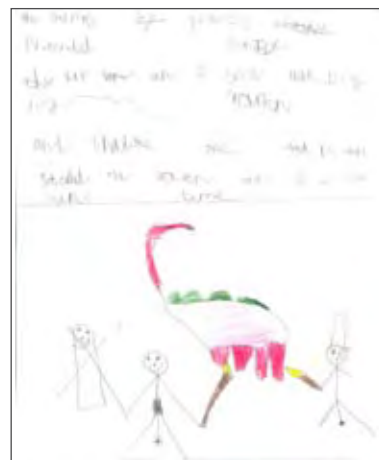
My favourite painting was the big picture by Francis Danby was called the Deluge and when I made the boat called Aerodino. When we made the costume we had to use our amachimashion and wear it in your head.

(Three items: a boat called aerodino, painting of a dragon and a Deluge painting with the word help.)  
© Tate 2006



My favourite activity was when we pretended to die in the Deluge by Francis Danby. Before that it was lunch time and we all had a nice time. We came back to school at about 3:30 pm I went to drama and thought I had such a good time at my trip good day and thank you

(Painting with parts of stick men titled *The Mud Bath*.)  
© Tate 2006



Up sters I like that pitcher that was called The Deluge by Francis Danby pretended the wit wer I saw that bit gagon big and that we r that stobtd the gagon and I was on that mans teme

(Two stick-men attacking a dragon.)  
© Tate 2006



like the beach I like to swim we did one beach picture was good I like you very and my one is the nud bath David Bomberg

(Image of woman and child.)  
© Tate 2006

The images in these accounts appear in the form of either narrative or conceptual representations. In the first case, this means that they are telling a story or they are framing an instance from the project where there is human interaction. In fewer cases, they represent a concept, an object, a painting or an array of objects and people with no interaction. Each of these two kinds of visual representation is suggestive of its own reading path, whereas this is normally clearly established in a written text. Viewing the multimodal accounts of the visit as a merging of writing and image could lead to a different reading path and a reconstruction of a joint narrative of the gallery trip.

When it comes to the textual aspect of the accounts, some of them narrate a sequence of events (function equivalent to that of the narrative representation) or include references to what has been experienced through the senses and express value judgments about that. The value or importance attributed to something is realised differently in the written and the visual account. Behind both of them lies a selection process, a design for making meanings that capitalises on interest as its main driving force.

The children's accounts of their visit could be analysed in many different ways and with various questions in mind. An analysis of the topics that are included in the images, and the issues that emerge in the text, would not suffice to shed light on what the children's impressions from the visit actually were. One would need to look closely at the meanings that emerge in the convergence of the two. A discourse analysis of these graphic ensembles can bring to surface information about the different choices, interests and agendas that each child has. The sub-section that follows, offers such an analytical account of one characteristic text.

One aspect of the 'integrated approach' is the collaborative partnership of teachers, artists, writers and poets. This rich human resource that the children engage with does not necessarily filter down to the children's accounts. The teacher, for example, as a human agent, is significantly absent from the text and image representations. Despite that, it is the teacher who mediates throughout the project so that these written activities (written accounts of their visit and picture books) are realised; the teacher is the person who is available to provide reference information (i.e. the names of the artists and paintings to which the children wanted to refer) or to help with spelling and the overall management of the tasks.



Fig. 77. Small group of children interacting with the action research team © Tate 2006

## A Multimodal Account of a Gallery Visit as a Literacy Event

When we went on the school trip I didnt like it because when I got there my legs were herting. what I did like about it was the picters where great. I liked the picter with all the zigzags that made stick men. I was trying to find picters with amazing coulers the picters where beituful. I was looking at the picters so much that I nearly forgot to do my work'.  
Georgia, Year 3

The above figure gives Georgia’s multimodal account of the gallery visit to Tate Britain, in which she employs the schooled literacy genre of the recount of a visit. The text features high up on the page, whereas a representation of the painting, *The Mud Bath* by David Bomberg 1914, stands out as a criterial element, due to its salience, in terms of colour intensity and centrality on the page.

A group of happy children along with a gallery educator are depicted standing in front of the painting demanding the attention of the reader, rather than ‘looking at the pictures’ as the text suggests. The children’s writing resources are lying on the gallery floor. This visual representation is more in line with the sentence ‘I was looking at the painting so much that I forgot to do my work’. The latter is reminiscent of the fact that just engaging visually with an artwork, without a written testimony of it, is not an acceptable school literacy practice. The written part of the account though is diligently produced for the school, employing the school literacy resources of sentences, punctuation, genres and grammar. Looking more closely at her text, we can see that she presents ‘doing your work’ and ‘looking at paintings’ as two different things – the latter as obviously more exciting and attention-absorbing than the first.

A minor detail in the visual representation, such as the text that accompanies the painting, acknowledges the gallery literacy practice of captions and labels next to the artworks. As Georgia’s text suggests, however, the literacy practices that they employed in the gallery developed mainly through seeing and less through writing or drawing with the resources that are shown as left on the floor. The primary interest of Georgia here at that given moment was to depict the fascination of engaging with paintings and colour and to convince the reader of this by drawing particular expressions on children’s faces.



Fig. 78. A multimodal account of the gallery visit © Tate 2006

Looking at the framing of different elements in the design, and making assumptions about their information value (Kress, Van Leeuwen 1996), we can suggest that the placement of the text at the top and the image in the centre and bottom have a particular significance. The written text represents the world of the 'ideal'- the way a proper written response to the task should be for the school requirements, whereas the image is linked to the 'real' world of the gallery visit that is more relevant to Georgia's life. What is also 'real' is the element of fun that the practices linked to the gallery visit allowed. This interpretation would be possible, except in the case of the teacher actually dictating a particular format, as well as the hierarchical placement of the written text and the image. This possibility would, however, still be significant in terms of choices made within the realm of the school literacy discourses.

## Poetry

Poem writing signals another literacy event that the *Ideas Factory Project* facilitated. The poems that the children created are significant instances of the meanings children made in the poetry workshop in School B, where Chris Ofili's *The Upper Room* paintings, and the gallery experience of immersion into that space, formed strong points of reference.

The following poems highlight the choices the children made in relation to what was made available to them. They also represent an innovative transformation of all the resources that were put to the service of poetry writing. The gallery- educator-led session helped build a rich linguistic resource of adjectives, nouns and adverbs, by triggering powerful visualisations and evoking all the senses.

The poems also reflect the degree of the children's immersion into the visualisations they elaborated. The process of writing the poems was a lively social event. It involved sharing ideas, getting feedback from fellow pupils and all the adults present in the classroom, finding ways to look up words in the dictionary, and asking for help.

Looking closely at the poems in terms of writing skills and grasp of grammar, the action research group found the children's poems really creative and a departure from their usual way of writing, as the teacher commented.

The poems manifest the children's successful use of different combinations of adjectives, adverbs, nouns, participles, compound words that the educators suggested, some examples being:

'curiously blue monkey,  
cold hearted monkey,  
showering love,  
harmless sorrow'

The children also managed to include them in meaningful sentences that evoked strong imagery appealing to all the senses:



Fig. 79. Year 4 pupils in a poetry writing workshop © Richard Eaton 2006

'You are an ancient breeze overflowing in the dusk'  
 'I am petrified of the sparkling, explosive lava'  
 (Pupil 1)

The action research team understood that the particular teaching methodology adopted provided a successful and fun way to convince children of the importance of understanding what an adverb, adjective and noun is. This was because it enabled the children to see the practical application of this knowledge by letting them articulate their experience in writing with accuracy, precision and power to evoke images to the reader.

'Monkey of the north  
 You are curiously blue  
 You are a cold hearted monkey  
 Flying in the yellow air

Monkey of the south  
 You are dangerously red  
 You are a lava hearted monkey  
 Powerful in the heat of fire.

Monkey of the west  
 You are spookily yellow...'  
 (Pupil 2)

'Monkey of the east  
 precious glittery  
 golden air  
 melting my heart away

Monkey of the south  
 your fire is original and dangerous  
 I am petrified of the sparkling  
 explosive lava

Monkey of the east  
 you are an ancient breeze  
 overflowing in the dusk.'  
 (Pupil 3)



Fig. 80. Using the dictionary to create new word combinations © Richard Eaton 2006



Fig. 81. Chris Ofili 'Mono Rojo' 1999-2002, © Chris Ofili

'Monkey of the south  
you are the red fire that burns  
the mystifying flowers'  
(Pupil 4)

'Monkey of the east  
you are a splashing mist'  
(Pupil 5)

'Monkey of the east  
your harmless sorrow  
a flying piece  
of sky cold air'  
(Pupil 6)

'Monkey of the east  
your blood is my soul  
your wonderful gold relaxes me  
and your showering love is beautiful'

'Monkey of the south  
your breathtaking love  
is a token of an icy dove  
in summer all is glittering'  
(Pupil 7)



Fig. 82. Chris Ofili *Mono Amarillo*  
1999-2002 © Chris Ofili



Fig. 84. Enjoying the writing  
process © Tate 2006



Fig. 83. Writing the final draft of  
the poem © Tate 2006



## The Artwork in Children's Multimodal Texts

A visual social semiotic approach to children's work also allows us to trace the resources that children chose to access and elaborate further in their work. The images that complement the texts in the figures below actually demonstrate a very close link with the original artworks that were experienced by the children in the gallery. The visual literacy work in the gallery, focusing on particular paintings around the theme of boats, pirates, monsters and the sea, resourced the narrative mediated through the text. In addition, it enhanced the visual representations, as the rich encounter with the paintings afforded many creative transformations to emerge.

It has been of particular interest to the action research team to observe how the teaching approach they have adopted mediates amidst others also in the production of literacy texts that represent the artwork in some way. The artwork as one of the primary resources that the children engage with, becomes a strong point of reference in their multimodal texts and is the subject of several transformations. Looking through them we could make assumptions about the aspects of the original works that the 'integrated approach' foregrounds and prioritises as important.

Here we follow some instances from children's work that show how they have transformed the original resource of five artworks through their literacy practices in the gallery and the classroom. This could be further helpful in establishing how the visual resources, around which the 'integrated approach' evolves, can actually enhance the possibilities for literacy work.

The first painting, *A Landscape with the Story of Cadmus Killing the Dragon* illustrates the 'story of Cadmus, founder of the ancient city of Thebes, as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Cadmus is slaying the dragon that has killed his companions while on a journey to Thebes. They have died trying to collect spring water from the dragon's cave, on the left, not knowing that it is sacred to the god Mars. Cadmus is protected by a lion-skin and is armed with a javelin'. (Tate Britain display caption)

The following figure shows a representation of the above painting in one of the children's accounts from the visit. The image is a fragment from a graphic ensemble, comprising a written text referring to the child's impressions from the visit, and an image depicting his favourite painting.



Fig. 85. Francesco Zuccarelli *A Landscape with the Story of Cadmus Killing the Dragon* exhibited 1765 © Tate 2006

The image features two stick men holding swords and attacking a dragon. There is a different figure in the background that is crossed out, probably suggesting the child was not happy with his attempt to represent the figure, as he would have wanted. The figures are holding shiny, sharp swords with wooden handles, as the colours suggest. The stick-men are very happily engaged with the viewers, demanding their attention. They look as if they are posing or taking pride in having dealt with the dragon that dominates the background. The dragon is coloured in red, pink and green. The red colour could be interpreted as blood, which may mean that the dragon has been killed.

The theme of monsters was a dominant one in the programme. There were several instances where the children had to draw, talk or write about monstrous creatures. Monsters and creatures proved to be a very popular and exciting theme. The reference to Zuccarelli's painting here reflects the interest of the gallery educators to get children excited with a theme and use it as a vehicle for a further drawing of themselves transforming into new hybrid monsters as well as acquiring new names. The painting was used as a stimulus for further visual and word-forming activity rather than any other purpose, e.g. to introduce ancient or contemporary myths and beliefs, or aspects of daily life at different times.

There are endless possibilities for using aspects of the historical, thematic, or technical aspects of a painting for directing children towards a particular learning target. The choices made within the particular example of the *Ideas Factory Project* for that age group were thematic and served the visualisation and role play around an imaginary trip. These transformations also raise a concern as to whether the experience of engaging with an original artwork within a gallery space should be made available as a visual resource, de-invested from its context, to serve the purpose of enhanced meaning-making in other contexts.

Alexander Calder's painted metal, suspended structure, called *Standing Mobile* was another artwork used by the gallery educators in their plan for teaching punctuation. The yellow, red and green shapes attached to the mobile were transformed into full stops, commas and exclamation marks by the gallery educators. This is a different kind of transformation to serve the literacy targets of the teacher that included the proper use of punctuation.

The children used templates of the three elements of the *Standing Mobile* to cut out shapes on differently coloured carton paper. They eagerly assimilated the gallery educators' proposed metaphor to invest them with the functions and properties of punctuation marks and enjoyed the kinaesthetic activity, as described in the earlier section. The children took the transformative work a stage further, by investing the cut-out forms with extra characteristics, such as funny, smiley or grumpy faces or animals' and monsters' heads.

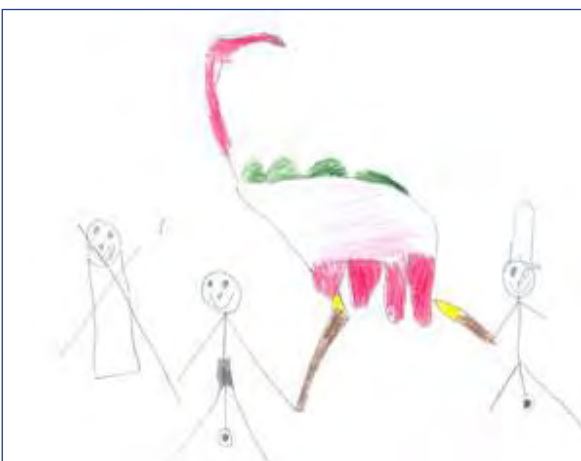


Fig. 86. Fragment from a Year 3 child's graphic ensemble © Tate 2006



Fig. 87. Alexander Calder *Standing Mobile* 1937, © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2002

The underpinning principle in both cases is the selection of elements of an artwork that are used as a resource that will be made available to the children in order to serve learning objectives beyond ones linked with art or art history. Elements of the visual resource can be freely and legitimately used in other contexts, according to aptness for purpose. This practice appeared as an integral part of the *Ideas Factory* approach in order to facilitate the emergence of children’s personal creative artwork, but more importantly in order to draw links and build bridges with other school subjects, such as literacy.

The painting of David Bomberg, *The Mud Bath* appeared as the most popular amongst the children, since most of them either directly referred to it in their accounts of their visit, or reproduced and transformed aspects of it in their images depicting the gallery space. The scene of the painting is based on steam baths near Bomberg’s home in East London’. The human figures that appear are reduced ‘to a series of geometric shapes’. (Tate Britain display caption)

The people depicted in Bomberg’s work as geometrical shapes, lines or fragments of body parts, re-appeared in different forms elsewhere in the visual images produced by the children.

Another artwork that had a real impact on the children was *The Deluge* circa 1840 by Francis Danby. This painting deals with an epic subject on a large-scale work. ‘It shows a story from the Old Testament book of Genesis. God sends a flood to punish mankind’s wickedness but allows Noah and his family to be saved. Noah’s ark is in the background, illuminated by a shaft of moonlight. A stormy sea rages round a rocky peak, to which humans and animals are clinging desperately’. (Tate Britain display caption)



Fig. 88. Punctuation marks  
© Tate 2006

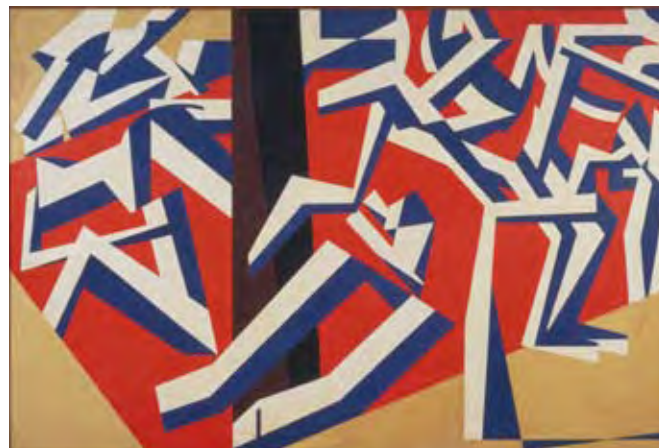


Fig. 89. David Bomberg *The Mud Bath* 1914  
© Tate



Fig. 90. Fragment from a visual ensemble with image and writing representing *The Mud Bath* © Tate 2006



Fig. 91. Fragment from a visit account featuring *The Mud Bath* © Tate 2006

The children's initial reaction to the artwork was quite strong and awe-inspiring, due to the intensity of the image, partly because of the sheer size of the painting. Some even found it upsetting. Even though this image did not form part of the actual programme of literacy activities, as it was seen alongside the other images, this was a case where a discussion about an artwork was sufficient to generate an intense response and provided the point of reference for verbal, written and visual literacy to emerge.

The large amount of children's work that incorporates references to that artwork or attempts reproductions of it, is indicative of the impact a work of art may have on them as an inspiration and starting point for further engagement. These references are depicted visually, either through image, or written text. The discussion that took place in the gallery space in front of that painting was a strong stimulus for the children to take notice of the artwork.

This was one of the many instances in the project where the art gallery education practice of closely observing an artwork establishes a powerful resource material for the children to draw on when they are making meanings through the established genres of their school literacy practices, i.e. accounts of the gallery trip experience, writing about their likes and dislikes, or writing poetry or narrative.

The following figures present children's visual references to the artwork. These are mainly visual excerpts that were taken out of their contexts, i.e. page of a picture book, accounts of their visit, writing about which curriculum areas the project linked to etc. What stands out as the most critical element in many of these is the notion of disaster. The children's interests revolve around depicting the turmoil, people's frustrated faces, the emotional cries for help, the huge waves and the natural disaster. It is interesting how the same painting has been used as a resource in many different ways, lending itself to a wealth of possibilities to 'talk' about it through imagery, that evokes and makes reference to all the senses.



Fig. 92. Francis Danby *The Deluge* exhibited 1840 © Tate

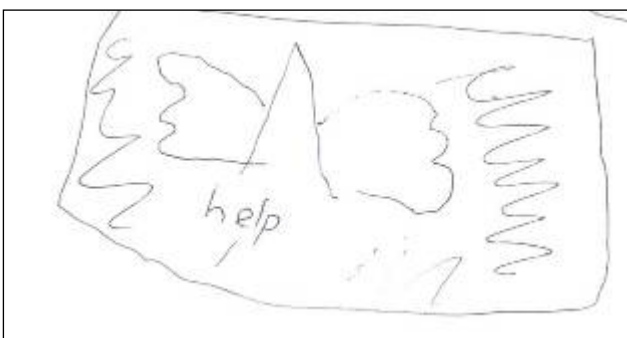


Fig. 93. *The Deluge* as it features in an account of the gallery trip © Tate 2006



Fig. 94. A transformation of *The Deluge* © Tate 2006

In figure 93, we have a rough schematic rendering of *The Deluge*, as this is part of a bigger image that depicts children in the gallery in front of three paintings. Despite its schematic rendering, the basic resources of a few lines and shapes that the child uses, allow us to see the peak of a mountain, or an island, the huge waves, their roughness and the high level of the water, the latter two being evoked by the zigzag lines that rise up almost to the top of that peak.

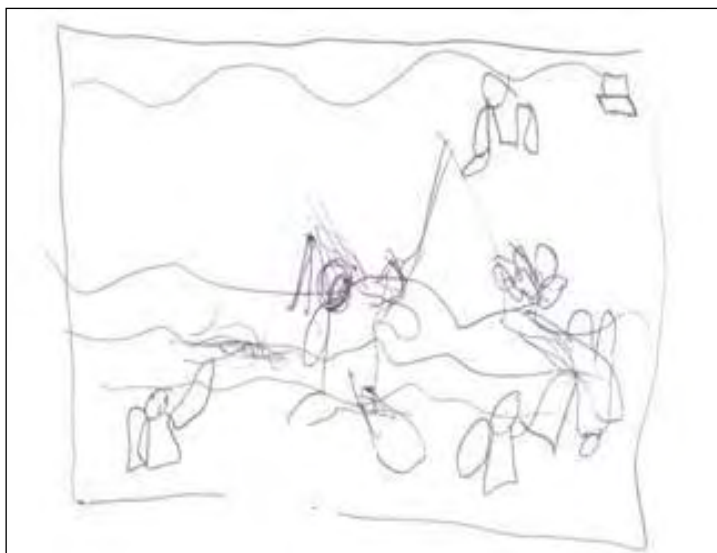
The word 'help' is coming from under the water where people are drowning and are currently invisible to the eye. The choice of inserting a word here is considered the most apt medium to communicate the meaning of people drowning, since the scale of the image is very small. It occupies only a very small part of a conceptual representation of the three things or activities the child enjoyed. It is through the written text that we get the additional information that the actual painting is big: 'My favourite painting was the big picture by Francis Danby was called the Deluge...'

The image above adds another layer to the act of visually representing a meaning when engaging in a literacy practice. The child here is obviously aware of the difficulty of representing the water, trees and other things in the most 'legible' manner. That is why he resorts to naming them with words.

This is another interesting case where the image forms the substratum onto which words appear. The 'naming words' (i.e. nouns) clarify what the image is presenting and eliminate the possibility of misunderstandings. It is the image, however, that the child considers the most apt means through which to convey information about the nouns, given the child's limitations in terms of resources for writing or his interests at the time. It is through the image that we learn what kind of 'chree' (tree) it is. It is actually a huge branch or a trunk that has been cut off from the tree. The force of the water then washed it out and wedged it somewhere on the island.

Different representations of *The Deluge* as in the following three figures, fore-ground different aspects of the painting and underpin different interests and resources available (anything ranging from drawing media to drawing skills).

The picture in figure 97 is drawn by a boy, who refers to *The Deluge* in his account of the visit as his 'favourite painting' because 'it had a lot of expression'. It is rather surprising, therefore, that he has drawn his version of the painting with the minimum of expression in people's faces. There is a possibility that this child had a different understanding of the word 'expression' and decided that the word carried all the meaning he intended to make. In his particular case, the drawing adds only to a certain extent elements to the meanings he wanted to make about the painting, whether complementary, contradictory or identical to the ones in his written account. There is also another possible interpretation, however; that he is not really conversant with the meaning of the word 'expression' and that he is in fact negotiating the meaning through his written text and drawing.



Figs. 95. and 96. Different representations of *The Deluge*  
© Tate 2006



Fig. 97. *The Deluge* as it features in an account of the trip  
© Tate 2006

There are several other representations of the artworks that emerge visually in other sites beyond the drawings. Children's writings often refer to the artworks and repeatedly frame particular aspects of them as the most salient. The artworks appear as objects that can be liked or disliked, that impress with their size or scare with the intensity of their depictions.

Re-establishing links between the above image-excerpts and their linguistic contexts, we can make sense of the role of the artwork, as a reference point in enhancing and enriching school literacy practices. The written text that relates to these images is usually of the type:

- 'I liked the Deluge, also known as Noah's ark';
- 'My favourite picture was the Deluge by Francis Danby';
- 'I liked all the pictures but my favourite is the Deluge'.

These children's literacy levels and skills could be considered poor according to the levels set by curriculum and national literacy strategy. The children do not explain in writing what they like about the painting and why it appeals to them. This is communicated through the possibilities that the images allow for as a mode, as well as through the logic of space and spatial arrangement that governs them. The meanings that can be made out of the simultaneous presence of various elements on the page, their arrangement, and the reading path envisaged, can all reconstruct a story.



Fig. 98. A two-page spread from a picture book depicting a storm scene  
© Tate 2006

The image in the figure above presents another transformative possibility of an artwork. It forms part of the narrative and images of a picture book. The picture on the left page describes a scene of a ship that is about to wreck. Huge and sharp waves, the size of mountains, rock the boat, which is eventually lifted high up over the waves that cover the rocks. The combination of a thunderstorm and a tornado make the situation worse. As the text explains, a huge wave makes the boat crash onto the rocks.

This scene of disaster, although not directly representing *The Deluge*, it still evokes images of it, especially the part where Noah's ark survives the waves, while people are drowning amidst the huge waves surrounding it. This visual example suggests the strong presence of the artwork that has provided the child with inspiration, ideas and different possibilities of representation.

The above considerations about the transformation of an artwork as a resource into multimodal literacy texts raises further questions. How does such an understanding and perspective explain the impact of an 'integrated approach' on the development of literacy? What does the notion of transformation of an artwork, as a resource, add to our understanding of enhancing literacy through art?

The short term encounter the children had with the particular programme cannot allow for any claims to be made regarding any progress in the development of the children's skills. Nevertheless, it allowed more possibilities for enhancing literacy to emerge; it showed a way forward in the direction of helping children meet the written literacy targets that they are expected to reach at school by a certain age.

A thorough reading of the images produced within the *Ideas Factory Project* allows for other possibilities to emerge. It offers a visual representation of children's views and understandings, making available an overview of the meanings that a student was interested in negotiating within a context. It also provides us with the possibility to recover hypothetically the justification behind each child's choices. This useful resource can be taken further by teachers, so that they help the children engage in a process of building the verbal and written resources needed to be able to represent the same meanings verbally and in writing. This would also allow for a more customised approach to each individual child's interests, rather than attempting a uniform teaching of writing.

The particular example of *The Deluge* also helped us highlight the importance of verbal literacy as a logical transition between practices linked to seeing and writing. The writing and drawing linked to this painting did not develop as a response to particular literacy activities built around it, as was the case with some other paintings. They were a follow up to an initial viewing and discussion session.

The pedagogical framework of the programme and the 'integrated approach' mediated the transformation of several works of art, as a primary resource, into children's literacy texts. The 'integrated approach' seems to have opened up more possibilities to the children by enriching and framing this primary resource accordingly.



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## **PART 4**

# **Gallery Discourses: Literacy Practices, School Subjects and Spaces**

**Integrating Designs for Learning**

## Literacy Practices in the School and Gallery Discourses

### Integrating Spaces

The 'integrated approach' as an approach to designing for learning, operates across spaces and social practices, forming trajectories between traditional perceptions of literacy as skills and literacy as social event. This amalgam of practices is re-contextualised in a new space that moves between the gallery and the classroom and always keeps one in mind as a point of reference when working in the other.

Drawing evidence from the children's responses, we realise that they seem to prefer the gallery space for activities and they seem more likely to use it as a social space. The literacy practices of the gallery are not as strictly regulated as they are in the classroom. The paintings that are present as visual stimuli in all directions allow for a different orientation and arrangement of the bodies in space, as well as different social relations. The children seem to have enjoyed those aspects a lot and particularly the teaching practices linked to this space:

Pupil: 'They give me advice and there are a lot of pictures there.'

When it comes to writing, however, they identified the classroom space as the most appropriate one. The children mentioned in their interviews that it was more convenient for them to write at a desk and have other resources available, such as dictionaries. In addition, the classroom space was associated with the presence and practice of the teacher and assistant going around the tables and helping the children with their spelling.

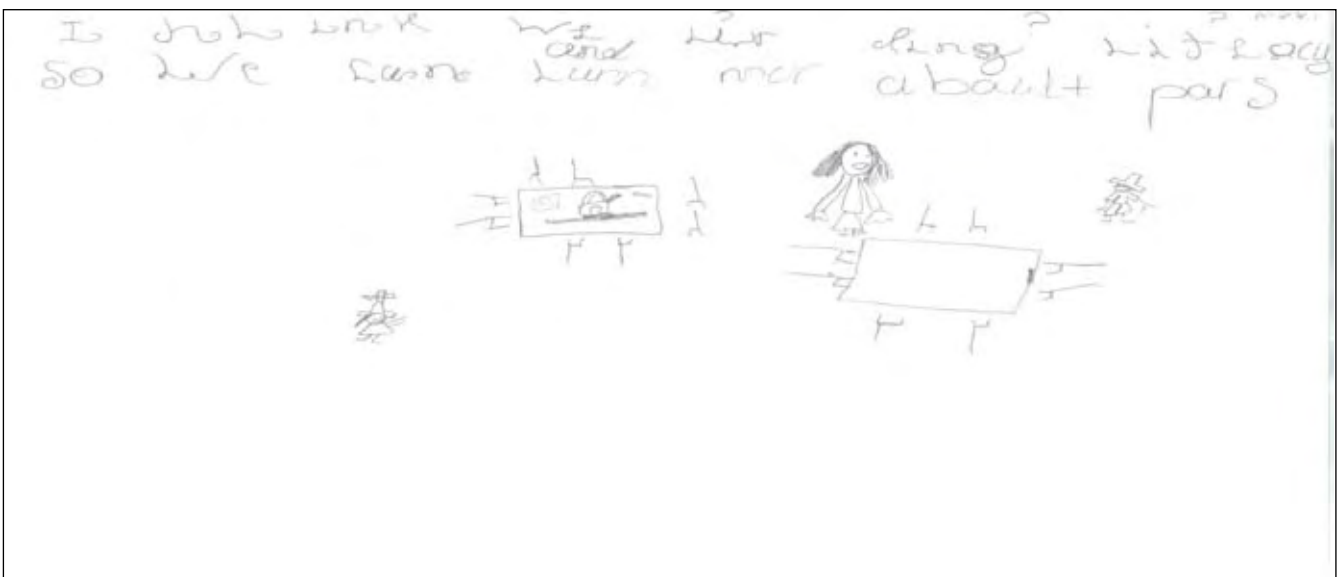


Fig. 99. An excerpt from a child's graphic ensemble, depicting the classroom space during the course of the project © Tate 2006

## Integrating School Subjects and Literacy Practices

It is interesting to view the teacher's understanding of the new practice that developed, and her need to accommodate that approach to an existing framework, if we look more closely at a literacy task she set in the classroom in which she asked the children to identify: a) what school subject they did as part of the *Ideas Factory Project*; b) what the whole project was about; and c) why they did the project.

Analysing the discourse of the teacher, as it appears in these instructions to the pupils, one could make assumptions about the teacher's own interest and understanding. First of all there is a need to accommodate the project into a particular curriculum area. This is also linked to the National Curriculum and its clear demarcation of subject areas. Even the notion of 'cross-curricular' presupposes an understanding of which curriculum areas are brought together. Each curriculum area in the school is characterised by particular practices. What happens when all these practices are merged together into a new whole that is not necessarily identifiable as a subject area?

The third question the teacher asked is linked to the notion of 'learning objectives'. Teachers are institutionally conditioned to make their learning objectives explicit and to state what is to be learned. The range of the project activities, the interweaving of resources, and the variety of learning potentials and objectives, do not together contribute towards a clear picture of what the objectives are in terms of what the school practices would dictate.

At the beginning of the project, the teacher mentioned that she would like children to improve their paragraph and story writing skills as a result of the *Ideas Factory Project*. The gallery educators offered a wide range of approaches to literacy, bringing in their own understanding of how literacy could be taught. At the end of the project, the teacher was interested in finding out whether children were in a position to recognise the learning objectives behind this.

The children responded using an A4 white sheet in different ways, usually combining an answer with a drawing in different layouts, placing importance on different parts of their response. The following figure shows a typical example of a graphic ensemble: a text and an image that children created in response to the set task. The appendix that follows offers an indicative account of the choices the children made in terms of using text or image to answer the questions, as well as of their perceptions in relation to the place the *Ideas Factory Project* occupied in the scale of the curriculum subjects.

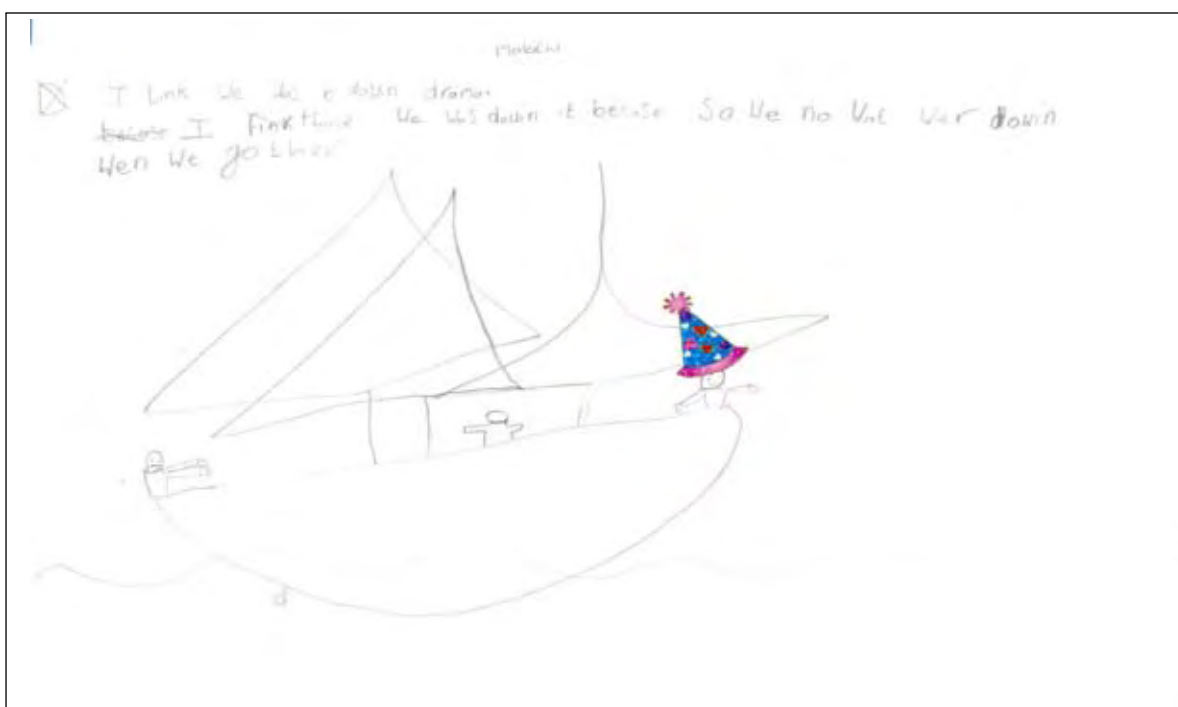


Fig. 100. A pupil's multimodal text, as a response to the questions set by the teacher © Tate 2006

|    | What school subject did we do as part of the <i>Ideas Factory Project</i> ?                 | What was the project about and why did we do it?                                    | Image produced   |
|----|---|---|--|
| 1  | <i>I think the subject is drama, P.E. and art</i>   | <i>I don't know</i>   | Drawing of a boat with a kind of house on top                  |
| 2  | <i>The subject is topic</i>   | <i>I think we are doing this project because to now the past.</i>                   | -  |
| 3  | <i>We was doing drama</i>   | <i>I think we are becous mybe is batw the song.</i>                                 | Image of girl and a head                                       |
| 4  | <i>I think we was doing science</i>   | <i>I think we are doing because is about pirates</i>                                | Drawing of a boat with several flags and a pirate one.         |
| 5  | <i>I think we was down drama.</i>   | <i>I think we was down it becuse so we no wat wer down wen we go ther</i>           | Boat with three people, one bearing a sticker hat.             |
| 6  | <i>I think we wr ling liteacy and</i>   | <i>So we cun lurn mor abault pars</i>   | Desks with chairs  |
| 7  | <i>I fink we was douing drama</i>   | <i>I don't no</i>   | Three female figures   |
| 8  |   |   | Image of pirate boat, person fishing and fish swimming.        |
| 9  | <i>I think we was doing ICT, Extended writing, PE, topic, art, drama, science, literacy</i> |   | Image of boat named S.S. Britannia                             |
| 10 | <i>I think it was art and drama</i>   | <i>I think we are doing this project because it is to learn</i>                     | Image of a rolled paper with a drawing of a boat and captain.  |
| 11 | <i>I think it was Art and Drama that we were doing.</i>                                     | <i>I think we are doing this project to lurn</i>                                    | A face with a heart- shaped mouth.                             |
| 12 |   |   | Drawing of a beach with a treasure box                         |
| 13 | <i>Art, literacy, topic, extended writing</i>   | <i>To learn</i>   | No drawing, the response was dictated by the pupil to an adult |
| 14 | <i>I think we was doing science</i>   | <i>I think we are doing this project because</i>                                    |  |
| 15 | <i>I thik we was doing scien topic.</i>   | <i>I think we are doing this project because we need to leaurn mor about topic.</i> | Image of pirate rowing in a boat.                              |
| 16 | <i>I was loning about pirets we ..topic and aret</i>  | <i>We was loning about pirets.</i>  | Dinosaur monster with teeth                                    |
| 17 | <i>I think ti was science and art</i>   | <i>I think we are doing this project because we need to now mor about pirts.</i>    | Pirate on a huge vessel with flag.                             |
| 18 |   |   | Red pirate boat with man fishing.                              |
| 19 | <i>Math drama dance , ICT (crossed out)</i>   | <i>To lee a bort Racanite</i>   | Pirate on island with cannons and cannon balls.                |

The children are identifying the new whole by naming its components, in terms of the school subjects they are exposed to, making associations with the practices through which each subject is normally taught: drawing is normally linked to art, whereas writing to literacy; role play is linked to drama and ICT to using a computer.

The drawings are inextricably linked to the text. They form a new whole, a graphic ensemble, which is significant in terms of the choices of subject and the framing of particular elements. A lot of information can be recovered from the drawings, which actually answers all three questions about the nature of the project and the purpose it serves.

The very appearance of their answers combining all the different modes (writing, drawing, sticking and colouring) and media (paper, pencils, colouring pens and stickers) to communicate meaning are reminiscent of the characteristics of the 'integrated approach'. That approach integrated all of the above at the level of its design and delivery, and also allowed children to get involved in the project and communicate meanings across all the different modes and media. The themes that the children bring to the foreground are about pirates. These form an overarching framework that links all the individual elements of the project and methodologies. All the resources of the programme were built into this story.

All children either through their drawing or their written response seem to have had an understanding that the project was about pirates. This, on the one hand, can be seen as the success of the programme that managed to engage children with writing in a fun and enjoyable way. The theme of the pirates seems to have permeated many of their multimodal texts.

But where does the artwork appear and what is its place in all of this? The artwork was a powerful resource and a point of reference in the gallery activities, as most writing and talking evolved through it. When it came to working in the classroom space, the artwork was a very distant point of reference though. This is hardly explicit in the drawings and children's responses. Their understanding of art is linked to doing, drawing and cutting. There are instances, however, where the choices of topics for representation relate more directly to things they saw, e.g. paintings of a beach and boats.

Their drawings anchor what they learned either in the imaginary space of the pirates' ships or islands, or in the classroom space. The art gallery as a site to locate learning seems absent from the drawings.

Pupil: 'We were writing about different stuff.'

Whatever the children learned from the 'integrated approach' and the *Ideas Factory Project* is instantiated in this task initiated by the teacher, which also reflects the children's interests at the time of doing it.

The *Ideas Factory Project* being based on a broader definition of literacy, sees literacy extending across school subjects. The art gallery educators in the project enriched possibilities for engaging with the art gallery, drawing from and creating bridges with literacy practices associated with other spaces, e.g. the literacy hour in the classroom.



Fig. 101. Another multimodal graphic ensemble with reference to the theme of pirates and boats © Tate 2006

## Literacy Practices in the School and Gallery Literacy Discourses

When looking at picture books, drawings or any type of graphic ensembles, we can see a range of different relationships between an image and a written text – complementary, ancillary, illustrative of a point, or contradictory. The key questions that emerge, however, are: What account of the world does each one give? What story or narrative does each one support? What are the resources that facilitate this? More importantly, what literacy discourses condition the creation of these texts? What are the institutional and discursive frames within which the work will develop and be accountable to? The children's graphic ensembles may be valued as excellent creative work within the domain of literacy, but is this work good enough for what the school considers acceptable literacy work?

The project showed that the children's work developed within two dominant views of literacies: literacy as a set of skills and literacy as a multimodal, social practice. Pahl and Rowsell stress the importance of 'mapping literacy practices' (Pahl, Rowsell 2005, p.12) across different sites, as each space allows for different literacy practices to surface.

Gallery visiting as a social practice is accommodated by a range of processes and events, including literacy events, such as reading curators' texts, reading the images, talking about the paintings and interacting socially. The gallery space has specific affordances, as it allows for particular literacy practices to take place. The same applies to the classroom. The different configurations of the two spaces allow for the same literacy event, such as story writing or drawing, to unfold and progress differently because different media are available to facilitate it.

This was quite clear for the children, who seemed to think that the most appropriate space for writing was the classroom, as they have particular media at their disposal, such as desks and dictionaries. The literacy event of story writing in the gallery space and in the classroom could never be materially realised in exactly the same ways in those two contexts, as the resources available to the children in each space are regulated by different social practices (schooling and gallery visiting).



Fig. 102. Working with a gallery educator on an art and literacy activity on the gallery floor © Tate 2006

The art gallery educational approaches that developed within the *Ideas Factory Project* in Tate Britain, despite the fact that they are not predominantly meant to support school literacy, are still realised as gallery-specific literacy practices and enable children's multimodal literacy production. Some of these practices and ways of engaging with art seem to have been long established within Tate Britain and are outlined in the handbook for teachers (Grigg 2001, pp.24-29). For example, the approaches described in the Tate handbook foreground the children's 'personal understanding', 'prior experience', 'personal meanings', 'value judgements', 'observation', 'use of all senses' and all modes of making meanings besides facilitating an understanding of the 'social context' around a work of art.

A close look at the discourse that underpins these approaches allows us to see that in the gallery the main interest lies in the visual resources that children can employ for their own meaning-making. There is no expectation to replicate a text they have previously been exposed to. The gallery practices do not encourage a particular conditioning or standardisation according to an original text. In terms of its practices, it validates all meanings children make; everything is legitimate as a personal statement of interest and meaning.



Fig. 103. Bringing the art creations to life through play © Tate 2006



Fig. 104. Immersing in the gallery discussions and participating through the school practice of raising hands © Tate 2006

The different institutional space of the school brings about its own literacy discourse as dominant and key to the programme, where the activities were all designed with the school literacy objectives in mind. The picture-book tasks, in particular, developed as a response to the 'strands of objectives for literacy' as outlined in the Literacy Strategy (DfES,2006), and especially in relation to the objective for the creation and shaping of texts, sentence structure, punctuation and presentation.

In the classroom domain, the literacy practices dictate that prior to the 'creation and shaping of a text' children are exposed to a process of 'understanding and interpreting' it, which then regulates the former processes as they develop. The 'visual' has a space in that discourse but it is ancillary. No assumption can be made that the school practice of teaching literacy would allow for any understanding of literacy to be mediated through the visual mode alone. The different understandings of literacy here, which predominantly aspire to the building of skills and the mastery of particular genres, offer different framing possibilities for children's meaning-making. The particular emphasis of the following sentences found in the *Literacy Strategy* have a regulating effect on children's graphic ensembles, as they set the realm of acceptable dispositions to narrative building.

'Use of beginning, middle and end to write narratives in which events are sequenced logically and conflicts are resolved',

'Use of layout, format, graphics and illustrations for different purposes' (DfES,2006).

The merging of the above two dominant views of literacy, those of the gallery and the school, was represented in the children's picture books. Their analysis recovered the underpinning institutional practices and the different visibilities of each one. The picture books are a well-articulated example of a text where different discourses emerge, reside and get reconfigured. These differently-patterned practices that develop within different discourses of literacy, at times complementary and at times contradictory to each other, run in parallel and can cause tension. These meanings recovered from the children's production reflect the argument of Barton and Hamilton (2000, p.12):

'Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relations, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others.'



## Understanding the 'Integration' in the Approach as Key in Developing Children's Literacy

This report examined the production of children's graphic ensembles of the Tate Britain *Ideas Factory Project* as literacy events. It further viewed them, through a multimodal literacies lens, as instances of an on-going process of meaning-making and transformation of the resources made available to the children in the context of the school and the gallery. A social semiotic discourse analysis of the work allowed making links to the relevant discourses of the gallery and the school.

The different understandings of literacy, practices, interests, discourses and views of 'what the world is like and how it should be' in the classroom and the gallery, all filter down to children's visual work and integrate in resourceful ways. The children's graphic ensembles integrate: school subjects and literacy practices; diverse expertise and range of resources to be transformed; and different interests and views of literacy.

The children's visual work, as it developed across the classroom and the gallery, actually demonstrates an integration of literacy practices identified with a range of school subjects, such as art, literacy and drama. The fact that the project did not fall within one subject area did not make it easy for the teachers, when it came to defining its aims and objectives, as well as the ways it would serve the curriculum. This was clearly manifested by the need of one teacher to identify the curriculum areas within which the project could be accommodated and to engage the children in that enquiry. This need of the teacher set off a series of written and oral tasks in the classroom in which the children were asked to link the programme to the school subjects it served, as outlined above.

The new practices that evolved within the context of that particular programme merged different approaches and therefore made it exceptionally difficult to demarcate curriculum areas. Even if the programme is viewed as 'cross-curricular' work, this notion still presupposes an understanding of the curriculum areas drawn upon. Each curriculum area in the school is characterised by particular practices. What happens when all these practices are merged together into a new whole that is not necessarily identifiable as a subject area?

The teacher views the picture books as a practice that will improve the children's paragraph and story writing skills. The gallery educators frame the project differently; it facilitates the school agenda on the one hand, but also brings to the foreground a range of resources, approaches, practices and possibilities to make meanings and represent them through word and image in a range of resourceful ways.

As regards the integration of resources, there are many signs in children's visual work that are suggestive of what they draw upon. Accessing these resources presupposes a skilful negotiation of meanings within different modes. The dominant one in the classroom is writing, whereas in the gallery the modes are seeing and drawing. The picture books interweave those modes, placing varying degrees of importance on each one according to aptness for purpose.

The children's visual work also manifests the different, at times contrasting or at times complementary, discourses that the classroom and the gallery domains are regulated by. With respect to the *Ideas Factory Project*, the school as an institution appears to uphold a more structured and regulated account of the world, even on behalf of the gallery, whereas the gallery is a less strictly conditioned space and less accountable for its educational practices to the school.

Representations of the school's interests also feature in children's graphic ensembles. The school's main interest here is to serve the purpose of the development of writing, whereas the interests of the gallery develop more along the lines of opening up more possibilities for engaging with a broader understanding of the world.

The *Ideas Factory Project* and the children's work manifest a merging and transfer of literacy practices from one domain and site to another. According to Kate Pahl, 'a domain is the sphere where a literacy practice originally was created and used. A site is the place where the literacy practice is actually engaged with'. (Pahl, Rowsell 2005, p.50). In this case, the picture books, as products of a literacy event that took place in both sites, show traces of practices identifiable with both the domain of the gallery and that of the classroom.

This 'integrated approach' to the teaching of art and literacy across the two sites, actualises and realises what Kate Pahl argues for, while at the same time referring to the contrasting views of literacy as a set of skills and as a social process:

'... it is possible to combine an understanding of literacy as a set of skills with an understanding of how we use literacy in everyday life' (ibid. p.9).

In conclusion, the project showed that children's visual work makes possible the merging and realisation of two different views on literacy that permeated the particular framing of the activities programme. The school view of literacy prioritised the word and was oriented towards the notion of literacy as writing a narrative. The art gallery view foregrounded the image and a notion of literacy as both visual and social. It is their combined effect and integration in the *Ideas Factory Project* that are mapped out in the children's graphic ensembles.



Fig. 105. Mapping their meanings on their graphic ensembles, while engaging with the gallery educator © Tate 2006

## Reflections on the Ideas Factory Action Research Project

The project was considered by the participants as one that was very successfully delivered, leading to a rewarding Family Day (where the children's work is displayed at Tate Britain and the parents and carers are invited). There was an appreciation within the group of the positive impact the project had both on the children and on their practice as reflective practitioners.

Further to this positive outlook, and the instances of good practice highlighted in the previous parts, the team pursued a reflective stance throughout the course of the *Ideas Factory Project* and a critical inquiry mode towards every aspect of it. The following quotes and brief comments raise particular issues with regard to the overarching framework of the project, rather than to its integrated pedagogy or the student's production, both of which are explored in other sections of the report.

These comments raise critical concerns and are of particular interest as they form instances where the differently constructed discursive positions of the participants are represented in the twilight sessions. They are indicative of their institutional positions, personal dispositions towards the notion of differentiating EAL pupils from others, the action research method and the feasibility of such a research project.

As regards the initial research question in particular, there was a general concern within the group as to whether there was any impact on the development of children's literacy. The action research team acknowledges the benefits of the project, however, and those of an 'integrated approach', and further identifies positive outcomes in relation to other areas.

Gallery Educator: 'I wouldn't expect the project to have much of a measurable effect; partly because of the small amount of time we had with the children, partly because of the lack of expertise I have in dealing with problems such as this. I don't see the work I do as delivering earth-shattering results. The benefits are more intangible. We offer people variety, interest and a chance to work outside the normal routines of classroom life.'

The team also shared an understanding that the gallery educators are a resource for learning. These individuals are able to bring a different perspective, due to the fact that they are positioned institutionally differently from school teachers.

Gallery educator 1: 'When I go into a project I am not thinking: "Oh I am going to make these kids have better grammar and punctuation skills", which is what we focused on. Because I don't think that's what I do really. I think that the things that I offer to the class are different to these... I think the benefits are more intangible than that I don't ever expect all the children to get a benefit out of it. Some kids wouldn't get any benefit from that at all because it is not an area of interest for them.'

Teacher: 'For most of our kids... the literacy was part of it ... and they worked very hard. What they gained from it more is a life experience and a literacy experience.'

Gallery educator 1: 'I think certain children get enormous amount of benefit in coming to contact with us.'

Teacher: 'Having you coming in was important for that and made a difference.'

Another gallery educator said, in an attempt to foreground the important aspects of the project, that what is also important is the exposure to different personalities and individuals conditioned by different experiences, backgrounds and working practices:

Gallery educator 1: 'You (referring to another gallery educator 2) have a world view of things. You have this world view you are bringing in, in your experience, your humour ... that has an impact and is inspiring.'

Gallery educator 2: 'What I do, for me, is offering them a life experience and a different view of looking at the world for a day.'

What also seems quite dominant in the 'integrated approach' to teaching in the gallery is the importance of the gallery space. Even when the programme is transferred to the classroom in the form of 'outreach work', the gallery is still a strong point of reference. The work that develops within the classroom by the gallery educators seems to serve the purpose of preparing them for the gallery experience.

Gallery educator 1: 'I think that's what's important in the Tate approach. We do not do a workshop about painting; it's about being in the gallery.'

There was an understanding that a project like the *Ideas Factory* was actually filling a gap that could not be adequately addressed by the teacher or the family.

Teacher: 'These are kids whose parents wouldn't be bothered to bring them down here and here they experience new people, new things.'

Researcher: 'Even if they brought them they wouldn't have their resources to help them. They would probably be intimidated by the experience.'

The teachers in the project acknowledged that they did not really engage with the world of art history, education or art gallery education. They considered this to be the realm of practice of an art educator. This was signalled by their eagerness to allow the gallery educators to take the lead while they preferred to perform a complementary role. The gallery educators seemed to be aware of their role as a resource that could bridge the gap between the different parties, while remaining conversant with the various participants' needs.

The action research element in the *Ideas Factory Project* brought into the operational framework an extra dimension – working towards literacy outcomes. There was a feeling that the research project was being framed in terms of school objectives and curriculum outcomes.

Gallery educator 1: 'When I was first confronted with the research question, my first thought was I have escaped the teaching and having to deliver a syllabus and things like that... I could never hope to deliver that. I don't think I can deliver it. For me this is not what this is all about.'

Gallery educator 2: 'The imposition of a question wasn't relevant to anyone.'

Teacher: 'I had no idea of what action research is... I am starting sort of now to understand, but we are unfortunately coming to an end.'

Researcher: 'I am sure that the CPD element is there and that we are all better practitioners at the end of the project ... Unfortunately there were limited opportunities for training and ... it did have an impact long term, because we didn't share the same understanding from the beginning.'

The fact that the research question was invested with the interests of several people prior to the beginning of the project was indeed one of the major limitations of the research, as outlined in the relevant section at the beginning of this report. The initial question functioned as a point of reference for the team and a starting point for an inquiry. The phrasing was actually alluding to 'outcome-gear'd research and a possibility of measuring the impact.

The team reflected upon the initial question, modified and adjusted it slightly to one that seemed to be more apt for the purpose; one which was more along the lines of, 'What are the practices that enable literacy learning in the gallery and the classroom?' The attention shifted gradually as the team realised that the EAL group did not really differ from the rest of the team, in terms of literacy difficulties.

Teacher: 'I find the whole EAL thing hard. They have been labelled that, but they are not different from my other kids in the class. I probably wouldn't have chosen that EAL designation, I would have chosen some lower ability students.'

Gallery educator 1: 'In terms of the research question, I was not convinced that what I would do would have an effect on the EAL learners in particular, because I don't think that's what I do really. The things that I offer to a class are actually very different to these specific targets. I think it's more about inspiring children, make them see in a different way.'

Gallery educator 2: 'Giving them confidence.'

Gallery educator 3: 'Maybe new skills are coming in, but this is not the main thing.'

These 'world views' are really important as they link to the issues raised in the previous part about how the gallery educators who pursue this 'integrated approach' actually attempt to integrate the school and the gallery educational discourses and agendas.

Gallery educator 1: 'In this project we have been tangled up with literacy and finding ways to intermesh the literary and the artistic.'



## **PART 5**

# **Literacy and Children with English as an Additional Language**

## Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

### Key Findings

The *Ideas Factory Action Research Project's* focus on children with EAL is manifested in two main areas:

- The design of the workshop activities that aspired to relate to and enhance EAL children's experiences.
- The selection of the research focus group that consisted entirely of EAL pupils. This group was closely observed and it is those children's work that is particularly foregrounded in the analysis.

The research problematised the notion of 'EAL children's literacy development', since the research methodology employed looked at more context-specific issues, such as the conditions that enable children's meaning-making, rather than assessing an end product. These enabling conditions are summarised as:

- Viewing literacy beyond its narrow definition as a school subject and a set of skills. Current views often perceive EAL children as disadvantaged and an obstacle to the literacy development of the class. Understanding literacy as a social practice that goes across school subjects and beyond the school can open up possibilities for addressing other literacy practices that EAL children are immersed in within their socio-cultural aspects of their lives.
- The presence of a design for gallery education provision that is highly and diversely resourced; one that makes available a range of people, expertise, spaces, viewpoints, overcoming the discursive boundaries the different institutions impose. The 'integrated approach' is a significant teaching model with a transformative potential for EAL children.
- An understanding that literacy is visible once it is materially realised. The acceptable 'emergence' of literacy is usually the written one, whereas there are many other visual and verbal manifestations, which are often neglected. This is a crucial starting point when it comes to engaging with EAL children, whose competence in writing is not representative of their literacy in general.
- Viewing the literacy meanings children make in modes other than writing, as reflections of their interests and the range of the resources they have available. This is a basis for designing approaches to address the development of their writing. These approaches are more relevant to their social lives and their literacy practices.
- The presence of a 'creative partnership' between different professionals whose practice is informed by similar understandings of literacy or who aspire to engage critically and productively with other views of how the world is and how it should be as Kress might put it, particularly in relation to the notion of EAL. This enabling condition is present in the *Ideas Factory Project* due to its nature and aspiration to be 'integrated'. The action research team also acknowledged that the different institutional contexts of the gallery and the school, within which they operate, condition their approach to teaching and allow for different possibilities for EAL children's literacy to emerge.
- A teaching practice that is acknowledging the importance of an additional linguistic and cultural resource and is facilitating its emergence in the classroom. This condition was met in the *Ideas Factory Project* and it counteracted any negative impact that the labelling EAL might have had. EAL children's experiences, as well as aspects of their cultural identity, can be a creative basis for an art and literacy project, as they emerge as an additional resource and represent a significant interest that drives meaning-making.



## Problematising the EAL Notion

The focus on EAL children has been the main emphasis in the programme. This focus reflected the interests of the Tate *Ideas Factory* partnership (programme directors, participants, EAL and art co-ordinators) at the time this research project was envisaged. The need to address EAL pupils was not instigated by the members of the action research team, nor was it high on the agendas of any of the teachers.

Gallery educator 1: 'The EAL learners were not any different from the rest of the classroom.'

Gallery educator 2: 'The focus on EAL was not arising out of the problems she (the teacher) encountered. The question was predicated on a problem that did not exist.'

Researcher: 'These kids are labelled as EAL in the school registers.'

Gallery educator 1: 'As the teacher has said before this hasn't affected anyone's practice and you wouldn't necessarily be aware who they (EAL pupils) are.'

Teacher: 'It is a meaningless labelling.'

Gallery educator 2: 'What it turns out to be from conversations with other teachers, it is a good thing, it doesn't have to be a problem or a difficulty with language. It means that they speak more than one language.'

Gallery educator 1: 'We've been starting this project, as if they are special needs, they are not!'

Gallery educator 2: 'EAL as a kind of grouping has been a bit bizarre. There are children who speak very fluently in another language, or there are children who have a few words in another language. I don't think here there are any children who were particularly struggling horribly with English as language ... whereas in other situations you have kids who have recently moved to England and who would be in the process of learning the language.'

Researcher: 'We established from the beginning of the project that EAL is not a homogeneous group. It is extremely diverse. Most of our children don't speak another language at home. They are actually learning the language of their parents as a second or foreign language. I think it is interesting that this research provided a platform for discussing what this EAL labelling means. I agree with you that these particular EAL pupils did not have any literacy difficulties.'

The broad definitions of EAL (DfES, NALDIC) and the current perceptions of the school about EAL pupils are not a useful reference when it comes to designing a project that will address their needs. The feedback we received from the teachers confirmed that the literacy problems of their pupils were not necessarily linked to their EAL background. Even though the EAL category was widely available in both schools, the teachers did not particularly see a visible difference in competence amongst the EAL children when compared with the rest of the class. The teachers were more concerned about the overall performance in literacy and particularly the writing skills of all the children.

Gallery educator 1: 'There is also a great degree of diversity within the EAL category.'

The research team found out that the category is not consistently used across the board, as there were other children that could have come under the EAL umbrella, who were not listed as EAL.

Gallery educator 1: 'Because ... there is a percentage of EAL children in these areas, there is another assumption, that EAL kids have a problem with literacy ... they don't!'

Gallery educator 2: 'You see, the teacher doesn't seem to think they really do ... because she sees all the kids. She doesn't see the EAL ones as standing out, having literacy problems.'

Teacher: 'I have got the class as a whole that has literacy problems, but not actually the EAL children.'

Despite this, the action research team decided to explore this aspect along with the other issues and needs that emerged for the teachers. The team did not address EAL pupils as ones with a deficit in their knowledge of English but as pupils who have access to cultural resources in addition to those of the other monolingual children, as well as to the resources of the school. Although the objectives that informed the art and literacy workshops aimed at enriching their vocabulary, sentence-making and story writing skills, there was no remedial approach attempted in relation to EAL children. Rather, it was the cultural aspects linked to EAL that were foregrounded along with the idea of using the art works and the integrated pedagogical approach to build trajectories towards those pupils' cultural and social experiences and resources.

Moreover, the emphasis on EAL as a target group for the project raises the concern that customising an arts and literacy project to EAL children's specific needs loses sight of the wider context within which all children learn – a context that is marked by the skills and interests of the children in general.

Gallery educator 2: 'I don't think we have registered the other children's changes and attainments.'

## The Transformative Potential of the 'Integrated Approach' For the EAL Children

The underlying assumption that permeates the project is interwoven with the notion of literacy as a social event. It acknowledges that there are various literacies operating within the *Ideas Factory Project* – the school literacies, and the literacies of home and the gallery. This would apply to all children, regardless of whether they are EAL or not. The research project team approached the children with an open mind and attempted to extrapolate the actual cultural and linguistic resources at their disposal. The focus on EAL allowed for an increased awareness of the fact that some children have access to different worlds than the rest. The team acknowledged from the beginning that a short term exposure to any approach could not possibly change the children's linguistic skills.

The preliminary stage would be to create the conditions that would enable the EAL children to expose the extra resources they hold and reassure them that those literacies can be transformed creatively in the classroom and be put to use within the context of school literacy. More importantly the constant redesign of the workshop activities, informed by the interaction with the children, demonstrated that the team was concerned more with showing children a range of different ways to make meanings in literacy and opening up more possibilities for engaging creatively with literacy as a social practice.



Fig. 106. EAL pupils engaging collaboratively in literacy work in the gallery © Tate 2006

Reflecting on the impact of this 'integrated approach', particularly on EAL children, the team could very clearly confirm the gradual difference it made for those children in terms of increased interest, participation, confidence and pride in their work. It was surprising how the *Ideas Factory Project*, which operated within and beyond the formal curriculum, provided opportunities for bringing out children's potential that would not have been captured by existing literacy practices.

The action research group was in a position to observe the great impact the approach had in raising children's confidence levels and enthusiasm, and in enhancing their participation in the group tasks.

Gallery educator: 'It was interesting that the kids that took part the most were the ones that wouldn't have taken part normally. It did draw them out. I think Jimmy in particular and Sarisha chatted away about it a little bit.'

Being a participant observer in the classroom and gallery sessions, I could easily see signs of children's excitement at being able to use their language as a cultural resource that was unique to them. This was visible in various ways: in the extra commitment to their work, more energy, raised tone of voice, confident body posture, content facial expression, and the willingness to open up to their classmates and talk about a word from a language they knew. They would smile, act shyly or even show surprise that they were allowed to use words coming from the 'domain of home' and the familiar which up to then had no place in the literacy of the classroom.

The following quotes from the discussion groups that the action researchers took part in are suggestive of the project's impact on several aspects of children's social life at school, going beyond a mere improvement of literacy skills. This includes the possibility that children who have been classified as low ability are actually in possession of a wealth of resources they cannot express in English:

'I was really impressed that they were very proud, they took pride in presenting their work.'

'I also noted that Georgia very confidently wrote down the word hello and bye-bye in Nigerian. She told me that her mum speaks Nigerian.'

'And then Jimmy started off with the word "czesc" that means hello.'

Researcher: 'She was communicating better today with all of us today. She approached me and said: "I am trying but everything I come up with, comes out in Spanish."'

Gallery educator 1: 'Yeah... That was quite a nice demonstration of how her whole experience is feeding into her practice. To me as well ... the thing there is that ... Sarisha was actually talking about her work, which is really impossible to get her to do other times ...or I find it impossible.'

Gallery educator 2: 'It actually gave her leave to discuss ... even if she says that she couldn't do it.'

Gallery educator 3: 'It sounds like normally she has to reject the Spanish and now she gets a chance to have it acknowledged and then she is fine! She may have been a totally different student if she were in a Spanish class.'

Researcher: 'Jimmy actually didn't really want to share his Polish. When he came up to the board he just came up with a random word ... sort of incomprehensible. It was probably further to the pressure of the girl who was next to him. She was actually very good at writing. She said: "I don't speak any languages"... and then Jimmy took great pride in that he could.'

Gallery educator 1: 'Actually the kids that found it most difficult were the kids sitting next to the ones who had another language. Because the kid with the other language would go straight to something ... They were: "Well I don't know anything". You are not supposed to know anything ... This isn't what this is about.'

Researcher: 'An interesting observation is on your phrasing of the task ... you asked them to think of the word and the meaning and then some of them were ... "How do I know the meaning? Who is going to validate what I said and translate it for me now?" ... that was the perception. They hadn't realised that it was themselves that were deciding what the meaning was going to be.'

Gallery educator 1: 'That kind of threw them. The idea of having a meaning for it. A lot of them were happy with doing a random configuration of letters.'

Researcher: 'That's why all the EAL kids were really proud, they knew some words they could use straight away.'

Teacher: 'Arcange was very proud of his work, his story and he wanted me to read it straight away to the class!'

## The Home Language as an Additional Resource for Meaning- Making within the Literacy Class

The particular design of the *Ideas Factory Project* activities offered possibilities for foregrounding children's home language. It allowed the inclusion of an extra resource in the meaning-making process by validating and legitimising its presence for the EAL and the non-EAL children alike.

The EAL children felt confident and excited as they were the only ones who could manage that knowledge without being judged and criticised about it. Some looked very surprised that they were allowed to use it in a school-based activity. This was evident in one of the activities of the project, when children had to invent a word that the natives of an island would use to address them. Most of the children resorted to the languages they had a command of in order to draw inspiration.

The availability of other languages in the classroom also offered extra possibilities for enhancing the teaching designs within the project. It offered a platform for problematising the notion of meaning in different languages and issues of cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as citizenship.

These can be observed in the following excerpt and observation notes from a session in the classroom:

Gallery educator: 'We are going to meet those people that we don't understand and imagine a word they will tell us when we meet them. We will write it down, write its meaning.'

Researcher's observation notes: 'The gallery educator is bringing the children's attention to the fact that they may be speaking different languages and asks around in the group to say if they speak any other languages. The children volunteer to say something in another language. The EAL children say some phrases in their language, whereas other non-EAL try to count in French, Spanish or Japanese. The discussion session worked as a platform for children to talk about aspects of their identity or about other people who knew that speak another language in the school or beyond.'

Teacher: 'We all have come across the experience of meeting people whom we don't understand. And of course we have to remember that our language is foreign to them. I thought we would all invent a word. We are going to imagine that we meet these people who live on the island. They are going to walk up to you and they will say one word.'

Gallery Educator: 'Could you write that word they will say? When you write that word, I want you to tell me what this word means in this person's language. You are going to think how you will spell it and then next to it, write its meaning. We are going to use these words in our story.'

Researcher's observation notes: 'Adama who probably speaks some Arabic tries to write "salam alecum", which she writes as "Aslamarlacom". She very proudly presents and writes her words on the flip chart. Adama has written a whole list of words. Georgia very confidently writes down "Hello" and "good bye" in Nigerian. She says that her mum speaks Nigerian. Jimmy has written down "Chest". This means "Hello" in Polish (czesc), he says with pride.

Jimmy speaks Polish at home. We share some words for "bye bye", "yes" and "no". When he actually comes on the board and writes he shares another word with the class "pincin tick" which means hello. For some children there was the issue of coding an existing sound or word using the English spelling system. For others it was an issue of allocating meaning to an imaginary assemblage of sounds, coded into letters. With the children's help, the gallery educator creates a new resource, a bank of new words which in the case of the EAL children, highlights another existing resource – that of their mother tongue.'

Reflecting on what happened in the classroom later on in a twilight session sheds further light onto the thinking behind the activity, the perceptions of the participants about the EAL pupils and their understanding of how the 'integrated approach' catered and enhanced the literacy practices of those children:

Gallery educator 2: 'We started off by doing, by making up a word. We talked about different languages. I was hoping to draw on the EAL experience and hopefully that they would volunteer. Some did and some didn't which is interesting. Jimmy didn't put his hand up during the session.'

Teacher: 'Neither of mine did either.'

Gallery educator 1: 'But afterwards he wanted to talk to me all about it ... about Polishness and all this kind of thing. Obviously not all of them wanted to share in front of the group. Sarisha [an EAL pupil who would rarely speak in class] managed a word. She spoke in public! She said, "Hola".'

Gallery educator 2: 'It is interesting that the word that Arcange created, his imaginary word, derives from the French sound ... "bonjour", it was something like "bourgieu". He was drawing on his parents' mother tongue.'

Gallery educator 3: 'The EAL children all of them actually were noticeably using their other language skills. And some other kids were doing it as well who are not listed as EAL.'

Teacher: 'They join the school's language clubs.'

Researcher: 'Adama actually used Arabic. I was really surprised. She is not listed as EAL. Adama was very proud she was going to the Saturday school ... She writes Arabic and she demonstrated it, writing on the board. She had written a whole list of words. She couldn't really remember the country she was coming from. She said "I am coming from that country in Africa... Bacao ..."'

Similar transformations of sounds, words and sentences from the native languages appeared in the picture book making task:

'a strange person appeared she said comlayana'  
'a girl came and said bubr'

## Action Research Group Recommendations for Enhancing the Literacy Experience

The action research project provided useful insights into a particular context. Due to the time restrictions, however, and the other limitations that applied, the team could not possibly research thoroughly the link between the 'integrated approach' and EAL. It identified various parameters to be considered in depth, especially the great degree of differentiation within the group labelled as EAL.

It benefited from the experiences of the participants and their reflections on the children's work and practice, and managed to provide useful insights similar to those that other more systematic research on bilingualism has achieved (Kenner 2004).

The research project participants reflected on the increased interest and participation that the children were demonstrating when the literacy activities established links to their backgrounds, in terms of validating and accepting the additional literacy practices that they were immersed in. This is in line with Kenner's discussions of bilingual children's living in simultaneous worlds, switching between languages and literacies, and the link of these to their identities.

Particular activities incorporated in the programme, as for example the storyboard writing and the making of the picture book, encouraged the use of other words and phrases from other languages in their writing up of a story. In the same session, the gallery educator encouraged all children to create new words and with their help they developed a new resource, a bank of imaginary words. In the case of the EAL children though, this actually conferred value to another existing resource: that of their mother tongue.

The focus on EAL actually allowed the group to reflect on the link between oracy and written literacy as well as the difficulty children encountered generally when they had to engage with their work more consistently in terms of proof reading, editing and making changes.

The teacher and the group acknowledged the difficulty with editing and getting back to what they had written earlier. One gallery educator pointed out the aspect of the integration of art and literacy in the service of editing, suggesting the introduction of different media from one level of editing to another, from a draft paper to a finished version.

There was also an attempt to find a link between the developmental and social aspects of children's lives and different levels of development in speaking and writing.

Gallery educator: 'There is a mismatch between what they say and how they write it and it's not only the EAL kids.'

The group's discussion focused on the difference that the activities made in bringing out the interests of EAL children, more in the area of acknowledging their background language and culture. Besides, the group acknowledged that writing a story was a long and complicated process, for EAL and non EAL children – a task that consists of a lot of elements that would need to be taught first:

Gallery educator: 'If I was to do this again I would focus on one element of writing a story ... setting or characters.'

Probably the limitations that apply in the planning and managing of the literacy syllabus do not allow for time to engage and digest different aspects of writing a story, or for recruiting a range of resources including art.

Gallery educator: 'For a lot of them it's too much.'

What seemed to work as a catalyst in helping the children structure their story and get to terms with the notion of beginning, middle and end was the verbal interaction with adults and the question and answer session that would take place.

Researcher: 'They did not really seem to be aware of the notion of beginning, middle and end in the story. It was in the process of interacting with us that they developed it.'

Gallery educator: 'Arcange developed the story after two of us were asking what's happening. His story flourished then.'

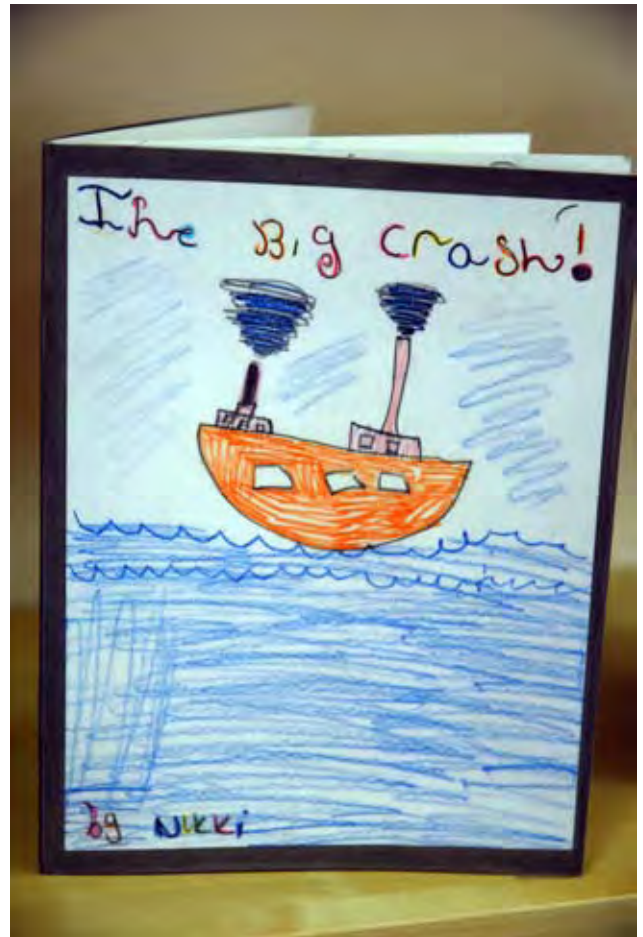
Dealing with EAL learners was a learning experience for the group, especially in terms of the hidden potential of the learner, which does not unfold through the current curricular and literacy activities, since they do not seem to be catering directly for them.

The project raised the issue of the various definitions the term EAL encompasses. It also sought an understanding of the EAL group through alternative discourses (research on bilingualism, linguistics, literacies as social etc.), beyond the ones that develop within the institution of the school, in order to engage with the planning of activities within and beyond the curriculum.

This was especially an issue for the gallery educators who are in an institutionally-privileged position to have an overview of what school literacies dictate, while at the same time maintaining the freedom to exercise a more open, flexible, diverse and 'integrated approach' to literacy.



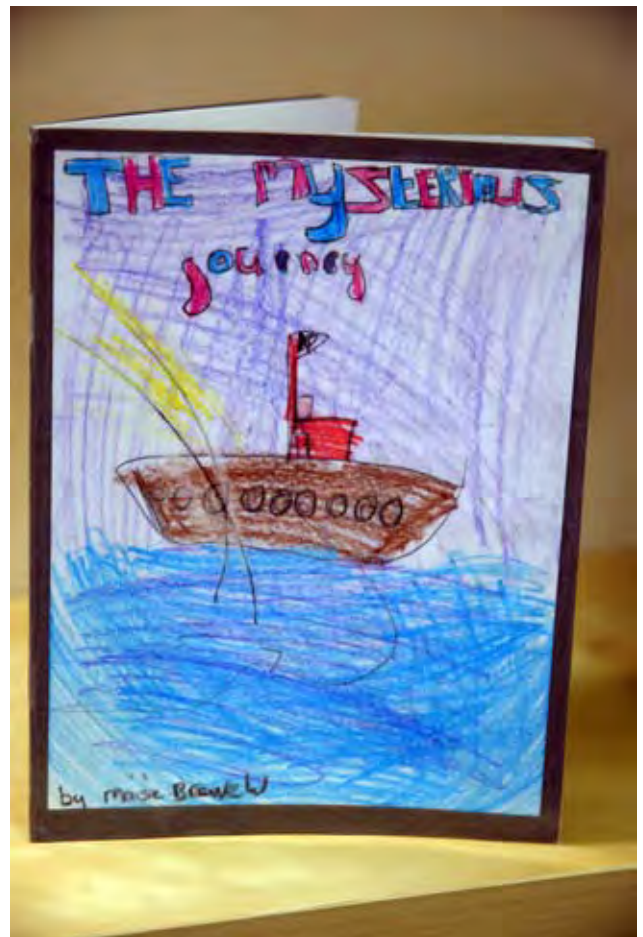
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## **PART 6**

# **Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications for Further Research**

## The Impact of the 'Integrated Approach' on Children's Literacy Development: Key Findings and Outcomes of the Project

The report on the *Ideas Factory Action Research Project* outlines the contribution of the 'integrated approach' to the teaching of art and literacy in the gallery and the classroom and foregrounds the children's literacy production across the two sites. It frames the literacy practices that were developed and reflected upon within a researcher-led action research project and further analyses them through a social semiotic, multimodal, interpretative framework. This, coupled with a view of literacy as a social event enables an in-depth understanding of how the Tate approach integrates different views on literacy, operating within two main literacy domains, the classroom and the gallery.

More importantly, the report showcases the link between the design of educational activities and their underpinning literacy viewpoints with the actual literacy production of children. The methodological framework allowed us to treat every literacy event in the programme as significant in terms of its impact on children's literacy.

The *Ideas Factory Research Project* developed as a follow-up to the *Visual Paths Project*, which focused on the link between arts projects and literacy. The particular focus of the *Ideas Factory* on children with English as an additional language (EAL), as well as on the literacy practices that underpin the 'integrated approach', opened up a new area for exploration. The reflexive practice initiated through the action research helped us to further the *Visual Paths Project* engagement with art and literacy, as it provided an alternative perspective for looking at the design of the learning activities and its link to children's literacy.

The distinct contribution of the project is its use of an action research method, as well as its introduction of the innovative theoretical perspective of 'multimodal literacies'. This perspective, when introduced in the field of gallery education, forms a novel way of seeing the actual event of the project, the Tate pedagogy and its impact on children. The 'close-up' look that a multimodal, social semiotic reading of the children's work allowed for, sheds more light on the significance of the *Ideas Factory* literacy practices and its possibilities to enrich the literacy practices of school children.

The overall significant contribution of the Tate 'integrated approach' and its benefits to children cannot be reduced to 'skills acquisition' only, as the initial research design was meant to address. The particular pedagogy underpinning the Tate approach is based on an expanded view of literacy, and any attempt to evaluate its impact in terms of 'development of literacy' and assessment criteria according to the Literacy Strategy would not do justice to the wider benefits of the Tate approach. Moreover, any attempt to assess and measure 'change', 'difference' or 'progress' in literacy skills would not be compatible with the underpinning philosophy of such an educational approach.

Evidence from the various phases of the project suggests that the children's development of literacy could not possibly be traced through a short-term encounter with the particular activities of the *Ideas Factory Project*: a different type of study, of a more long-term nature, would be required.

The reflective practice of the team problematised the notions of 'skills acquisition and development' as key indicators of a successful literacy pedagogy. Given the particular circumstances around which the programme evolved and developed, the nature of the research and the limitations that time and budget imposed, the data available could not illustrate and clarify sufficiently the actual impact of the 'integrated approach' on children's written literacy development and skills acquisition.

Despite the specific limitations mentioned in the 'Introduction' and in the 'Project's History' sections of this report, the project as a whole confirmed several of the findings of the *Visual Paths* project. Notwithstanding the fact that both could not claim a considerable change on children's writing skills as a result of that particular encounter with the project, they identified many other areas where the programmes had an impact. Several of these accord with the ones commented on by Eileen Carnell and Pam Meecham in their interim and final reports on the *Visual Paths Project* and were further elaborated by Colin Grigg, in the *Visual Paths to Literacy: A handbook for Gallery Educators* (Grigg, 2002, p.87), as follows:

- Opportunities to learn outside school;
- The richness of the resources that the gallery environment provides;
- Stimulation of the imagination;
- Working with experts;
- Sense of accomplishment.

By focusing on a deeper understanding of the 'integrated approach' within the *Ideas Factory Research Project*, the project identified:

- The links between the framing of the teaching design, as a primary resource, and the children's work, as a creative transformation;
- The significance of children's engagement with art and literacy as a means for seeing the world beyond the narrowly circumscribed realms of art and literacy as school subjects. It offered all the participants a significant overview of an expanded understanding of literacy;
- The elements that constitute the 'integrated approach', that permeate the *Ideas Factory Project*, and describe its methodology;
- The literacy discourses that school/gallery partnerships operate within and their impact on children's literacy;
- The particularities of the 'integrated approach' in terms of integrating diverse practices, spaces, expertise and resources and more particularly in providing a platform where different discourses about literacy merge.

More particularly, with relevance to the focus on the EAL pupils and their literacy practices, the project identified that:

- EAL children's engagement with art and literacy is a significant means for seeing the world beyond the narrowly circumscribed realms of literacy as a school subject, which often associates these children with notions of disadvantage.
- EAL children's experiences and aspects of their cultural identity can be a creative basis for an art and literacy project, since they emerged as an additional resource and represented a significant interest that drove meaning-making. This was particularly the case when they were integrated into the expanded notion of literacy that the gallery programme enabled;
- Foregrounding the EAL children's own language and cultural experiences, and allowing them to integrate aspects of their identity into the strictly regulated area of school writing as valid and legitimate, can have a significant impact on raising EAL pupils' confidence and interest in participating in a range of literacy activities;
- The 'integrated approach' is a significant teaching model with a transformative potential for EAL children too;
- The different institutional contexts of the school and the gallery, along with their distinct definitions of literacy, allow for different possibilities for EAL children's meaning-making to emerge;
- The EAL category, in the particular context of the programme, did not emerge as a significant one. Despite the particular labelling, the EAL group could not be differentiated from the rest of the class in terms of achievement, abilities and skills. The additional language and social context that EAL children are immersed in featured as additional resources available to them for transformation in their literacy practices;

## **Contribution of the Project in Terms of its Implications for Further Research and Practice**

The project's impact was significant in terms of the questions it raised and the issues that it highlighted with regard to the following areas.

### **Action Research Process as a Means of Enhancing the Teaching and Learning in the Gallery**

The *Ideas Factory Research Project* evolved and developed alongside the actual practical component, not in a parallel and disengaged manner but with the two elements interwoven. Rather than engaging in a research project led by the perspective of an independent researcher who would be observing, participating, collecting and analysing data in its different stages, we embarked on a collaborative project whereby the action research team, comprising people with different interests and perspectives, design, apply and reflect on their approach.

The benefits of a partnership between gallery educators, teachers, artists and writers that the *Visual Paths Project* highlighted, were further enhanced through the possibility of framing the art project within an action research one. This provided a unique opportunity to negotiate the ‘most apt and appropriate’ approach for the particular educational context that the team had to strive for. In addition, the particular phases of an action research project, involving preliminary meetings, evaluation and reflection sessions, allowed for ample opportunities to question notions that were ‘fixed’ and taken for granted in the institutional discourse of the school and the art gallery. In particular, terms such as ‘literacy’ and ‘EAL students’ were not necessarily interpreted in the same way within each institution.

The action research element, along with the partnership approach, made its own distinct contribution to an exploration of the question of literacy. It allowed for an integration of the participants’ personal reflections into all the stages of the project delivery. In other instances, when all these reflections could not always feed into practice, it at least enabled an awareness of these reflections to inform subsequent stages of the research.

## **Documentation of the ‘Integrated Approach’ as a Key Teaching Methodology that Characterised the Project as an Inspiring Teaching Model**

One of the benefits of conducting the *Ideas Factory Project* research in an action research/reflecting mode, was the creation of a well-grounded theorisation of the ‘integrated approach’.

The team focused on:

- The constituent parts of the notion of the ‘integrated approach’;
- Its conceptualisation by the educators involved;
- Its educational framing and delivery;
- The resources it employed;
- The pedagogies and teaching methodologies it brought together; and
- The reception of the approach by the pupils and the potential for transformation of the art-museum resources it facilitated.

The ‘integrated approach’ of the *Ideas Factory Project* has been viewed by the teacher (who participated in this research) as having a great impact on children’s engagement with learning and has worked as an inspiring teaching model, which she applied in further classroom work. The success of the approach is manifested in the children’s remarks in their evaluations and accounts of their visit, and can be evaluated as being positive across the different activities. It is evidenced by the actual excitement with which children were seen to participate in the different stages of the programme but also by other instances of their work where evaluation was not requested from them (such as the children talking about their art works, their actual visual representation and the in-depth engagement with the activity they demonstrated in situ).

## **Introduction of a Multimodal Perspective as an Approach to Viewing Museum and Classroom Literacies**

Adopting a multimodal perspective to engage with the notion of literacy and the art museum practices is an approach that provided us with new tools enabling a different view of learning both in the art gallery and the classroom.

As the multimodal semiotic analysis of the data has shown, looking at children’s works through a different lens, beyond the constraints of the notion of ‘development of literacy’ within a short-term project, allows more possibilities for children’s meanings to emerge. The multimodal outlook on learning in the gallery and the classroom enabled us to see the children’s work as:

- Products of the children's interests at a particular moment and a specific context;
- Significant and meaningful instances of meaning making;
- Multimodal representations of their literacy learning;
- Instances of transformation of the resources that the 'integrated approach' foregrounded.

This showed that the aspects of the teaching methodology of the 'integrated approach' were based on the fact that they promoted a multimodal engagement with literacy, one that attributed importance to speaking, singing, drawing, writing, playing and moving. Despite the fact that it put all these resources to the service of particular aspects of school literacy, such as writing, it used a different perception of the notion of literacy as a situated social practice linked to a particular context.

## Considering Art Gallery Literacies along with School Literacies in their own Contexts

This report has highlighted critical concerns about the way we perceive literacy in the art gallery. The project data showed how the gallery educators designed literacy events in a particular way and how the teacher enhanced them in order to be in accordance with the school version of literacy (e.g. creating high quality display material/picture books with narratives). The report also raised questions about the gallery's role in contributing and serving the national curriculum agendas for literacy. Should the gallery be mediating in order to condition children's literacy according to the dictates of a school curriculum?

The engagement with the project by the research team raised a range of issues and questioned several notions that are considered stable and fixed in the institutional discourse of schooling, such as the notions of EAL, literacy, skills and development.

The particular research question and its underpinning assumptions seem to view the project as a catalyst for transition from one level of acquisition of literacy skills to the next. Opportunities for reflection on and evaluation of aspects of the project allowed us to question this notion of literacy and see it more broadly including within the specific context of the art gallery.

['Different everyday contexts present different literacy demands, perceptions of literacy' and 'types of power relations and hierarchies of knowledge'](#) (Barton et al 1999, Street 2003, quoted in 2006 UNESCO report on literacy).

The art museum context presents particular 'literacy demands' and requires particular skills (thinking skills, oral skills and visual literacy) to assist with immersion into the context and realm of images.

Art literacy definitely presupposes a type of power relation with the art expert as dominant. The particular 'integrated approach' advocates that the meaning resides with the reader and it encourages children to make their own personal meanings. Such an approach is most compatible with pedagogies that are linked to multimodal social semiotics and multi-literacies.

In this project, the 'integrated approach' and its underpinning methodologies serve the school curriculum and the Literacy Strategy with their accompanying assessment approaches. The literacy events linked with the art gallery experience are of a particular nature (seeing, thinking, using all senses, relating to own life and experiences, relating to their own bodies etc.).

At the same time, the same 'literacy events' are framed and articulated differently in the National Curriculum and in accordance with the Literacy Strategy terminology (e.g. story writing with a beginning, middle and end, literary genres, sentence and paragraph writing). The 'integrated approach' as it was realised in the project seemed to be promoting a broader understanding of literacy, as a social event situated in a particular social practice and realised through the appropriate means.

There were instances in the project that illustrated a 'tension' between serving the art museum's views of what literacy is and what it should be, and those of the school. The *Ideas Factory Project* approach is mainly concerned with locating the student at the centre of a meaning-making process, allowing for personal meanings to emerge as valid and legitimate. On the other hand, the research work recorded many instances where the art educators, as initiators of a relating/questioning process with the artwork, felt compelled to deviate from this position. In most cases, this was in order to make their teaching more relevant to the dictates of the school writing agendas. In those instances, the gallery educators seemed to be extrapolating ways to serve a more product-oriented approach; one which would culminate in an end-product that was as close as possible to a literacy form/genre acknowledged by the National Literacy Strategy and one considered by teachers as serving most appropriately the purposes of their lessons. In some other instances, a strong point of reference informing the choices of the gallery educators was the necessity to produce quality work for display.

## **Converging towards Shared Understandings of Literacy and Diverging from Narrowly-defined Definitions of it, as the Key to a Successful Completion of a Project**

The criteria for what is considered 'successful' in schools and in the gallery seem to be different. Teachers are differently accountable for their literacy practices to the school than gallery educators are to the art gallery. The power of the literacy discourses of the gallery and the school to create a regulating framework emerged as a key issue after the withdrawal of one school from the project. The institutional conditioning of individuals by the different discourses of the school and the art gallery allows for different understandings of literacy, and diverse value systems and criteria for success.

Cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional work can be successful in those instances where the underlying philosophy and approaches of the individuals involved are compatible or, at least, critically exposed and mutually understood.

## **Views of Literacy supported by Ideas Factory Project, as a Condition for Learning beyond the School**

All the above considerations raise the following question: is there a particular perception of literacy that facilitates and generates the conditions for learning in the gallery? Is the gallery collection only a resource that can enrich school literacy, or is there an independent 'art gallery literacy' that stands out in its own right, as a literacy that is shaped by the social practice of visiting the museum and following the particular teaching approach that characterises Tate Britain?

It is interesting that the majority of the literacy events, even though they were initiated in the gallery and drew their initial inspiration from it, were 'substantiated' and 'instantiated' in the classroom space. In many of the activities the artwork remained a remote point of reference (e.g., link between the teaching of punctuation marks and the structure of Alexander Calder's *Standing Mobile*). In such instances, it was obvious that the link was forged in order to serve a very narrowly-defined aim, such as the teaching of the form and use of punctuation marks. This also raises further questions: 'is the art-gallery the appropriate resource when it comes to the teaching of very particular skills associated with writing? What are the actual 'affordances' (capacities) of the art works when art is in the service of teaching a range of subjects and building various skills? And is there a flip side to this creative use of resources in the service of formal education purposes?

Throughout the programme, the art educators have successfully used the museum resources in order to design a range of activities that would enable children to explore writing in a variety of contexts and through different perspectives (role play, poetry, lyrics writing and picture books). In an attempt to build bridges between the artworks and the school writing skills that had to be achieved and served by the project, the artists designed 'creative' and 'innovative' metaphors that could possibly generate the desired outcome. The criterion for allowing the meaning-making potential of an artwork to emerge was whether it afforded the possibility or had the potential to enhance writing skills and address a curriculum requirement. Subsequently, this seemed to necessitate a selection process, one which was probably narrowing down the potential of an artwork to be 'read' for other meanings too. The meanings that were primarily facilitated to emerge and were subsequently negotiated with the children, had relevance to notions of sequence in story writing – an essential component of a good narrative.

Looking through the children's art works, drawings and graphic ensembles enables us to see that literacy events can take place in spaces that the curriculum does not make provision for, such as the gallery space. The particular literacy work produced at the intersections of the school and classroom space and of art with literacy, was often not understood as 'proper' literacy by the schools, as it could not easily be accommodated within the notion of literacy as a school subject. In addition, the *Ideas Factory* workshops seemed to generate literacy work that would not necessarily fall under any of the available categories of the school literary genres and could only be accepted under the umbrella of 'imaginative writing'.

## **The Ideas Factory Project Visual Literacy Work, as a Potential Trajectory with the School Work**

The children's graphic ensembles and narrative representations created in the museum, or produced as an immediate response to artworks, allowed for meanings to emerge in a more informal way, since the presence in them of school literacy demands are not so apparent. Despite this informality, the work produced has consistency in terms of the way it is represented, and is significant because it sheds light on children's learning. The 'integrated approach', as a teaching methodology foregrounding the negotiation of meanings visually, seemed to provide an appropriate framework for preparing children to cope with the task of writing a narrative in a book format.

Looking at the children's visual narrative representations, one could see the children's commitment to constructing a meaningful narrative. If these visual narratives were to be transferred to writing, they would emerge as a non-conventional narrative with a beginning, middle and an end. This demonstrates the conceptual proximity between the visual and the written narratives, which the 'integrated approach' employed in order to make the children's experiences rewarding in the two different contexts of the art gallery and the classroom.

## **Negotiating the Framing of the Activities Programme in relation to the Art History Disciplinary Context as well as the Present Historical One**

In the *Ideas Factory*, the meaning-making process around an artwork was often guided in the direction of creative writing. This, however, can be very distanced from any art historical perspective that often dictates the legitimate reading of a work of art, at least in the eyes of an art historian. This is a dimension that the *Visual Paths Project* emphasised as an area for consideration for further research that emerged from that project. This project raises some more questions in the same direction, especially with regard to the ideas that underpin the 'integrated approach' as a teaching methodology. Should the 'integrated approach' necessarily involve a de-investment of the artwork from its original historical context and a subsequent new investment with the historical contingencies of the present? The general approach within which the Tate pedagogy operated at the time of the *Ideas Factory*<sup>1</sup> was that of the 'critical and contextual studies'. This is encouraged in the handbook for teachers (Grigg 2001) as an approach, but is probably seen as more appropriate for different age groups than that of the young pupils of the *Ideas Factory Project*.

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<sup>1</sup> The Tate pedagogy was further elaborated in the subsequent Tate publication of *The Art Gallery Handbook: A Resource for Teachers* (Charman, Rose, Wilson 2006), which was not available at the time of the *Ideas Factory* Research Project and has, therefore, not informed the art and literacy practices of those involved in it.

The above considerations bring up the following questions. Does the idea of making the artwork relevant to young children's lives mean shifting our attention from its historical context to its relevance with the present? Should this idea of making an artwork relevant to a pupil's life be informing our approach to an artwork's interpretation or should it constitute the interpretation of the artwork itself?

## **The 'Art-educator' as the Mediator of the 'integrated Approach'**

Quotes from the gallery educators suggest that it is their actual skills, interests and personalities that make the approach integrated. Apart from the fact that their approaches are informed by their immersion into the world of art and education at the same time, they also happen to be conditioned by the art museum institutional discourse about literacy. This is less strictly circumscribed and defined than that of the Literacy Strategy.

## **Interest as a Driving Force in Making Meanings**

Another concept that the research data brings forth, if seen from a multimodal, social semiotic perspective, is that of 'interest'. An action research project allows for the interests of several parties to merge into one, while at the same time individual groups' interests are distinguishable. The latter seem to emerge as contradictions within the 'integrated approach' and the actual design of the project.

The project also showed how the children's interests developed as a response to and in a dialogue with the interests of the adults who designed the learning framework. These interests are mapped out in the children's literacy texts and can point to other aspects of learning that have not been attended to. This can be useful feedback, when it comes to re-designing and re-framing a gallery learning programme. The action research team acknowledged that beyond the 'integrated approach' there are many other aspects of the richly resourced gallery and school domains and the creative partnership that can actually generate interest in children and be a driving force in literacy.

The 'integrated approach', as it developed within the reflective and critical environment of the action research, can be a useful point of reference when it comes to identifying links between its practices and the children's literacy work, particularly in terms of understanding how it worked as a resource that informed children's interests which were given a form through their literacy production.

The research team, by validating the meanings the children made and operating beyond the boundaries dictated by the school learning objectives, discerned some of the children's diverse interests as they surfaced in their representations and in their context-specific solutions. There was also an acknowledgment made by the team that the 'integrated approach' is only one of the pedagogical framings one could design and that there are several other resources linked to the children's interests that still remain unframed.



## The Art Gallery and the Ideas Factory Teaching Model as an Apt Medium for Serving a Multimodal Definition of Learning

Following on from the previous issues as well as from the reflections of the participants, there was concern as to whether an art museum-based research should be involved in tracing the impact of a short-term art project in terms of writing skills development only. Reflections on the project by the action research team suggest that there may be other in-between stages on which the impact of the project could be seen. This would possibly necessitate research into the project's impact on other areas of meaning-making, which could mediate between the 'reading' of works of art through a multimodal engagement and the making of meanings in writing, in line with the notion of school literacy. There may be other fields we could attend to – fields onto which children's understanding of the world is imprinted and realised. The following realms, for instance, could be alternative routes for a creative engagement with other aspects of literacy and learning, and could provide 'evidence' for that:

- *Verbal literacy (oracy)*. This can possibly help realise and represent children's thinking paths.
- *Bodily movement and physical engagement with an artwork and other activities revolving around them*. These could be seen as manifestations of children's interests, understanding and transformations of the resources made available to them visually. Children's 'actional' involvement in role play, freeze frame and other drama focused activities can form apt and appropriate areas for research into the engagement of students whose limited writing and verbal skills can be a potential obstacle to communication.
- *Visual literacy, as an aspect of literacy relating to the engagement with 'visual texts' and their making*. Through children's visual representations we can hypothetically recover and verbalise children's meaning-making processes. Through the reading paths that they use as they 'read' the gallery pictures and verbalise what they see in them, or through the reading paths that we can trace in their own transformations of these original images, we can access a different world of literacy: one that sees literacy events as social ones.

The analysis of children's work showed how all the above areas are sources for eliciting information about the student's engagement with the project and provide evidence of learning. They form preliminary stages that are all interconnected and designed in such a way as to facilitate and underpin the writing activities. They are meaningful in the sense that they help us see how the specific educational design and framing of the *Ideas Factory Project* actually resources children's meaning-making.

On the other hand, as school narrative writing is an aspect of literacy that is regulated by more conventions than other forms of meaning-making, we could argue that the *Ideas Factory Research Project*, as a multi-modal and multi-sensory one, would require particular tools to assess its impact, tools that take into account that both the input (the framing of the teaching design) and the output (children's representations of meaning) are realised multimodally.

The above issues could be a starting point for using children's work in order to understand how they actually employ the resources that the art gallery collection and the interpretation make available and how they transform elements of those resources into new imaginative and creative artworks. Rather than seeing how the 'integrated approach' contributes to the development of literacy skills, we should look at how the children's representations (visual and written) can manifest instances of transformation and re-making of the art museum resources (collection, 'integrated approach' and context).

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# Acknowledgements

The action research team would like to acknowledge the generous support of Tate & Lyle that enabled the realisation of the action research project and this report.

I wish to express my thanks to:

- The Year 3 and 4 children of the primary schools for their creative art and literacy work, and for their inspiring participation;
- The teachers, literacy co-ordinators and head teachers who enthusiastically facilitated the project;
- The action research team members Ceri Buckmaster, Sarah Carne, Jocelyn Clarke, Katherine May and Christine McNeil for designing and delivering exciting art and literacy workshops, as well as for enriching the project with their diverse expertise and unique reflections;
- Dr Pam Meecham and Prof. Gunther Kress at the Institute of Education for their engagement in inspiring and thought-provoking discussions about the project, and Fariha Hayat for her useful remarks and the proofreading of the final draft;
- Tina Corri, Anne Cooper-Beresford and Hester Alban-Davies for their involvement with the administration and management at different stages of the project for Tate Britain;
- Andy Ash for eagerly supporting the research project as a consultant, as well as offering his useful insights at different stages of the research design;
- Rebecca Sinker and Harriet Curnow for their support in the final stage of the project and their observations on the report text.

London, October 2007





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