

Creative Representation



Explore, Create, Empower Conference
1/8/19
Luke Toughill

Let's play a game...



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- Creative representation involves imagination and creative thinking as well as complex thought and problem solving
- It includes some of what we typically call “art and craft” but considers more broadly the full range of materials and experiences that children use to represent their thinking

A broader view of the arts...



“The art explorations that we offer children [create] fluency with art media. The children carry this fluency into their work and play in the classroom.

Art spills out of the studio and into the children’s lives, as the language of art becomes the language of learning.

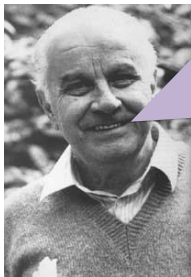
Art can become a tool for investigating, asking questions, forming and testing theories, collaborating, and exploring an idea from a range of perspective – art can grow a culture of inquiry in our programs”

Pelo, A. (2007). *The language of art: Inquiry based studio practices in early childhood settings*. St Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Why does it matter?

- Through creative representation we develop **higher order thinking skills** – the ability to interpret, translate and manipulate our understandings
- Through representing our ideas we not only come to understand them more clearly but we are also better able to share and discuss them with others

The Hundred Languages of Children



“The child is made of one hundred.
The child has a hundred languages
A hundred hands
A hundred thoughts
A hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
A hundred... “
Loris Malaguzzi

Making Thinking Visible

Children’s ideas – like adults’- are often vaguely formed, not fully defined or clearly articulated... A child can give an idea form by drawing, painting, sculpting or building it. In doing so she can begin to clarify her ideas... when her idea is visible, other children and adults can engage with it, thinking with her about its nuances and complexities, its gaps and incongruities...

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Novelty Art and Craft



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- Provides time to explore ideas in depth

Values and promotes creative representation

- How are children encouraged to see the value of creative expression?
- How do you recognise and promote the creative representation of ideas?
- How do you create a culture of exploring and revisiting ideas within the classroom?
- How are children encouraged to express ideas in different ways and to use different media to communicate their thinking?
- How is creative representation valued outside of the art/craft area?

Provides materials for children to use

- What opportunities are there for creative expression in your setting?
- Besides traditional art and craft materials what other materials encourage creative representation?
- Where can children use materials and is there enough space for them to do so?



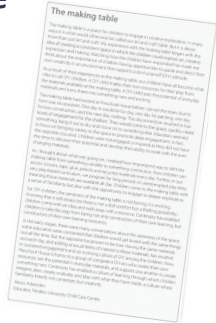
The Atelier, Diana School, Reggio Emilia





The Making Table

“One day it would be for clay, one day for painting, one day for box construction... children were not engaged or inspired as they did not have time to discover their potential and develop their ability to work with the ever changing materials...”



Provides opportunities to learn how to use materials well

- Repeated opportunities to use familiar materials leads to the ability to use the materials with greater skill.
- Don't be afraid to use the same materials over and over again (provided they are the right materials!)
- Helping children to learn how to use materials is an important step in skill development

Provides time to explore ideas in depth and with adult support

- How does your program encourage depth of thought and investigation?
- When are blocks of time available for children to explore without unnecessary interruption?
- How are adults freed up to become involved with children's thinking? How does the routine, structure of the day and culture of the setting support this to occur?

From mud puddles to faces



Drawing with practice



A fork in the road...



A fork in the road...



Taking time to investigate deeply, to follow new leads and interesting tangents, rather than trying to get to the end result as quickly as possible, usually leads to more meaningful and complex learning
