Visual Art Education in Early Childhood Centres
Teachers' Beliefs and Practices.

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Abstract

Teachers’ beliefs and practices in the curriculum area of visual art education, along with relevant theory and the curriculum guidelines Te Whaariki, provide a framework against which teachers plan and implement programmes in visual art education for young children. Three distinct orientations (rote, child-centred, and cognitive) are used to investigate the beliefs and practices of teachers in a sample of Christchurch early childhood centres in order to establish the philosophical perspective that surround the provision of visual art.

A distinct influence of child-centred orientation is seen whereby teachers value the visual arts as a curriculum area that allows children opportunities to engage in the process of self-guided creative expression. In addition, many rote oriented table-top type activities were provided for children. Cognitively oriented art education approaches were not significantly featured in either the teachers’ beliefs or the way they practised in visual art. Implications for teaching practice and the development of children’s artistry are discussed in light of the research findings.
Acknowledgments

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Chapter One Introduction

My interest in visual art education has evolved from my experience as an early childhood teacher and teacher educator. I hold strong philosophical beliefs about the significance of arts education in early childhood and worked hard as a practitioner to integrate opportunities for children to express their ideas and test their theories about the world through aesthetic experiences. For me, a programme rich in language, music and arts based curricula was the ideal.

Music education was a strength of my professional practice when working with young children. As a musician I always had a purpose for the integration of such curricula in the early childhood centre setting. I worked with children in music transmitting knowledge of the elements of the discipline and promoting children’s musicianship through playing, listening, singing and moving. I was quite certain about my purpose and relied on rich interactions between children, and between children and adults, to integrate curriculum music experiences.

In relation to the visual arts, I possessed a much less clear-cut understanding of my role and the significance of the visual arts in children’s experience. I had been taught in a developmental (with slight underpinnings from psychoanalytical) paradigm. Children’s art, I had learned, developed along clear maturational lines related strongly to their physical development and coordination. I understood that my purpose in this maturational process was to provide many opportunities for children
to engage in art and plainly to let them “get on with it”, thus, allowing the best opportunity for creativity which I understood to be paramount. This child-centred approach was different from the table-top methods of art where adults provided specific activities for children to complete in the context of the free-play programme. The child-centred ideas, I understood, were more closely aligned with the developmental view of age and stage theory.

Alongside this, and as a beginning practitioner, I was presented with the ideals of the early childhood teaching approach called ‘Structured Environment Allowing for Communicative Original Happenings (or SEACOH). This was a popular approach to environmental and programme design in Aotearoa / New Zealand in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s and is explained in more detail later in the chapter. The message I took from SEACOH in relation to visual art was to provide the appropriate resources and environment, and to allow children the freedom to create. Any intervention on my part, except for teaching basic cutting or pasting skills, was to be minimal as this would inhibit children’s creativity. They (the children) were viewed as competent and confident decision-makers who would drive their own learning and creativity through experimentation, practise, trial and error. My part in this was provider of resources who attractively maintained the environment.

I have to say, neither the maturational or SEACOH ideas sat very well with me as a practitioner. My involvement in other arts education areas, such as music, was
purposeful and active. I had a very well defined part to play in children's artistic
development. To not be involved with children in the visual arts as I was in music
was a dissonance I was unable to resolve or explain.

When I began working as a lecturer at the Christchurch College of Education, part of
my job was to teach curriculum courses in the area of visual art. I had ample reason
to read widely within the discipline of visual arts and broaden my own knowledge
base. At this time (mid 1990's), the phenomenon of "Reggio" (the term used to
describe teaching approaches in early childhood education in Reggio Emelia, Italy)
was becoming more and more known. Study tours, literature and exhibitions of
children's work were weaving their way through the early childhood education
sector. The detail and extent of children's artistic expression in visual art was, I
believed, extraordinary and quite different from the artistic expression of children I
had worked with as a practitioner. I certainly began questioning why children's
experience and artistic expression, as I had known it, was so different from those that
I read about.

My reading into the curriculum area of visual art lead me to the emergent ideas
around Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), a United States initiative related to
the visual art education (discussed in detail further on in the chapter). I read about
visual arts in education from the perspective of communication and in terms of the
elements of art, art history, criticism and aesthetics. The ideas in DBAE required
active investment in children's artistic experience in terms of adult participation and collaboration. There was a sense of familiarity in what I read. The visual art curriculum through DBAE was approached in a similar way to music education. There was a clear relationship between the teaching approach in DBAE and the development of children's artistry. This was similar to the focus on the development of children's musicianship that had driven my practice in music education. To me, the principles of DBAE made sense.

During 1996 in my job as a teacher educator, I began talking the Discipline Based Art Education rhetoric with students. The ideas were so far removed from their experience that understandings, let alone acceptance, of the relevance of the DBAE ideas were slow. After nearly a year of talking the ideas through, relating them to the New Zealand context and finding ways to explain how and why these ideas might be valid, my interest in the visual arts took hold.

As the ideas I had been expounding related at their very core to philosophy and the place of arts education as a valid and central aspect of children's educational experience, I challenged my own learning and questioned my own teaching methods as a practitioner many times. As well as this, I was asking students to question what they saw in their own teaching experiences. As my own position gained clarity, the gap between the DBAE ideas I was talking about and the practices that students observed in centres grew wider. I found that students in my classes were unable to
articulate their own ideals, let alone begin to explain what they saw in the field or what might be supporting their observed practice.

In order for me to support students in their learning, I believed that I needed to help clarify and contextualise the dissonance between what students were learning at the College and what they were experiencing in early childhood centres. As much of the knowledge I had been presenting had centred around philosophy and its relationship to practice, and I was concerned with children’s experience and how best to support their artistic development, an investigation into these aspects of visual art education for me was warranted.

The remainder of this chapter provides a review of teaching approaches to visual art as they relate to early childhood education and the development of artistic skill in young children. As teaching approaches have a significant effect on curriculum, this concept is explained and related to visual art in early childhood education. Research into the study of teachers’ beliefs is discussed and my interpretation of alternate approaches to visual art and how these might be reflected in practice is presented. Links between visual art theory and the curriculum document Te Whaariki: Early Childhood Curriculum (hereafter referred to as Te Whaariki) are explored in order to examine the congruence contemporary theory in visual art with the guidelines for appropriate practice that early childhood educators are urged to implement in their programmes for young children.
A Framework for Examining Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices.

Figure 1 below characterises the approach I have taken to the study of teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding visual art in early childhood education. There are, I believe, strong connections between our own knowledge and beliefs regarding children’s learning and the way in which we will practise teaching in the centre setting. Further influence is seen when the relationship between what we believe as teachers and what we are required to deliver is considered. Finally, knowledge of literature related to the curriculum discipline is influential. These aspects of programming related to visual art education form the basis for the current study.

Figure 1. Three main influences on curriculum provision in early childhood centre settings.

National curriculum guidelines, Te Whaariki, provide a long awaited scaffold for early childhood education in Aotearoa / New Zealand. While the compulsory
implementation of the curriculum guidelines is not legislated for, Te Whaariki certainly outlines the Government’s expectations for early childhood centre curriculum planning, evaluation and assessment. The Ministry of Education promotes Te Whaariki as applying to all licensed and chartered early childhood services in the country, thus providing a common denominator of educational principles, strands and goals for our youngest children. As this study is related to the provision of curriculum experiences in early childhood centres it is obvious that the guidance expounded in Te Whaariki requires careful consideration. This, along with teachers’ beliefs and current theory in visual art education, provides a set of reference points for the current study.

The term ‘curriculum’ is defined in Te Whaariki as the “sum total of the experiences, activities and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development” (Ministry of Education [MOE] 1996, p.10). The success and relevance of a curriculum is dependent upon the programme which in turn, is dependent upon the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the teachers. It is essentially the beliefs and practices of teachers regarding the visual art curriculum that are under investigation in this project.

In this study, I refer to visual art as planned experiences in early childhood centres where:

a) children’s artistry (that is, artistic skill) in the visual arts is promoted, and/or
b) where opportunities for children to be creative, expressive or communicate through visual media are presented.

Activity areas in early childhood centres, such as, painting, drawing, printmaking and three-dimensional collage are commonly associated with visual art education for young children.

While there is shared understandings (from Te Whaariki) driving the provision of early childhood education programmes in Aotearoa / New Zealand, this by no means supposes that the types of experiences and opportunities afforded children in various programmes are alike. The five main types of early childhood centres that co-exist in the early childhood education sector, are State Kindergartens, Playcentres, Childcare Centres, Home Based services and Nga Kohanga Reo. Increasingly, growth of Pacific Islands Early Childhood Services in metropolitan areas is also being seen.

While Te Whaariki provides these services with one set of educational principles, strands and goals for young children, each service interprets and implements a unique understanding of the guidelines. Between the five main types of services there are distinct philosophical differences. State Kindergartens, for instance, adhere to a philosophy of free play, while Playcentres hold parent and family involvement central to the ethos of the service. Nga Kohanga Reo are instrumental in maintaining and promoting Maori culture and Reo (language) while working within a Whanau model. These aspects of institutional philosophy permeate each centre and are
expected to give effect to the philosophy of the service through the way they plan for and implement curriculum experiences. It is plausible to suggest that the teachers’ beliefs in Figure 1, may be informed by a variety of institutional or personal biases.

Cabello and Burstein (1995) propose that “teaching practices reflect teachers’ beliefs that, in turn, reflect their own experiences and backgrounds” (p.1). This notion reflects the position I take in the current study. It has been shown that teachers’ behaviour (or practices) is a central influence on quality early childhood education practice (Meade, 1985; Smith & Haggarty, 1979). If we accept the premise that teachers’ behaviour or practices are influenced by their beliefs, then in order to characterise the learning opportunities that exist for children within visual art education, teachers’ beliefs must be examined.

Specific research into the beliefs of teachers and their practices with regard to visual art education is slight. Barry and Townsend’s study (1995) about teachers’ judgements regarding the teaching of art in primary schools in Aotearoa / New Zealand included questionnaires that asked teachers to assess their general attitude towards the teaching of art as well as asking about teachers’ classroom organisation of art. The authors concluded that attitudes towards the teaching of art were relatively positive and that for teachers who had special responsibility for art in schools, their classroom organisation reflected their beliefs about the importance of art. The notion that teachers’ beliefs about visual art relate to their teaching practice
in visual art reflects my own proposition that the planning of curriculum experiences in the early childhood centre setting is influenced by the beliefs of the practitioners charged with the planning.

In this study, three main orientations to visual art education, Rote, Child-centred and Cognitive, have been used as theoretical frameworks to examine current early childhood teachers’ beliefs and practices in the curriculum area of visual art. In the next few pages, I shall discuss these three orientations and how I interpret these as being demonstrated in practice.

Alternate Perspectives on Visual Art and Education
Recent theories of children’s artistry have evolved alongside centuries of proposals and alternative viewpoints on the nature of children and their learning processes. Authors (e.g., Bresler, 1994; Kindler, 1996; Marme-Thompson, 1995) have tracked change in the teaching of visual art over the last century, drawing parallels between different teaching emphases in visual art and various viewpoints of child development. From contemporary literature, (e.g., Bresler, 1993; Kindler & Darras, 1996; Wilson, 1996) three distinct orientations in the teaching of visual art have been drawn. Bresler (1994) names these as the rote, open-ended and cognitive orientations. In this study, I use the term child-centred to describe what Bresler calls an open-ended approach to visual art. In my reading of the literature the concepts behind the approaches are the same.
When reflecting on my own experience as a practitioner in early childhood, the three orientations described in the literature had a sense of familiarity about them. The rote ideas paralleled the table-top type activity that I had been clearly taught to avoid providing for children. The child-centred ideas closely reflected the developmental approach to visual arts that formed the basis of my own early teaching experiences. DBAE, in my opinion, reflected the cognitive orientation of visual art.

The Rote Orientation

Bresler (1994) labels the methods associated with the carefully structured and instructed table-top activities in visual art as the rote orientation. This is a particularly teacher oriented bias, whereby children’s participation in the activities helps to meet adult directed goals. She describes the rote approach as one that has expectations of children developing “dexterity and fine motor skills, neatness, memorisation and following of directions” (p.93). It is usual to see a thematic approach to visual art education where a rote approach influences adult philosophy and teaching behaviour. Often art experiences are used to supplement other programme initiatives, such as, themes around holidays, special events in the centre, or studies of the seasons. Alternatively, in my experience, rote oriented activities might be completely unrelated to other programme content but rather, reflect solely what the teacher decided to provide on the activity table. This reflects the teacher-oriented bias mentioned previously.
Visual art methods aligned with the rote philosophy have been likened to a “factory or industrial method of art where the act of creation is a mechanical one of reproduction” (Bresler, 1994, p.93). The assumptions, values and goals of a rote orientation according to Bresler, can be likened to the view of the education setting as a “preparatory institution for industrial or clerical work and an instrument for social control” (p. 98). While it is not my contention that early childhood educators intent on providing visual art experiences seemingly influenced by a rote bias are consciously engaging in the factory method of reproduction, the notion in itself is interesting.

A rote approach to the visual art curriculum can be described as activities that are carefully set up and implemented by adults for children often with little or no consultation with children or obvious relevance to children’s interests or artistic development. A vignette of the type of experience I associate with the rote approach is outlined below:

*Easter Bunny Making*

*All children are invited to participate in the art activity. There is a table in the art area with all necessary equipment available, cotton wool for the tail, cardboard templates cut out in a rabbit shape with eyes, ears and nose already drawn on, glue, and white paint.*
Teachers carefully instruct children on how to construct their Easter Bunny. They may hand children the resources to use when they are up to the relevant step, usually there will be a teacher sitting at the table making space for the next child to come and make their Bunny. The teacher will keep the resources stocked and re-direct children to other areas of the programme once they have finished their Bunny and put it on the shelf to dry.

If a child wants to make more than one Bunny, the teacher may let them have another turn, but usually will tell the child to wait until everyone has had their first turn. It is not necessarily clear whether or not the Easter Bunny making is compulsory for children however, the teacher would usually make sure everyone at least had the opportunity to make one.

The teacher responsible for the activity will direct children carefully, giving them instructions on how to complete the task. Teachers may say, "glue the cotton wool tail on here", "use the white paint to colour in your Bunny". When everyone has finished the teacher will put the activity away. Children will usually be praised for completing the activity and may be told that they can take their Bunny home when it is dry.

It is always important for me when describing this type of practice to students, to ask them why they think such an event might occur in an early childhood centre setting
and what relevance to children’s artistic development such experiences have.

Invariably responses include reasons such as:

- children are learning about rabbits;
- children are developing fine motor skills;
- children are learning turn-taking skills and cooperation; and,
- children are enjoying the process of being creative.

As often occurs after being presented with such a series of rationale for providing the type of activity I describe above, a lively debate about each of the points usually results and, when carefully deconstructed, we inevitably end up questioning the relevance of such an approach.

The irony in the description of the rote orientation is poignant. Parents and caregivers generally respond positively to this type of artwork and will reinforce the teacher’s approach when presented with the Bunny at the end of the session with praise and value statements. I still have my own two-year-old child’s Santa Claus carefully constructed with paint, cotton wool and tissue rolls tucked away in a box of childhood treasures. The messages to children from teaching practices like this are, I believe, complex and inhibiting. They include the inherent “conform and receive praise” message where children are rewarded for meeting the pre-determined goals and ideals of the teachers who provide the experiences. Teachers may conclude that since parents and caregivers appear pleased with their children’s products, that this type of table-top activity is appropriate. Thus, the cycle reinforces itself and repeats.
My main issue with the rote type of approach is that it is not the special characteristics, interests or artistic development of children that have driven the experience. Rather, it is the adult directed goals and rewards or praise that children and teachers receive from each other, or from parents and caregivers, that appears valued more. The type of teaching practice described above is very teacher directed and perhaps reinforces the notion that product driven ideology in early childhood education is warranted, because it looks on the surface as if practitioners have been ‘teaching children’. The question for me about how this type of table-top activity promotes the development of children’s artistry, however, remains unanswered.

The rote methods in themselves do, I believe, have a place in visual art education. When considering specific skills or abilities that teachers may try to impart to children, for example, paint application or clay coiling, careful teacher directed instruction may well be required. Further, the use of theme based activities and experiences can successfully generate integrated learning and extend the exploration of ideas and concepts. However, when the product of the activity becomes the focus for completing the activity I question the usefulness of the approach. The critical differentiation for me, between when the rote oriented approach is useful and when it is not, is between whether visual art experiences reflect the table top model of curriculum or, are initiated as part of a successive stage of curriculum inquiry related to children’s development and learning. The latter being I believe, more desirable.
The Child-Centred Orientation

Bresler (1994) calls this approach to teaching in visual art education open-ended, that is child-centred, emphasising child art as the "unique expression of the individual", highlighting "exploration, originality and imagination in the process of creation" (p.99). The child-centred approach is characterised by belief in the notions of self-discovery and naturally unfolding artistic development linked to physical and later cognitive development, manipulation and exploration. As I stated earlier, the child-centred orientation was most significant in my own early experience as a practitioner. I also remarked that I was unable to reconcile the child-centred orientation with my own views in arts education total. I intend to discuss this issue in more detail later in the chapter.

The process of creation in a child-centred orientation is valued far more than the product of children's work, and experimentation with visual art media is valued for its benefits of allowing children to release emotional energy and being creative. Tinworth (1997) describes a child-centred curriculum as one that presents a "professionally initiated curriculum, which is based on an estimation of the child’s needs and interests" (p.25). In relation to visual art, the child-centred orientation may present with thematic type activities like the rote oriented approach discussed above however, the thematic planning reflects children's needs and interests at the time thus being part of an integrated programme plan. Children's developmental
needs are a significant consideration in the child-centred orientation and age and stage theories are influential. This is partly due to the fact that children’s artistic development has historically been seen as developing from within, following along a pre-determined maturational pattern of development.

Lowenfeld (1947), a prominent researcher and academic in the visual arts, cites the role of the teacher in visual art to be that of guide, stating “any application of an external standard, whether of technique or form, immediately induces inhibitions and frustrates the whole aim” (p. 12). The whole aim is creative and mental growth (the title of Lowenfeld’s (1947) publication) meaning that children’s uninhibited expression and exploration is the desired aim of visual arts education. Lowenfeld contended that children were by nature, born with a drive towards creative activity, and the adult guide is the teacher who provides opportunities for children to engage in such creative and expressive experiences. This ideal is further reflected in the literature in the 1970’s. For instance,

Prepare a secure environment which offers art activities suited to the developmental level and needs of the children. Advice on matters of technique have no place in the art of children. Indeed, it is likely to affect their development adversely. Given the right environment and offered the right experiences, the creative expression of children will flourish. (Ebbeck & Ebbeck, 1974, p. 339).
An implication of this child-centred orientation is that adults have no role to play in collaborative work with children in visual art because adult input will somehow stifle children’s naturally unfolding creative development. Further creative development is seen as an end product of children’s artistic expression. I believe that it is too much to presume that through children’s own self directed experimentation and exploration in visual art that they will accumulate the experiences, skills and knowledge in order to develop creative expression. In addition to this, I see the purpose of visual art in children’s lives as much more than simply a vehicle for creative development.

It is my experience that a child-centred approach to young children’s visual art education is the most prevalent and influential in the provision of visual art programmes for young children in early childhood centres in Aotearoa / New Zealand. The approach closely mirrors the idea of free play, a concept central to the ethos of the State Kindergarten movement. This notion is based on Froebel’s concept of development where “educators should follow each child’s nature in order to attain the beauty of the individual’s mature power” (Bresler, 1994, p.99). Here it can be seen that the adult’s role is not to provoke children’s development, but rather, the adult should follow children’s own intrinsic developmental pattern.

Implicit in the child-centred approach to visual art education is the idea that the teacher’s role is mainly to provide resources, set up the environment and let children get on with the business of creating, exploring and experimenting. Bresler (1994)
describes the adult's role as providing mainly technical assistance to children, such as, teaching cutting or stapling skills, and setting up an environment conducive to facilitate children's independent learning.

The child-centred orientation has filtered through teaching practice in early childhood education since the middle part of the twentieth century and it has been conveniently reinforced locally in Aotearoa / New Zealand with the emergence of the SEACOH philosophy in the 1980's. When I trained as an early childhood teacher, SEACOH was the strongly favoured approach to be used when working in early childhood education. SEACOH proposed a move away from the table-top focus of teachers where a series of apparently unrelated activities formed the basis for the early childhood programme, to a more integrated approach to early childhood curriculum provision. The movement was significant in my view, at the time. However as I stated earlier, it did not reconcile with my position in terms of promoting children's aesthetic experience and artistic development.

In terms of an approach to visual art in a centre, SEACOH meant that children's creativity was paramount and that all visual art resources were to be available for children at all times in the programme. SEACOH took the position that children were independent and able decision-makers who would use a variety of visual art media in their work to symbolise and express ideas and knowledge. I agree with the position that children can and do communicate in many ways using a variety of
media. In my view however, teachers have an active role to play in this process. In order for children to be able to make the decisions needed to communicate their knowledge through visual art, they need the tools and skills to enable them to achieve their objectives. Teachers' are, I believe, one such tool, for it is they who help children develop the skills and techniques to use the media in order that they (the children) can communicate what they know.

When I began teaching I was employed in a centre that had adopted the SEACOH approach. The integrated nature of the programme held visual art as a core component of children's daily experience. Children’s creativity was to be fostered through spontaneous and self-directed participation with the visual art resources and materials that were available. As teachers, we were simply providing children with opportunities to develop their creativity. In practical terms this meant that children working at visual art were left mainly to their own devices.

The child-centred approach is one that my colleagues and students recognise most when discussing their experiences working in visual art programmes for young children. My general description (similar to others in the literature, for example, Bresler, 1994) of the visual art programme in a centre that has teachers who practice a child-centred approach is as follows:
There is a specified art area in the centre with a number of small tables in it. There is usually a set of collage / construction shelves stocked with resources for children to access themselves, a set of art easels with paints, and maybe a round storage shelf in the centre of the area with staplers, glue, felt pens, crayons and other drawing or painting equipment on them. Often there will be other art resources spread throughout the centre, for instance, an easel outside or collage / construction resources at the carpentry table. All or most art resources are accessible to children.

There may or may not be an adult within supervision range who will be instrumental in writing children's names on creations and who will respond to children's questions about what they might want to do or use in their work. Adults may discuss the process of creation with children, for instance, asking what resources they would like to choose from the shelf, or suggesting the child uses a staple or glue to stick parts of a creation together. Limited comment (if any at all) might be made about the child's finished product, usually comments would come in the form of a value statement, e.g., "that's nice", or "good work". Largely children are left, to engage in the process of creating.

To me, the child-centred approach suggests that in the early childhood years, children's artistic development in visual art is best promoted by allowing children the
uninhibited freedom to explore and experiment, and that through this process, children’s artistic development will mature. I am certainly mindful that direct instruction and art ‘training’ in the early childhood years is not desirable. However, if the visual arts are part of the repertoire of tools that children use to communicate their knowledge, then the active participation of teachers, in helping children develop knowledge, experience and skills in visual art in the early childhood years is necessitated.

When the notion of an intrinsic path of artistic development is generally accepted, it is possible to rationalise the importance of children’s self-directed participation in visual art education. Patterns of artistic development that follow through stages of scribbling, pre-schematic forms, schematic forms, dawning realism and pseudo-realism are closely tied to chronological age and present in much historical and more recent literature on children’s artistic development (e.g., Brownlee, 1983; Cherry, 1990; Lowenfeld, 1947; Linderman & Herberhoiz, 1974). I believe that when presented with age and stage theories, it is easy for teachers to accept that all children will naturally follow the pre-determined pattern of development that the particular theory expounds. However, when being mindful of such theory, there is a danger that the child-centred principle of meeting children’s individual needs and interests may not be realised. Teachers may justify the inclusion or exclusion of curriculum experiences related to children’s interests or abilities under the guise of readiness or age-appropriateness.
Another influence on the maintenance of the child-centred approach in my view, is the psychoanalytic perspective of art discussed by Piscitelli (1989) whereby the making of art becomes a form of expression and emotional well-being. The psychoanalytic perspective suggests that much of human behaviour originates in the unconscious or subconscious mind. Hence, expression in the visual arts is a result of unconscious assertion in the visual form. Contrary to the developmental view, the psychoanalytic perspective holds that children’s artistic expression matures as their conscious thought exerts control over their unconscious thought. The resulting realism in children’s artwork is a product of this psychological development. Again, I think the claims of psychoanalytic theory have resulted in teaching approaches that reflect the non-interventionist child-centred orientation. Similar to the developmental perspective, the psychoanalytic ideas reinforce the concept that internal processes determine and shape children’s artistic ability.

As with the rote orientation, the child-centred orientation towards visual art education has merits. Unquestionably child-centredness has given credence to the notion that children's early artistic development is central to their overall developmental growth. Much emphasis has been placed on visual art in early childhood education. Visitors to any early childhood centre cannot help but notice the variety of visual art media and work spaces organised for children in these environments. The child-centred ideas certainly have a place in the evolution of our understanding of children’s art and how best to promote artistic development. My
main issue with the child-centred orientation is however, that it reinforces the common and convenient belief that artistic development takes care of itself.

It is my contention that wholehearted implementation of either the rote or child-centred orientations of visual art education is neither justifiable nor desirable for promoting the provision of quality visual art programmes for young children. The child-centred orientation permits practitioners to step back from engaging in meaningful dialogue with children about art because children’s artistic development is believed to be tied to an intrinsic and pre-determined pattern of creative and artistic development. Non-interventionist philosophies allow practitioners the grace to be solely the provider of resources and supervisors of children’s artistic endeavours. Similarly, the presence of significant adult direction and pre-formed steps to the completion of table-top activities hinder children’s artistic development and expression by not provoking children to think and problem solve or use their own knowledge in new and exciting ways. It is my belief that beliefs and practices that are strongly aligned with either of these orientations may have left us with generations of children who have missed out on endless opportunities to explore their artistic experience with sensitive adults.

The Cognitive Orientation

Bresler’s (1994) third construct in visual art is named the cognitive orientation. It is characterised by the emphasis on artistic activity and creation within a “cultural
context drawing on its values and accumulated body of disciplined knowledge” (p.101). This cognitive approach is significantly different from the rote and child-centred orientations described earlier. Here we see art as a complex activity involving symbol systems and the representation of thought in a variety of modes. The cognitive orientation places emphasis on visual art as a form of communication or language and highlights the visual art as an important curriculum component in an individual’s cognitive experience and artistic development.

The cognitive orientation is related by Gardiner (1980, 1982) to the notions that children’s ability in the visual arts reflects their knowledge of media and the properties and purposes of media and further, that children know that their ultimate product will have effects upon themselves and on others. Bresler (1994) talks of higher-order thinking whereby children are presented with aesthetic experiences to provide ‘lenses and guidelines with which to conceptualise and construct’ (p.97).

The skills used by children in the visual art curriculum experiences include observation, perception, and problem solving and are scaffolded by teachers through the disciplines of art history, art production, aesthetics and criticism. Clearly the cognitive orientation is closely related to the notion of communication of knowledge and ideas within a cultural context and picks up on the idea of education through the arts that I mentioned previously. It is certainly related to cognition in the sense that in order to communicate an idea or concept through visual art media, children are required to visualise a symbol, decide how to create it and then recreate it in their
representations. This view involves the visual arts in more than creative expression or talent, and is reminiscent of the view in the Reggio Emilia preschools of visual art being a reflection of children's thinking.

The 'Reggio Approach' according to Edwards, Gandini and Forman (1993) "fosters children's intellectual development through a systematic focus on symbolic representation" (p.3). This symbolic representation includes the symbols that children use to recreate their experiences and communicate their knowledge through the visual arts. This principle is clearly aligned with the cognitive orientation towards visual art.

In a similar vein to the child-centred orientation, creativity is seen as an integral aspect of children's experience in Reggio Emilia. The difference in the Reggio Emilia perspective comes however, with the notion that creativity isn't the end product of children's artistic expression. Rather it is only part of the process that enables children to communicate their ideas and knowledge. There is certainly reason to reflect on the difference between my experience of children's ability to represent their knowledge through the visual arts and the examples of children's representations seen in publications like *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Gandini, Edwards & Forman, 1993). Unquestionably, there is a key difference in how as a practitioner, I viewed the purpose of children's participation in the visual arts and how teachers explain the purpose of the visual arts in the Reggio Emilia
centres. Foremost, I believed, the visual arts were concerned with children’s creative expression and development. In Reggio Emilia, child art is viewed as a language, another form of cognitive expression and a form of documentation that allows teachers and families opportunities to share in children’s knowledge and understandings.

In the United States a recent doctrine, Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) is emerging from the Getty Education Institute for the Arts. I believe DBAE is teaching approach that reflects the cognitive orientation of visual art education. According to the Institute, DBAE is not a curriculum in itself, rather it is a way of teaching and, as explained by the Foundation, takes advantage of art’s “special power to educate” (ArtsEdNet, 1998).

Schiller explains (1995), that DBAE is concerned with approaching art through the related disciplines of art history, criticism and aesthetics. Schiller’s (1995) paper describes her own teaching success with young children in her classroom where she undertook to implement an art-based summer programme in a National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited preschool. Schiller’s paper is assuredly reflective of the notion of education through the arts, and while the context of Schiller’s description is not entirely applicable to the Aotearoa / New Zealand early childhood centre setting, it provides an insight into the application of the principles of DBAE with young children.
Schiller set up her classroom with the typical (according to Schiller, United States) early childhood art centre. The description of the environment is very similar to that described earlier in the child-centred vignette. Further to this Schiller paid particular attention to the broader centre environment, for instance, placing fine art prints on the walls around the classroom, “Georgia O’Keefe near the science table display of flowers … barn house scenes near the housekeeping corner” (p.35). Emphasis was placed on art curriculum topics in other areas of the programme, for example, “a guest art educator brought objects from many cultures for the children to look at, touch and talk about” (p.35). Schiller, picking up on an already established interest of children, also talked about how the popular Ninja Turtle characters from television had borrowed their names from artists of the past. Initially, Schiller says, the children ignored her attempts to engage in meaningful dialogue regarding the emphasis on visual art present in the centre programme. However, later discussions with children while painting, for example, revealed an interest in, and understanding of some of the concepts they had been studying through the weeks. “Here are the roses and here are the dead ones … here are the cracks, and here is the old boy…” (p.37). The statement about cracks in the child’s painting is attributed to an earlier discussion of Michelangelo paintings.

The basic premise of DBAE is that it is a comprehensive approach to art education that takes advantage of art’s special power to educate. The Getty Education Institute for the Arts advocates DBAE as an effective means by which to help students
experience the visual arts in a variety of ways. Schiller (1995) discusses the implementation of DBAE in elementary schools in the US, suggesting that “art activities should go beyond creative expression to facilitating a knowledge base about art through the related disciplines of art history, art criticism, and aesthetics” (p.33). The Getty Institute model also promotes as central to DBAE the ability of children to experience many opportunities to create art. DBAE is concerned with consideration for the teaching of art, and of how children’s experience in the visual arts can provide a foundation for aesthetically based educational experience. DBAE, I believe, is attempting to ground visual arts in the academic domain of education with an aim of supporting the development of children’s artistry and using children’s artistic skill as a vehicle for general development and learning.

The following vignette helps to exemplify my understanding of DBAE in action. It is based on my reading of DBAE related materials from the Getty Foundation for the Arts (ArtsEdNet, 1998) and from papers that I have read that describe and critique DBAE (e.g., Delacruz and Dunn, 1995; Schiller, 1995; Stinespring, 1992). This description has been used many times in my discussions regarding the approach with students and often provokes lively debate.

_The environment is set out in much the same way as described in the child-centred vignette, however three distinctly different features are observed._
Firstly, space is a feature of the environment. Primarily there are art easels, collage / construction resources, a variety of drawing media and sensory media (for example, clay, play dough). There is also table top and floor space for children to move about and use as appropriate in their work.

The second feature is the presence of quality visual art media and resources in the environment, for example, fine art prints on the wall, a variety of papers, brushes for painting, pencils and pastels. The combination of quality media and space is central to the approach as art production is one of the main strands of DBAE.

The third feature of the approach is the closeness of an adult assisting children to produce art or talking to children about their art work. This may include discussions about a child’s own work or work of others, for example, a teacher might discuss a particular piece of art with a group of children asking them questions about what they liked or didn’t like about the picture. Teachers may directly instruct children on specific techniques regarding the media with which they are working for example, modeling the use of clay. A further possible observation might include adults and children engaging in the process of making art together.
The vignette is certainly different from the rote and child-centred orientations described earlier. By talking about what children did or did not like about a picture children are engaging in Bresler’s ‘higher-order thinking skills’. By watching the teacher model the use of clay children would be presented with the opportunity to develop and use the techniques in their own clay-work. The DBAE approach, in a sense, forces teachers to be cognizant of their approach to visual art education in much the same way as I was as a practitioner in music education curriculum.

An environment and structure as described above allow the application of DBAE principles to be seen in the teaching act. Children are taught through balanced content described by ArtsEdNet (1998), from the four main visual art disciplines of:

- art production (the making of art),
- art history (recognising the contribution that artists and art have made to culture and society),
- art criticism (the ability to make judgements and offer opinions about art);
- and aesthetics (the recognition of the unique nature and qualities and value of art and how people make judgements about it).

It is proposed that through DBAE or similar aesthetic education approaches, children’s general development and learning can be promoted (e.g., Jalongo & Stamp, 1997). This is the crux of the cognitive construct as described by Bresler (1994) and forms the third orientation that I have used in this investigation into teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding visual art education in early childhood.
centres. The DBAE approach is I believe, one of reform and is attempting to move visual art and our perceptions of children's artistic development from the maturational and experiential views of child-centredness towards the discipline based study of art in its own right. Further, within the cognitive orientation of visual art, DBAE provides a framework from whence children can communicate their ideas and express their knowledge and understandings.

In this investigation the three orientations I describe form the framework against which I ask the principal research question in the study, “What beliefs do practitioners possess in regard to visual art education?”

In addition, the key theoretical background that I have yet to apply to the current discussion is that of Te Whaariki. In the remainder of this chapter I intend to describe my interpretation of the relationship between this curriculum document and desired educational outcomes in relation to visual art.

**Te Whaariki: Early Childhood Curriculum**

The ecological perspective of the early childhood curriculum in Aotearoa / New Zealand is central to its application and interpretation. “A child’s learning environment extends far beyond the immediate setting of the home or early childhood programmes outside the home” (MOE, p.19). The curriculum title, Te
\textit{Te Whaariki} conveys the metaphor that the early childhood curriculum is a mat upon which children’s educational experiences are based. Providing weft threads of the early childhood curriculum are four broad principles. Noticeably, one of the principles is that of relationships, the basic premise being that “children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things” (MOE, p. 14). Two other principles, that the early childhood curriculum empowers children to learn, and the expectation that the wider world of family and community is central to children’s development, are also explicit in the document. The final principle underpinning the document presents the expectation that the curriculum reflects the “holistic way children learn and grow” (MOE, p. 14).

It has been argued by Cullen (1996) that while \textit{Te Whaariki} “reflects recent perspectives on the early childhood curriculum which emphasise the importance of social and cultural contexts, its structure is essentially developmental” (MOE, p. 114). The document is organised according to the age-related concepts of infants, toddlers and young children and is surrounded by reflective questions and examples of experiences for the different age-related groupings that would result in curriculum goal attainment. I have remarked earlier in the chapter that I find the proposal of age and stage related theories problematic. There is, I believe, always the possibility that teachers can take broad age-related stages and apply them across the board to children, thereby removing any concerted effort to plan for individual children’s
developmental patterns. Within Te Whariki, however, reference to much more than developmental philosophy can be inferred.

Te Whariki places stress on the concept of “socially and culturally mediated learning” (MOE, p.9). This assumption is closely linked to the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) who held that the symbolic tool of language provided the critical link that shaped mental functioning. Vygotsky proposed that “the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development...occurs when speech and practical activity converge” (1978, p.24). Speech, is seen as a cultural tool that is used by children to help master their surroundings, “speech not only accompanies practical activity but also plays a specific role in carrying it out” (p.25). Given the messages in Te Whariki regarding socially and culturally mediated learning, and the ideas of Vygotsky it can be seen that central to children’s educational experience are opportunities for language based interactive relationships.

Vygotsky (1978) viewed education as leading development, that is, through collaboration and interaction with others the child actively constructs new cognitive abilities. Considering the principle in Te Whariki of responsive and reciprocal relationships forming at least part of an optimum learning environment for young children, the practices and methods in visual art education are required to be reciprocal and responsive. If we accept the view that language is instrumental in
facilitating learning, then active language based interactions in visual art are required.

If the principle of empowerment is to be upheld, then children require the transmission of skills and knowledge to support their participation in the visual arts. Once more, adults are responsible for establishing an environment wherein children can make informed choices about the direction of their work. Teachers are required to scaffold children's learning through joint problem solving and responsive relationships within Vygotsky’s *zone of proximal development*. That is, the distance between the child’s actual developmental level and the level of potential development achievable through “determined problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (1978, p.86).

Clearly the child-centred and to a lesser degree, rote orientations described earlier do not feature this type of adult guidance or collaboration as a central aspect of children’s learning in visual art. The DBAE principles and the Reggio Emilia approach, however, certainly reflect this notion. Therefore, messages from *Te Whāariki* contain clear expectations for teachers to join with children in curricular experiences that promote collaborative interaction designed to foster children’s individual patterns of development.
Curriculum goals in Te Whaariki aspire to children developing an “understanding that symbols can be read by others and that thoughts, experiences, and ideas can be represented through words, pictures, print…” (MOE, p.78). I believe it is too much to propose that through spontaneous self-expression and exploration with visual art media children will reach such understandings. Rather, the supposition that teachers are required to provoke children towards more complex thinking and increasing competency through guided participation in the arts would serve as a basis for realising such curricular goals. In order to facilitate children’s artistic development in the visual arts, a clear focus on children’s current and potential abilities, a sound base knowledge of the elements of the discipline and the opportunity for children to represent their knowledge through the media is required.

The eclectic nature of the philosophical basis for Te Whaariki is, I think, both useful and problematic for teachers. At its most useful, it introduces some key theoretical concepts about contemporary thought related to children’s learning and development to practitioners and student teachers. Ideally, close reading and reflection about concepts, such as, Vygotsky’s principle of socially and culturally mediated learning has the capability to influence teachers’ practice so that it reflects the context for teaching described in the Vygotskian framework. Further, when the principles, strands and goals of Te Whaariki are read in light of contemporary curricular theory, the potential for teachers to plan for and implement challenging and appropriate
curriculum experiences is greatly enhanced. This is the potential change that I argue for in terms of an approach to visual art education.

In contrast, a close reading of Te Whāriki with a clear focus on the familiar developmental philosophy described by Cullen (1996), may result in the situation where teachers believe they are ‘doing it all already’ and the potential for reform is much lessened. Interestingly, when Te Whāriki was launched in its draft form in 1993, I was a beginning teacher. This was precisely the response I recall my colleagues having to the document when it arrived in the centres where I was employed. I propose, however, that Te Whāriki provides clear guidelines for teachers to employ practices that require them to actively engage children’s interest and provoke the development of skills and knowledge in a variety of curriculum areas.

It is from this position that I have set out to investigate the provision of visual art in early childhood education. The examination of teachers’ beliefs and practices within an interpretive framework provides the basis for this study that aims to answer the following questions.

1) What beliefs do early childhood educators possess in regard to visual art education?
2) What teaching approaches do early childhood educators use within visual art programmes?

3) What type of visual art experiences and resources are provided in early childhood centres?

4) Are discipline based approaches to artistry and visual art education practised in early childhood programmes?
Chapter Two Method

Data for the project were gathered in two distinct stages. Firstly, teaching staff from four early childhood centres were invited to participate by allowing me to video tape visual art experiences being provided to children. These teachers also participated by completing questionnaires regarding their beliefs and teaching approaches to visual art. The same questionnaire was used in the second stage of the study when a wider sample of early childhood teachers was invited to complete it. Throughout the remainder of the report, those centres where video and questionnaires were completed are referred to as the observation centres. The centres where teachers were asked to complete the questionnaires only are referred to as the questionnaire centres.

Participants

All regular teaching staff in the observation centres were invited to participate in the project. However, only those staff were video taped who were either responsible for the art experiences provided on the day, or were rostered onto indoor duties at the centre during the time of the video recording.

Settings

The government agency, Early Childhood Development (ECD), was asked for information about the number and location of early childhood centres in Christchurch City. The ECD provided a set of brochures which categorised early childhood
centres in Christchurch by geographical location and type of service, that is, Playcentres, Childcare Centres, Kindergartens and Home Based Services. Due to the focus of the project being on teaching methods and approaches in centre based early childhood services, it was decided not to approach Home Based Services for participation.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education (1996) show that 45.6% of early childhood centres in Aotearoa / New Zealand are childcare centres, 24.6% are Kindergartens and 23.5% are Playcentres.

The observation centres.

To reflect the national distribution patterns, four centres (two Childcare centres, one Kindergarten and one Playcentre) in the central east area of the city were invited to participate in the observation phase of the project.

Childcare centre A was administered by a private owner and had a staff of seven teachers, working to the equivalent of five full time staff. During the observation period (two mornings and one afternoon visit) relieving staff were in attendance. The centre owner informed relieving staff that the observations were being conducted. The centre was licensed for 33 children and normally had an attendance of 33 children in the morning and 25 children in the afternoon.
Childcare Centre B was a community based childcare centre administered by a parent committee. Six teachers working to an equivalent full time teaching team of four teachers staffed the centre that was licensed for sessional attendance of 28 children. Normally 25 children in the morning and 20 children in the afternoon attended. Observations in this centre occurred over two afternoon and one morning visit. Both of the childcare centres provided childcare for families and children aged between birth and school age (6 years).

The Kindergarten was administered by the Canterbury Westland Free Kindergarten Association. Three teachers, of whom two worked full time and one part time (morning sessions), staffed the centre which was licensed for sessional attendance of 45 children in the morning and 30 children in the afternoon. Attendance patterns reflected licensed numbers. All observations in this centre took place during afternoon sessions. The kindergarten was diversified meaning that children from 3-5 years attended both sessions. During the week of data gathering, all three staff who worked at the Kindergarten were observed working with children as the staff member who worked part time was relieving for an absent teacher during one of the visits.

The Canterbury Playcentre Association and a parent committee administered the Playcentre. Two Playcentre Supervisors and parent helpers staffed the centre which operated for morning sessions Monday to Friday. One Supervisor and a number of
parent helpers attended each session. The centre was licensed for sessional attendance of 26 children aged between birth and school age (six years). Attendance patterns usually reflected licensed numbers. However, on the observation days (three morning sessions) an average of 16 children aged between 4 months and 4.11 years attended the centre.

The questionnaire centres.

Using the information provided by the ECD, a wider sample of centres (twelve in total) was selected and invited by letter to complete the questionnaire. Permission to approach centres from the Kindergarten and Playcentre Associations had already been sought and granted. The absence of such management structure meant that childcare centres were approached directly.

There were three other Playcentres in close proximity to the observation Playcentre. Due to the small number of Playcentres it was decided to invite all Playcentres in the area to participate. Analysis of the ECD information revealed that the distribution of early childhood services by type in Christchurch City was similar to national patterns. Following this trend, teachers from three other kindergartens in the area and six other childcare centres were invited to participate. Teachers from five of the twelve centres agreed to participate thus a total of nine centres formed the final sample.
Procedures

After management consent was received from the appropriate administrative bodies, the staff of the centres were contacted. In the centres, not all the staff were trained teachers. In the report, I use the terms adults and teachers interchangeably. Written informed consent for participation from all teachers and adults was obtained. All teachers were informed that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time. They indicated whether they wanted the videotapes returned to them at a later date.

In the two childcare centres three students working towards the Diploma of Teaching (E.C.E) were present on teaching practice placement. Verbal consent for participation (to be video taped) was sought and received from them.

Information about the project was conveyed to children’s families by the centre management and staff. Notices informing the families of my presence were evident in all centres on all of the observation days.

Prior to visiting the observation centres I spent time talking by phone with management staff to clarify any points of concern the centre staff had about participation in the project and to confirm dates of observation visits. These phone calls were followed up with written confirmation of details. An introductory letter and a set of questionnaires was posted to the larger sample of centres inviting participation. Later, follow up letters requesting the return of completed questionnaires were sent as needed.
Data Collection

Questionnaire, narrative and reflective observation are commonly used instruments for data collection in the examination of teachers' beliefs, (Barry & Townsend, 1995, Clandinin & Connely, 1987, Court, 1991, Quinn & Wilson, 1997,). In order to probe the character and meaning of teaching practice a number of methods may be combined.

Referring to study in educational settings, Carr and Kemmis (1986) remark that researchers will be "confronted by a reality which is already permeated by the interpretations, beliefs and intentions of educational practitioners" (p. 111). This means that in order to understand the ideas behind the teaching of visual art, both teachers' beliefs and practices need consideration. In this study, I have employed a twofold approach that interprets both belief and practice. These will I believe, characterise and help to explain the provision of the visual art education curriculum in early childhood centres.

Some research into teachers' beliefs employs a case study approach where teachers' narrative accounts are interpreted and analysed before being used as a platform for discussion between researcher and teacher (see for example, Bell, 1991). I decided in the present study to not ask practitioners to engage in discussion about their teaching practices in visual art. I had been unsuccessful as a practitioner myself to satisfactorily articulate my own beliefs regarding the provision of visual art and the
way I worked in the curriculum area. I considered it unreasonable for me as a researcher to expect that practitioners with whom I had no previous association would be able or even willing to enter into such discussions with me. The inability of students to gain a clear understanding of the philosophies driving the practices they saw was another reason for not entering into such discourse. Livingstone, McClain & Despain (1995) state that teachers are often “not cognizant of their philosophical beliefs and find the discovery and articulation process to be frustrating” (p.1). In preparation for the current study then, I thought it best to use my own experience and knowledge of literature to frame the theoretical constructs that support my investigation into the visual art curriculum. The methods of data gathering were chosen so that a profile of current teacher philosophy and practice in visual art education could be developed. Questionnaires allowed a uniform set of questions to be asked of teachers across a range of centres and enabled a larger sample of participants to be included in the project.

Video tape recording was chosen as it allowed samples of teaching behaviour and language to be recorded and later interpreted in terms of the orientations employed in the study.

Checklists of activities, resources and the physical set up of visual art curriculum areas were completed in the observation centres. The checklists were designed to serve as a double check on the video tape recordings. They also provided space for
me to note any contextual information that may have been relevant to data gathered on the day.

Data gathering was completed between June and October 1997. The observations were carried out over a four-week period in September. Each centre was visited three times and at least 45 minutes of video were recorded on each visit. Video data were gathered within one week at each centre. Questionnaires were left with centre staff at the time of the first observation visit and collected at a later date.

Checklists of the visual art resources available to children in the observation centres were completed either before or after the video tape recording. The combination of checklist and videotape data was designed to give as accurate a record as possible of the visual art resources available for children in the observation centres. I carried out all observations and subsequent coding of data. A reliability check of event frequency was also completed.

**Questionnaires**

A questionnaire was developed for completion by individual teachers and had four sections: 1) centre information, 2) visual art resources available for children, 3) teaching methods, and 4) individual teachers' beliefs about visual art education (see APPENDIX A).
Section One of the questionnaire gathered information about the centre including the type of centre, number of staff, license numbers and age range of children. Section Two of the questionnaire was a checklist that gathered information about the type of visual art resources available in centres. In section Three of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to rank on a five-point scale how often a particular event happened in the centre. The nine questions in this section reflected teaching behaviours that aligned with the teaching orientations described earlier (see Table 1.)

Section Four of the questionnaire was structured in a similar way to the prior section. However, teachers were asked in this section to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a particular statement. There were nine questions in Section Four again reflecting the teaching orientations used in the study. Table 1. shows the question numbers and the teaching orientations that these aligned with.

Table 1.

Questionnaire questions and their associated teaching orientation.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching orientation</th>
<th>Question Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rote</td>
<td>Q.3i  Q.4i</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q.3iv  Q.4viii</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q.3viii Q.4ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centred</td>
<td>Q.3ii  Q.4iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q.3vi  Q.4v</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q.3ix  Q.4vi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Q.3iil Q.4vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q.3v   Q.4ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q.3il  Q.4iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The questionnaire was trialed and amended three times prior to data collection. Trials were conducted with colleagues from the teacher education programme where I work and with members of the College's Diploma of Teaching (E.C.E) course. All individuals who trialed the questionnaire had a working knowledge of early childhood education and have been involved in the practice of teaching in early childhood settings.

A total of 89 questionnaires were distributed to participants in the project. Forty-one were completed and returned. This represents a 46% return rate. Of these, 21 were received from the observation centres and 20 were returned out of the 68 questionnaires sent out to the larger sample.

**Video tape recordings.**

Each visit to the four observation centres lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours. On the first visit to each of the centres, I consulted with staff about the most suitable area for the video equipment to be set up. Care was taken to ensure that I would be as unobtrusive as possible and would cause minimum disturbance to traffic flow at the centre. Video equipment was positioned in order to maximise the amount of the visual art programme area (as indicated by teachers) visible at any one time. The layout of all four environments, however, meant that video equipment was repositioned a number of times during the video taping as it was not possible in any of the centres to record activities in the whole visual art area at one time with a single
camera. In addition I wanted to sample a variety of visual art experiences. Therefore I changed the focus of the video recording on each visit a number of times.

It was regular practice in all observation centres to have specialist art activities available in addition to the basic art equipment and resources. For much of the video taping, these specialist art activity tables became the focus of the recordings in response to the suggestions of centre staff. This area was where most of the interactions in the visual art programme between children and adults occurred.

After each centre visit, the original videotape was copied onto a VHS videotape. This tape was used to work from when interpreting events. As the sound quality of the recordings was very poor, a complete transcription of language was not undertaken. Only in some instances did sound quality allow for transcription of adult:child language interactions. These have been used to exemplify video episodes in the following chapter.

‘Episodes’ of adult:child interactions were identified from the video tape. An episode was defined as occurring when one or more of the following conditions were met:

- a teacher, verbally or non-verbally, invited a child to participate in a visual art activity;
• a teacher set up the activity by providing resources or equipment and then positioned herself as if she were going to engage in the activity;

• a child began working with visual art resources or equipment in the designated area;

• the video began recording at an already established activity.

An episode (continuous for at least five minutes) concluded when one or more of the following criteria were met:

• The teacher formally ended the activity by stating that it was finished or by putting equipment and resources away;

• Neither teacher nor child was working at the activity; or

• The video tape recording of the activity was stopped either by the video being turned off, or the focus of the video changed to another activity in the area.

The nature of the teacher participation in the activities was observed by events that were based upon teacher behaviour categories used by Meade (1985) and Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992). The behaviour categories were defined as follows:

• verbally interact: where adults talked with children during the episode;

• initiate: where the adult attempted to engage children in the experience, for instance, by verbally asking the child to participate;

• assist: where the adult gave assistance to a child in order for the child to reach an outcome, for example, holding paper for a child to cut it;
- **participate**: where the adult participated in the activity alongside children, for example, modeling with clay or painting her own picture;

- **maintain**: where the adult engaged in behaviours associated with maintaining the ongoing activity, for example, re-presenting resources, helping children put on aprons or writing names on children’s work;

- **supervise**: where an adult mainly watched or overlooked children’s participation;

- **unengaged**: when adults attention was not focused on the activity yet they were physically present at the activity, for example, talking to other adults, observing other children not directly involved in the experience;

- **off-camera**: where the adult was out of the video camera shot.

**Reliability check of coding.**

A reliability check of categories was completed. I watched four video episodes (one from each centre) and completed an event record of the video. An independent observer later watched the same four episodes and also completed an event record. The frequency of events was then compared showing a level of agreement between the observers of 95.5%.

**Checklist observations.**

On each visit to the observation centres I completed a checklist regarding the visual art education resources available to children at the centre. I used five broad categories of resources to organise this information: drawing, painting, printing, manipulative media and construction resources. In addition, I noted visual art
displayed in the centre, for example, fine art prints, weaving or children’s artwork. I recorded contextual information about the visit, for instance, the number of children and adults present or other information the staff may have given verbally, such as, “There aren’t as many children here today as usual”. The checklist contained space for me to make additional notes about the visit, for example, comments on potentially relevant variables such as weather, that may have influenced the ways in which adults and children interacted. Finally, I drew a rough sketch of the centre layout on this form.

Data Analysis

Methods for analysing data in the study were chosen so that a range of information about teachers’ beliefs and practices could be interpreted. Event recordings were completed from the video in order to ascertain the frequency of teacher observed behaviours. In addition to this, in order to investigate if there was consistency between the frequency of teacher behaviours and the amount of time teachers’ demonstrated these, a time sampling of four episodes was completed.

The episodes used in the time sample analysis were chosen because they reflected the longest episode of different experiences in each of the centres. The sound quality of the recordings was also considered when I chose these episodes because I wanted where possible to transcribe adult: child language interactions. This provided an
opportunity to present a descriptive account of teachers working at the visual art curriculum area.

**Questionnaires**

Once returned, questionnaire data from Sections Three and Four, were collated and analysed before being presented in Figures containing the charted data of teachers’ responses. Teachers’ answers regarding the types of visual art experiences provided in centres (from Section Two) were collated and categorised. This information was organised and presented in Table form and provided data about the types of resources available to children.

The data from the questionnaires often revealed obvious polarisation between teachers in their answers to the ‘beliefs’ and ‘practices’ questions (Sections Three and Four). In response to this, and for presentation purposes, the questionnaire data are presented in figures on a three-point scale showing either teachers’ support or lack of support for the teaching orientations.

The questionnaire data were organised according to the three teaching orientations described earlier so that a comparison of teachers’ responses across the rote, child-centred and cognitive orientations could be seen.
Video tape recordings.

(i) The number and length of adult:child interaction episodes were calculated, and the activity the children were engaged in was noted. Twenty-nine episodes were identified.

(ii) An analysis of teachers' participation in the episodes (by event) was completed from a total of 296 minutes and 11 seconds of video.

(iii) A time sample of teachers’ participation in four selected episodes was completed using the already defined behaviour categories.

(iv) A transcript of adult:child language interactions from the four episodes was undertaken.

This information was used to discuss the teachers' approaches in light of the teaching orientations presented in Chapter One.

Checklist Observations

The information on the checklists that I completed was collated using the five main categories of resources that I had already identified. I was able to use this information to show similarities and differences between centres in relation to the types of visual art resources and media that were presented to children.
Chapter Three Findings and Discussion

In this chapter of the report, I intend to address each of the research questions in the study. I have used the questions to structure the chapter and draw on relevant data to discuss the findings from the study as appropriate.

What beliefs do early childhood educators possess in regard to visual art education?

I used questionnaire data to answer this research question. In Section Four of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements that I had aligned with each of the teaching orientations. My intention was to establish if the ideas in any one of these orientations were reflected in the teachers' responses.

Teachers were essentially presented with three questions that asked,

1) what they thought a principal purpose of visual art education was;

2) what they thought teachers should emphasise when working in the visual art area of the programme; and

3) what they thought a central aspect of visual art education in early childhood centres should be.

Data from this section of the questionnaire is presented according to the rote, child-centred and cognitive orientations in the following pages.
Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

Q.4i. One of the principal purposes of an art programme should be to provide art activities to support broad programme themes or foci.

Q.4ii. When children work at art activities, adults should mainly encourage children to ensure they complete the art activity correctly.

Q.4ix. A central aspect of the art programme is that adults should place emphasis on completion of specific art activities related to programme themes or foci.

Figure 2. presents teachers’ responses to beliefs based questions associated with the rote orientation. There is a strong trend in this data showing disagreement with rote oriented ideas in visual art. A large number of teachers (n=30) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the principle that art programmes should be to provide activities that would support broad programme themes or foci. Further, the statement about adults ensuring that children complete art activities correctly met with strong disagreement or disagreement (n=38). When asked if adults should encourage children to complete art activities related to programme themes or foci, 35 teachers who responded to this question indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. There is a notable pattern to teachers’ responses in these questions suggesting that rote oriented beliefs are not a feature of the teachers in this sample.
Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

Figure 3. presents data that shows the extent to which teachers agreed with statements aligned with the child-centred orientation. In this Figure the polarisation of results is directly opposing that in the preceding Figure. Most teachers (n=39) when responding to the child-centred orientation questions agreed or strongly agreed that art programmes should allow children opportunities for creative expression with minimal adult direction. Further, teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the nature of adult involvement in art should be to give positive attention and encouragement in order that children would engage in the creative process (n=39). Teachers also strongly agreed or agreed (n=41) that adults should emphasise activities in art that were designed to promote creative expression. It appears from this information that teachers’ beliefs are strongly aligned with the child-centred orientation described in the study.

Q.4iii. One of the principal purposes of an art programme should be to allow children opportunities for creative expression with minimal adult direction.

Q.4iv. When children work at art activities, adults should mainly give positive attention and encouragement to promote creativity and enjoyment of the process of creation.

Q.4vi. A central aspect of an art programme is that adults should place emphasis on participation in activities which allow children to engage in the process of creative expression.
Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

Q.4vii. One of the principal purposes of an art programme should be for children to develop skills in artistry and understandings of art.

Q.4ii. When children work at art activities, adults should mainly teach children about the artistic elements of their work.

Q.4iv. A central aspect of an art programme is that adults should place emphasis on participation in experiences related to art history, criticism and aesthetics.

Figure 4. presents data from teachers’ responses to questions about visual art programmes that are aligned with the cognitive orientation. When teachers were asked if a principal purpose of art programmes was to allow children to develop skills in artistry and understandings of art, 18 teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that this was so. Thirteen teachers disagreed with this statement, one did not respond and nine teachers responded that they didn’t know if they agreed or disagreed with this statement. Many teachers (n=33) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they should mainly teach children about the artistic elements of their work. When asked if emphasis on participation in experiences related to art history, criticism and aesthetics should be a central aspect of an art programme 30 of the forty-one teachers in the sample disagreed.
There was strong agreement in this data that allowing children opportunities for creative expression with minimal adult direction was a principal purpose of visual art curriculum. This suggests that the child-centred idea of art being important in terms of children's creativity is a strong emphasis in early childhood visual art programmes in these centres.

Many teachers disagreed with the notion that art activities designed to support broad programme themes or foci should be a principal purpose of visual art programmes. This is an interesting finding in light of the child-centred idea of thematic planning related to children's needs and interests. This is where the programme of activities in an early childhood centre might centre upon one or two topics that would reflect the children's current needs and interests. Perhaps the language I used in the preceding Section of the questionnaire suggested to teachers that the type of broad programme themes or foci I was referring to were those more aligned with the table top ideas in the rote orientation. In consideration of this, the disagreement from this sample of teachers with this idea is not surprising.

Almost half of the teachers agreed visual art programmes were important for children's developing artistic skill and knowledge of art curriculum. In light of the strong child-centred beliefs that have already shown in this data, I believe that teachers would see part of their role as teaching artistic skills and knowledge at children's developmental level. This finding is interesting, as I believe it suggests a more pointed focus for visual art education than I held as a beginning practitioner.
The lack of clarity I faced is certainly not reflected in this sample of early childhood teachers.

In the developmental and psychoanalytic views of children's artistry and creative development teachers were strongly encouraged to follow children's own intrinsic developmental process. These ideas are reflected in the child-centred orientation whereby the adult guide essentially sets the opportunity for children to drive their own participation in the curriculum area. This self initiated experimentation and exploration in the child-centred orientation allows children to develop the skills and knowledge that then forms part of their own developmental pattern. The child-centred inclination towards creative expression is certainly reflected in this sample of teachers. This contrasts with the cognitive views of visual art where it is viewed as a means by which children represent and symbolise their knowledge. That is not to say that the development of creativity is not important in a cognitively oriented programme, rather it is viewed as part of children's artistic endeavour rather than an end product of it.

In terms of children's artistry, where a teacher centred in the cognitive orientation would provoke children's learning or even teach specific skills and techniques, the teachers in this sample rejected this type of approach as being central in visual art programmes. This perhaps reflects the child-centred view that children's artistic skill develops as their experience and exploration in the visual arts widens. Emphasis on the artistic elements is not a feature of the child-centred orientation in my experience and this is reflected in the teachers' responses.
What teaching approaches do early childhood educators use within visual art programmes?

In Section Three of the questionnaire, teachers were asked how often a particular type of teaching behaviour happened in their centre. As with the 'beliefs' section of the questionnaire, I intended to assess whether teachers' practices in centres were aligned with any of the three orientations. The findings are presented below.
Teachers were asked to indicate how often in their centres children were:

Figure 5. presents teachers’ responses to questions about their teaching approaches in visual art that were aligned with the rote orientation.

Almost all teachers (n=38) indicated that the use of activity sheets or colouring in activities was uncommon in centres. This contrasts with teachers’ responses to the questions regarding the use of special art activities. Here, responses were more evenly distributed across the range of responses. Eighteen of the 41 teachers indicated that children were often provided with programme focus type activities and 21 of the teachers responded that this type of activity wasn’t often offered to children.

When asked if specialist art activities, the table-top type activity referred to earlier, were offered to children, almost all teachers (n=39) reported that this occurred often.
Teachers were asked to indicate how often in their centres children were:

![Bar chart showing responses to Q.3li.]

Q.3li. ... encouraged to self select art resources and independently use these in creative and expressive ways.

Q.3vi. ... given opportunities to use art resources with no emphasis on producing a product at the end of the experience.

Q.3ix. ... are encouraged to use art resources to make things to help express ideas.

Figure 6. Teachers' Practices: Child-centred Orientation.

Figure 6 shows teachers' responses to child-centred oriented questions regarding teaching methods in visual art programmes.

It can be seen from this data that there was a strong emphasis towards the 'always' or 'often' categories when teachers were asked how often children were encouraged to self-select resources and use these independently (n=38). Similarly, many teachers (n=39) reported that children were often given opportunities to use art resources with no emphasis on producing a product at the end of the experience. When teachers were asked if children were encouraged to use art resources to help them express ideas again, almost all teachers responded that this was so. There was strong emphasis towards the 'always' or 'often' categories in all responses towards these questions indicating that teachers' practices in centres are strongly aligned with the ideals of the child-centred orientation.
Teachers were asked to indicate how often in their centres children were:

Q.3iii. ... encouraged to critically evaluate pieces of art work.

Q.3v. ... encouraged to look at or discuss famous art works, e.g., pictures in art books or paintings in the museum.

Q.3vii. ... encouraged to share their opinions of art works.

In Figure 7, teachers’ responses to cognitively oriented questions are presented. The majority of teachers (n=27) responded that children were not often encouraged to critically evaluate pieces of artwork. Six teachers either chose not to answer this question or said they did not know if children were encouraged to do this. Further to this, children were not often encouraged to look at or discuss famous art works. Almost all teachers (n=39) reported this. Seventeen of the 41 teachers indicated that children were ‘often’ or ‘always’ encouraged to offer their opinions of art works, presumably their own, whereas 14 teachers responded that this was not a practice that often occurred in their centres. Again, in this question, a number of teachers (n=7) reported that they did not know if this happened. Presumably, if teachers said they “did not know” in response to this question, then they at least were not encouraging children to offer such criticism.
The findings from this section of the questionnaire as presented in Figures 5 to 7 reveal a definite inclination on the part of teachers towards the child centred orientation (Fig 6.). However, most teachers’ responses (Figure 5.) indicated that children were often given special art activities to use. The type of activities suggested in the questionnaire that were to constitute ‘special art activities’ were table-top activities like marble painting or straw or bubble painting. Further, almost half of the teachers reported that children were given special art activities that related to broader programme themes or foci in centres. In reflecting the teaching orientation in Chapter One where rote experiences were described as being carefully constructed, instructed and executed by adults, the data that reports children being provided many table-top activities (assuredly constructed and often instructed), suggests that ‘rote’ teaching approaches in visual art experiences are relatively common occurrences in our early childhood centres.

In all three of the questions that were aligned with the child-centred teaching orientation, almost all of the forty one teachers reported that the teaching practices consistent with the orientation occurred in their centres ‘often’ or ‘always’. That is, children were ‘often’ or ‘always’ encouraged to self-select resources and use them independently with no emphasis on producing a product. Further they were encouraged to use resources to help to make things to express ideas. Interestingly, there is an anomaly in these last two responses.
In the child-centred oriented questions about teachers’ practices, teachers quite clearly reported that children were presented with an environment where self-directed creative expression was favoured. It was also seen in the responses to the child-centred questions that the product of children’s experiences in visual art was not emphasised. Rather, the process was reported as being valued more. However, in the rote oriented questions teachers reported children were often provided with special (table-top) art activities to complete (the example in the questionnaire was Easter Egg making). Surely specialist art activities are product oriented. If a teacher sets up an ‘Easter Egg painting’ experience, then there is an expectation that children (if they choose to attend the experience) will paint an Easter Egg. This anomaly reflects, I think, Henley’s (1993) notion that a frequently expressed fallacy in visual art education programmes is that the product of children’s experience is not emphasised in the visual art curriculum. The product, in my view, is of course an integral part of children’s participation in the curriculum area and in this sample of centres, has been greatly emphasised. This has been seen in the environments that teachers have designed and the large focus on the provision of specialist art activities.

If we consider other table-top experiences, e.g., marble painting, and how these might align with the child-centred orientation, I see a difference between what this type of experience can offer to children and the ideal of creative expression. The fact that table-top activities are provided doesn’t necessarily contravene the ‘child-centred’ ideal of self-guided creative expression. However, the reality of what
children can achieve with a paint covered marble being swirled around a container is, in my view, limiting. The product in this type of experience is more related to chance rather than children’s skillful creative expression. There is, in literature, a clear distinction between the orientations. However teachers’ reports of their practice reflects a much more eclectic approach to the provision of visual art. While the child-centred orientation appears by far the most prevalent in these centres, there are, I think, elements of the rote ideals emerging in the data. This is a finding that my experience tells me is accurate, and that the data in this study support.

The video recordings of adults working with children at visual art experiences provide a view of teachers’ actual practices in contrast to their reported practice from the questionnaires. The context of the recordings is reflected on the following page in Table 2.
Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Episode No.</th>
<th>Episode Length</th>
<th>Activity/Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare Centre A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 mins 9 secs</td>
<td>Roller painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16 mins 10 secs</td>
<td>Roller painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29 mins 12 secs</td>
<td>Painting with fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15 mins 31 secs</td>
<td>Crayon/Glitter pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 mins 50 secs</td>
<td>Painting on wet/dry paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 mins 9 secs</td>
<td>Painting on wet paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9 mins 38 secs</td>
<td>Clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare Centre B</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5 mins 43 secs</td>
<td>Dropper bottle painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5 mins 8 secs</td>
<td>Dropper bottle painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5 mins 15 secs</td>
<td>Dropper bottle painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7 mins 22 secs</td>
<td>Balloon painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8 mins 28 secs</td>
<td>Sensory trough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5 mins 41 secs</td>
<td>Balloon painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6 mins 33 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5 mins 10 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5 mins 16 secs</td>
<td>Playdough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14 mins 14 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16 mins 7 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13 mins 22 secs</td>
<td>Sensory trough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10 mins 42 secs</td>
<td>Sensory trough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5 mins 28 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6 mins 47 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6 mins 2 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playcentre</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6 mins 31 secs</td>
<td>Outside collage/construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10 mins 3 secs</td>
<td>Concrete painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13 mins 46 secs</td>
<td>Collage/construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13 mins 34 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12 mins 29 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5 mins 2 secs</td>
<td>Collage / construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. presents a summation of the number and length of the episodes within each centre by the type of activity the children and teachers were engaged in. The recorded episodes came from similar activities or areas in each of the centres. As mentioned earlier, I recorded a range of experiences in centres and changed the focus of the video on many occasions. When I coded the video, I used the ‘episode’
definition that included continuous video recording for at least 5 minutes. As a result of this, the range of activity areas that were included in the episodes is quite limited. I may have been recording in a particular area then changed focus for a short while before returning to the original area. For example, the first two episodes in the table are the same activity but constitute two episodes. In such a case the activity has been coded as more than one episode.

From these 29 episodes the nature of the teachers’ participation was determined by coding teacher behaviours as defined earlier (Table 3.).

Table 3.

The frequency of teachers' behaviour in 29 episodes of visual art experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of participation</th>
<th>Number of events</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbally Interact</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unengaged</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Camera</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. Events</td>
<td>1192</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that the most common behaviour demonstrated by teachers in these episodes was verbal interactions (n=400). This suggests that even though teachers reported in the questionnaires that children were most often encouraged to work at visual art independently, that teachers were still talking with children frequently while they worked at visual art. I remarked in Chapter One that it was usual in the child-centred orientation to support children’s work at art by talking to them about
the process they were engaging in. I recall myself as a practitioner engaging in such practice with the rationale being to support children to experiment and explore the properties of the media with which they were working. This would, I believed, enable children to engage in the process of creative expression.

The number of times teachers initiated in these episodes was small (n=34). In addition, 6% of the coded behaviours involved teachers assisting children. This suggests that children in these episodes were responsible for engaging themselves and working independently at these experiences. Again, this reflects the child-centred teaching orientation where self-guided participation in the visual art curriculum is favoured.

To find out more about the nature of teacher participation in the visual art curriculum, I transcribed and completed a time sample observation of four selected episodes. The data from this analysis is presented below (Table 4.).

Table 4.

Percentage of time in each episode spent in different types of participation behaviours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of participation</th>
<th>Episode 3 'Painting with fingers.'</th>
<th>Episode 10 'Collage / construction.'</th>
<th>Episode 15 'Sensory trough.'</th>
<th>Episode 23 'Balloon painting.'</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbally Interact</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unengaged</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Camera</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four episodes provided two examples of experiences that were provided in centres as part of the core curriculum and two examples of experiences that were provided as special art activities planned in addition to the core curriculum resources in the centres. Just over 20% of the adults' time was spent verbally interacting with children. In the preceding Table (Table 3.) we saw that verbal interactions were the most commonly observed behaviour yet the percentage of time teachers spent talking with children was relatively small. The amount of time teachers engaged in behaviours that involved interacting with children either verbally or non-verbally (i.e., verbally interact, assist, initiate and participate) was just 29.1% of the total observations. This reflects my experience as a practitioner where children were most often encouraged to work at visual art on their own. From the time sample observation, we can see that teachers spent most of their time off camera.

As I had completed a transcript of episodes '3', '10', '15', and '23' (see for example, APPENDIX C) I was able to describe more fully, the nature of the teachers' participation in them. At the episode where children were painting with their fingers. (episode 3), the teacher, F, had planned this activity as part of the 'over-two's' afternoon programme. The episode began with F setting the activity up with children waiting and assisting where possible. F seemed to have a clear idea about the purpose of the activity she had prepared for the children. The children were to paint with their fingers and F tells them this at the beginning of the episode. Even when one of the children questions the notion of using her fingers to paint with, F continued with the activity as she had planned.
"A child M asked ‘where’s the paint brush?’ F moved paint palettes on the table and placed one each in front of the two children saying, ‘I’ll show you where your paint brushes are today, do you want to make, put your hands here, put your hands behind your back, wiggle your fingers, wiggle your fingers and (inaudible) there’s your paint brush’. As F talked she put her hands behind her back, and then brought her hands back in front of her body indicating that the children’s fingers were their paint brushes. The children imitated her. The child M said to F “your fingers aren’t your paint brushes” to which F replied “we’re going to pretend that they are paint brushes today”.

F’s language centred mainly on the content of the children’s artwork. However, there were some interesting passages where F commented on the process of the children’s work and the properties of the medium with which they were working.

Two examples of this was when F said, “oh that looks beautiful M you’ve used some beautiful colours there”, and “it looks like you’re pinching your paint and dropping it onto your paper”. Largely however during this episode F was concerned with supervising and maintaining the activity or with talking to other staff in the area. This is seen in Table 4. where F spent 54% of her time in this episode supervising, maintaining or unengaged.

In Episode 10 the adult, A, was working with children at the collage/construction area of the centre. The structure of the programme was set up to reflect the Playcentre model of the 16 areas of play. Collage/construction is one of the 16 main
areas of the programme and is one of the core curriculum experiences. A main thread in this centre’s philosophy was the notion that:

“We want children to be themselves, to be capable of originality, to be able to experiment. This is what creativity really is… adults are to avoid making, for example, ‘birds in the nest’ at the clay table as a model for children to copy. It is the adult who gets the feelings of competence, not the child” (Densen, 1980, p 42).

Teachers and adults were very mindful that the notion of children’s self-guided participation was a feature of the ‘16 areas’ of the programme. In this episode, much of the first part of the episode was taken by A looking for some stencils for the children to use. As in the previous episode, A seemed to have a clear idea about what resources children needed to be using at this activity area and offered children these. A clear example of this was when A offered one of the children at the table some felt pens to use on her picture. The three children at this activity spent most of the time working on their own alongside each other while A either engaged in maintenance activities or left the activity area altogether.

Episode 15 took place at a sensory trough with the adult Y spending a great deal of time being unengaged (34% of the time) or talking with children (32%) although not always about topics related to the activity. Y often made statements about the properties of the cornflour and water mixture the children were playing with, e.g., “hmm, it’s dripping everywhere”. Early on in the episode, there were a number of children gathered around the sensory trough but not willing to participate. In what I
think was an attempt to engage these children’s participation, Y asked the children who were playing how the mixture felt to play with. Consequently a number of children answered her and Y replied with “oh” and “really” comments. For much of this episode, Y’s attention was divided between supervising the children at the activity and talking with other adults or children who weren’t playing at the activity. The children who were playing were able to experiment and play uninterrupted.

In the final episode the teacher K talked mainly about the action that the children demonstrated when they were using the balloons to paint with. On several occasions K said “up and down, up and down” referring to the arm movements one child was making when using the balloon. In addition, K gave quite specific instructions to one child, L, about how to use the resource. She can be seen offering L a new colour of paint and told him “down into the paint now L”… “now onto your paper”. K’s attention in this episode was divided between the balloon painting activity and a nearby sensory trough activity. K often reminded children at the sensory trough to “keep it low” or to “be careful” while they were playing. K spend 76% of her time in this episode off-camera which resulted in the children working at the balloon activity being left to participate at their own level.

The extent to which children were responsible for their own experimentation and participation in these visual art episodes once more supports the ‘child-centred’ orientation towards visual art education. I did not often see teachers and children working together during these episodes and when teachers did interact with children
they were often making statements about the process of children’s participation, referring briefly to the content of children’s art-work or engaging in maintenance type behaviours.

It appears that teachers see their role as mainly concerned with helping to sustain children’s interest in the activities by offering resources or commenting on what children are doing, and to keep the work area for children relatively safe and clear. I do not make this summation lightly and have considered that other factors may have influenced teachers’ participation in these experiences. Assuredly when reviewing the data from the video I was in fact reminded of my own early non-interventionist teaching approach to visual art.

**What type of visual art experiences and resources are provided in early childhood centres?**

The type of visual art experiences and resources in each centre are described in the following pages. This data came from field notes and discussion with teachers.

**Childcare Centre A**

This centre was established on the property of a residential house, a part of which had been converted to meet licensing standards for an all day childcare centre. The centre had three main playrooms, one of which was also used as a dining area, and a large outdoor area based around the already established garden. In one of the main
playrooms there was an area that permanently housed collage/construction materials and playdough to allow ready access to children during free-play sessions.

The centre walls and notice boards displayed several fine art prints and examples of children’s artwork, some of which had been framed before being displayed around the centre. The children’s artwork included examples of crayon and dye pictures, roller painting, cornflour and water pictures and children’s easel paintings, ink etchings and painting with dye on textured and non-textured papers.

Childcare Centre B

In Childcare Centre B the converted residential property was open-plan with the main traffic flow through the middle of the centre from the entranceway through to the outdoor area. The centre had a wet-floor area where the art easels, collage/construction table and resources along with the sensory trough were permanently situated. In this centre, there was a large array of visual art resources and media permanently available to children.

Again in this centre the walls were decorated with examples of children’s artwork. Evidence of many prior visual art experiences was seen in the displayed pictures and paintings. These included, for example, crayon and dye pictures, pictures of children who had been traced around and then painted, photocopies of pictures that had been painted on or dyed, children’s own easel paintings, and pictures of Easter eggs that had been painted.
As well as the resources that were presented daily, each day the teachers in the centre would present a number of planned activities, many of which related to visual art. For example, chalk drawing on the concrete outside, clay or a painting activity in the outdoor environment. These were offered to children as part of the free-choice programme and children were able to use the resources and activities as they wished.

Kindergarten

In the Kindergarten, the environment was once again set up with a variety of core curriculum resources which included art easels, collage/construction resources, sensory media and a variety of printing, drawing and painting activities. In addition, several extra activities were set up on the observation days, for example, felt pens and paper outside, chalk drawing on a chalkboard outside and a large collage mural.

Again, the environment contained many examples of children’s artwork, for example, children’s easel paintings, collage murals, and dye dropper pictures on tissue paper. In addition, there were several small fine art prints on the centre’s walls and a weaving hanging in one of the centre’s windows. One difference in this environment in comparison to the other three centres, was the inclusion of posters and notices about children’s participation in the programme presumably used to guide adult’s participation at activities. One such example was a notice on the wall in the collage/construction area of the centre that read, “Collage, pre-drawing and painting are important areas for me to express myself creatively in my own way. Skills are developed for cutting and writing” and near the Dough table there was a
notice that read “Dough: is fun to touch and squeeze, my hand muscles develop (good for writing and painting) and I can learn maths concepts”. (Field Notes).

**Playcentre**

In the Playcentre there was a similar type of resourcing and layout to Childcare centre B, described above. Again, there were art easels permanently available to children as well as playdough and collage/construction resources. This centre, like the previous one, provided many experiences in addition to those provided as part of the 16 areas of play on each of the days that I observed in the centre. For instance, on the first day that I visited the centre the adults had carefully set up a variety of experiences and resources in the outdoor play area including, clay, painting on the fence, concrete painting, a collage table outside, and chalk drawing. Like the other two centres, there were many examples of children’s artwork displayed in the environment. This included a large mural where children had printed their handprints, and examples of children’s collage pictures and easel paintings.

In all of the centres I visited there were many examples of children’s artwork displayed in the environment. In addition, in two of the centres I observed examples of fine art prints displayed on the centre’s walls. In Schillers (1995) paper she describes the careful attention she paid to displaying fine art in her centre environment noting that opportunities to discuss fine art with children supported the DBAE principle of children engaging in art criticism and discussing art history. I didn’t record any such discussion between adults and children at the centres when I
visited. However, the presence of such pieces in the environment is encouraging. In one centre, in particular, careful consideration had been given to displaying children’s work. Pieces had been framed with cardboard and were presented as a type of gallery. It was clear to me that significant thought and preparation had been given to the children’s work.

I had collected data on the questionnaires about the visual art resources that were available to children. In all categories of resource on the checklist I developed, teachers reported many ‘Other’ types of experiences and resources that were available to children. Table 5. summarises data from the examples of resources that I had included on the checklist and Table 6. presents information about the resources that teachers included in the ‘Other’ category.

Table 5.

Visual Art Resources Available to Children in 9 Early Childhood Centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual art area</th>
<th>Type of Resource</th>
<th>No. of Centres providing resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Easel Painting</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Crayons</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chalk</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Felt Pens</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coloured Pencils</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collage / Construction</td>
<td>3D Collage</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papier Mache</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative</td>
<td>Playdough</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plastercine</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>Screen Printing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubbings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stamping</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In all of the centres the resources of collage, easel painting, playdough, clay, crayons and stamping were available to children during the week. The second most commonly provided resources included 3D construction media, chalk, felt pens and coloured pencils. From this information it is clear that a sample of drawing media in particular were provided for children in the visual art area. Playdough and collage in early childhood centres are commonly included as core curriculum components so the reporting of these as being available in all centres is not surprising. The reporting of papier mache and screen printing as being provided in only two of the nine centres is interesting because these two types of experiences require quite a deal of adult input and assistance in my experience. It is possible that teachers do not consider this type of resource as developmentally appropriate for young children, or possibly, they were simply not offered in the week preceding the teachers completing the questionnaire.
Table 6.

'Other' reported visual art resources and experiences available to children in visual art experiences at 9 early childhood centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Manipulative</th>
<th>Drawing</th>
<th>Printing</th>
<th>Paint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stick Construction</td>
<td>Fingerpaint</td>
<td>HB Pencils</td>
<td>Hand Printing</td>
<td>Cotton Bud Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellophane</td>
<td>Sawdust</td>
<td>Pastels</td>
<td>Shadow Printing</td>
<td>Carton Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Board</td>
<td>Water Play</td>
<td>Charcoal</td>
<td>Potato Printing</td>
<td>Bottle Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry</td>
<td>Playdough</td>
<td>Sponge Felts</td>
<td>Cotton Reel Printing</td>
<td>Pallet Paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kites</td>
<td>Gardens</td>
<td>Pens</td>
<td>Monoprints</td>
<td>Small Paper Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glitter Pictures</td>
<td>Connectors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sponge Paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lego</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>String Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Toothbrush Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marble Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roller Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Straw Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balloon Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Box Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Butterfly Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Egg Carton Painting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The extent to which 'Other' painting experiences and resources were reported as being available was notable. Here a number of table-top experiences (e.g., straw painting, toothbrush painting, glitter pictures) set up and implemented by adults for children reflecting the 'rote' orientation that I referred to in Chapter One. Possibly teachers' include these types of activities in the context of their child-centred programme because children are able to use the resource in their own way, or the table-top experiences listed may have been linked to other programme initiatives.

I have included resources, such as, mobilo, connectors and lego in the list even though I consider these resources as belonging to a domain of curriculum other than visual art education. There are clearly other interpretations of what constitutes a
visual art experience or resource from my own and this is represented in these findings.

There were of course many similarities across centres in terms of what children had available to them and Table 5. shows the resources that were commonly reported across centres. In Table 7. I present a summary of the additional types of resources that were observed in the four centres I visited.

Table 7.

**Additional Resources Available in the Observation Centres.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual art Area</th>
<th>Centre A</th>
<th>Centre B</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Playcentre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Brushes and paint pottles at easels (when outside), newsprint, A4 paper at collage table.</td>
<td>Brushes and paint pottles at easels, rollers, feathers, straws, toothbrushes, ice cream sticks, coloured paper and card, newsprint.</td>
<td>Brushes and paint pottles at easels, newsprint, white card, coloured papers and card.</td>
<td>As for the Kindergarten, plus, cotton buds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Crayons</td>
<td>Felt pens, crayons.</td>
<td>Felt pens, crayons, drawing pencils, chalk, rulers and stencils, chunky marker pens, chalk boards.</td>
<td>Felt pens, crayons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collage Construction</td>
<td>Paste, magazines, scissors, string, wool and a variety of construction resources.</td>
<td>As for Centre A plus, hole-punches, cellotape, staplers.</td>
<td>As for Centre B.</td>
<td>As for Centre B plus, masking tape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative</td>
<td>Playdough and other planned activities, e.g., clay.</td>
<td>Playdough and other planned activities, e.g., slime.</td>
<td>Playdough and other planned activities, e.g., cornflour.</td>
<td>Playdough, clay, sensory trough media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Stamp pads and ink stamps.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the data gathered in the checklists and observations it can be seen that children are regularly provided with a variety of drawing, painting, construction, printing and manipulative experiences. In addition to this, it is evident that children are provided with many opportunities to use the table-top type experience I have discussed.

The presence of such a variety of core curriculum resources in each of these centres suggests that much emphasis is given to children’s ability to source and resource themselves in the visual art area of the programme. Many opportunities, it seems, exist for children to be able to work and play at both open-ended self-directed activity areas and more adult structured table-top experiences.

Are discipline based approaches to artistry and visual art education practised in early childhood centres?

The final question in this study was centred on the cognitively oriented teaching approach of DBAE. Teachers reported that children were often encouraged to share their opinions of artworks which is an aspect of the DBAE approach. Children weren’t often encouraged to engage in critical analysis of artwork or generally encouraged to look at and discuss famous art works, yet many teachers had responded that a principal purpose of visual art was to foster such artistic experience.

Interestingly a large number of teachers did not respond to the question that asked if a principal purpose of an art programme should be for children to develop skills in
artistry and understandings of art. This reveals, I think, either a badly worded question on my behalf or a lack of understanding of the question by the teachers in the sample. Some clear definitions of some of the terms used in questionnaire may have minimised the possibility of misunderstandings.

In a cognitively oriented approach, this artistic skill development would primarily occur where opportunities for children to work with adults or skilled peers at visual art experiences existed. In both the video and questionnaire data no evidence of this happening was seen. It appears that the child-centred notion of artistry being best promoted through spontaneous self-expression is stronger than the cognitively oriented notion of guided participation by these teachers.
Chapter Four Conclusions and Considerations

The preceding chapter presents findings and a discussion from observations, questionnaires and video tape recordings centred on the provision of visual art education experiences and activities in a sample of early childhood centres in Christchurch city. In this Chapter I intend to present my conclusions as they relate to the research questions in the current study. In addition, I will consider some methodological issues and implications for future research.

I began this report reflecting on the lack of clarity I felt, as a practitioner, about my role in the curriculum area of visual art in comparison to the curriculum area of music education. Further, I reflected about the students I work with and their inability to pose theories to explain the experiences and activities that they observed in visual art on their own teaching practice placements. I also mentioned my perceived unrealistic expectation I placed on students to be cognizant of their own philosophical beliefs as they related to the curriculum area. This study has been in part an attempt to clarify, contextualise and explain why children are presented with the myriad of activities and events that form the visual art education aspect of the early childhood curriculum.

In my attempt to characterise the nature of the visual art curriculum in these early childhood centres I have taken the position that curriculum experiences are based on a framework of teachers’ beliefs, relevant curriculum theory and Te Whariki. I presented three theoretical orientations regarding visual art education and set out to
compare teachers' practices and beliefs with regard to these orientations in order that I could propose a clear theoretical underpinning to the provision of visual art in early childhood centres. In part I think have reached this goal.

I have had three main reference points related to the teaching orientations (rote, child-centred, cognitive) in visual art upon which the current study has been based.

Were approaches to visual art education based around the notions of (i) teacher directed thematic goals, (ii) child directed expression and creativity, or (iii) cognitively oriented notions of higher order thinking skills through development of children's artistry?

Were teachers at visual art experiences (i) directive, (ii) non-interventionist, or (iii) collaborative?

Did teachers in these centres value visual art curriculum for its potential to (i) 'level' children's abilities, (ii) present mainly opportunities for exploration and experimentation, or (iii) engage children's minds through active participation and investigation in the pursuits of art production, history, criticism and aesthetics?

At the concluding point of the report I offer the following interpretation and conclusions.
Te Whaariki: Early Childhood Curriculum provides a cornerstone from which teachers can plan, implement and evaluate visual art experiences for young children. I have already noted that in my interpretation, the Vygotskian principles that underpin much of the curriculum document require teachers to become active and involved in children’s learning by carefully planning programmes attuned towards challenging children’s development. Language is a central tool that children use in their construction of knowledge and understandings about the world. Because of this, children’s participation in visual art education must rely on plenty of opportunities for meaningful language based interactions. This interactive approach to visual art is seemingly at odds with the observed practice in the sample of centres in the study. In the data, teachers’ interactions with children were brief and appeared focused on maintaining children’s own self-guided participation in the visual art experiences with which they were working. The notion of exploration and experimentation being central to children’s own creative and artistic development holds stronger than that of the more provoking collaborative endeavour.

I do not intend to negate the influence or importance of child-centredness. Rather, I review its place in light of emergent theory and experience that suggests that careful guided participation and collaboration in curriculum experiences can result in enhancing children’s artistic experience. I know of no evidence to suggest that the cognitively oriented teaching approaches negatively influence children’s creativity or self-guided expression (both aims of child-centred visual art education). Rather, knowledge of the elements of art, an ability to use visual art media in appropriate
ways and discuss art in their lives serves, I think, to enrich children’s experiences in order that they can use these to be creative and expressive. We see examples of this where children in cognitively oriented early childhood centres in Reggio Emilia, Italy are provoked to communicate through visual art and conceptualise, investigate and construct ideas and knowledge through media in this core curriculum area. Further, the DBAE notion of engaging children in the higher order thinking that comes from determined inquiry into the arts through the domains of history, criticism and aesthetics places emphasis on guided participation and collaboration at an appropriate level. Again, I know of no evidence to suggest that this approach hinders children’s creative or artistic growth. The cognitively oriented perspective provides another insight into how best we, as teachers, can support the development of children’s artistry and creative development.

Where in this context can we place the rote methods and ideas? The question has occurred to me many times during the course of the study. Again, rote teaching approaches had, and still have, a place in the educational experiences of young children. Where teachers have specific skills and knowledge they need to impart to young children there is no justification for why teacher directed activities and experiences would not be included in visual art programmes. This perspective on the rote approach reflects the cognitive practice of provocation or direct instruction with regards to artistic technique. However, a different focus to the rote oriented practices has been observed in the present study.
Many adult established table-top type experiences and activities have been a feature of the visual art programmes investigated in this project and I have to question the continued usefulness of this type of approach to visual art on two levels. Firstly, I ask what opportunities for responsive and reciprocal interactions between individuals and groups do they afford in these programmes? Secondly, what implications do they have for the development of children’s artistry?

There is, I think, little scope in a table-top activity for meaningful interactions to occur. It is quite clear that if an adult sets up an experience, for instance, ink stamps and ink stamp-pads on a table, and a child decides to participate in the activity, they will be engaged in the process stamping the pad and stamping the paper. There is really only so many times a teacher or a child can comment on the subject of the stamp, or remark on the smudges the ink leaves on the paper if the stamp is moved before a clear print has been made. Of course teachers will write the names of the children on their pictures and make sure the ink doesn’t get smudged all over the table. There is very little else to occupy the participant’s time. Having provided this type of activity myself as a practitioner (even though I believed I was strongly influenced by the child-centred ideals), I recall the limiting influence on teaching practice that this type of approach results in.

In terms of promoting children’s artistry, there is I think, some potential in the art of ink stamping. At its very best and as part of an investigation into the art production technique of print making, it could be used as an experience in which children could
discuss the elements of positive and negative space. The experience could also be used as a starting point for children making their own stamps to use in their artwork. The type of approach I am suggesting, however, is clearly of the cognitive, rather than the rote orientation. Cognitively oriented activities like the one I suggest were not a feature of the teaching practices I observed. Rather it was more likely the rote oriented activity that was reflected in the data. The implications for the development of children's artistry, therefore, are very limited.

Herein lies an interesting proposition from the data gathered in the present study. Could the teachers' expertise and knowledge of the many types of table-top activities that I observed be used in a more cognitively oriented approach to visual art? If included as part of a visual art programme structured around the notion of promoting children's artistic development and understandings, I think so. This is perhaps another future research path.

Further, to investigate if children were able to use newly acquired art production skills and knowledge to express their ideas and demonstrate creative flair would be another important research endeavour. This type of study would be useful in testing my earlier hypothesis that children's creativity relies on their artistry rather than creative pursuit resulting in artistic skill.

I asked the question at the conclusion of Chapter One, "What type of visual art resources and experiences are provided for children in visual art programmes?" A
number of drawing, painting, construction, manipulative and printing resources as part of the children’s daily experience is the conclusion that has emerged from these data. Further to this, many table-top visual art experiences and activities were provided as part of the programme over and above the core curriculum.

The question “What teaching approaches do early childhood educators use within visual art programmes”? was also posed. In the episodes teaching approaches were seen as child-centred. Much of the teachers’ time was taken up with supervising, maintaining or being present and not engaged in visual art experiences with children. Teachers were instrumental in setting up an environment and allowing children opportunities for self-directed participation in curriculum experiences be they more table-top type activity or activities provided as part of the regular programme.

I remarked in Chapter One that teachers’ philosophies are rarely purely reflective of one theoretical orientation and in the questionnaire data in particular, aspects of the rote approach to visual art have been reported. The rote teaching approaches, however, seemed to be encompassed by practitioners within the beliefs of child-centredness. By this I mean that even though table-top activities and adult directed experiences were presented regularly, I think that because these weren’t compulsory and children could choose to attend the activity then the activity was seen as being ‘child-centred’, i.e., upholding the notions of free choice and self-guided participation. This would help to explain the presence of so many table-top activities as part of these centres’ planned programmes.
In response to the research question that asked what beliefs early childhood practitioners possessed in relation to visual art education I attempted to primarily use the questionnaire data to answer the question. It can be concluded that I observed, that teachers' beliefs like their practices were also largely entrenched in the 'child-centred' orientation. This reflects my own experience as a practitioner and is not surprising given the influence of theories like Lowenfeld's (1947), the 1980's based SEACOH philosophy and the focus of a free-choice programme that was seen in these centres. This finding serves to clarify my own knowledge and to contextualise the experiences that my students face in their own teacher training programme.

By default, the fourth question in the study has been answered by investigating the teaching approaches to visual art. This question asked if discipline based approaches to artistry and visual art education were practised in early childhood programmes. Given the strong emphasis towards the child-centred teaching approaches seen in these centres, the presence of discipline based teaching approaches has not been a feature of the visual art programmes in the sample. However, emergent ideas are present in the sector, and the cognitive orientation that places emphasis on the higher order thinking skills that parallel DBAE principles are certainly not being ignored. The presence of literature, possibilities of study tours, courses and training programmes that reflect collaborative endeavour in visual art are common in the present climate. Here in Christchurch a recent visiting lecturer from the United States has spent almost a year teaching and talking with teachers about the ideals of Reggio Emelia. Increasingly more so since the data for the current project were
gathered, I have seen evidence of her influence in the visual art programmes of the many early childhood centres I have visited over the past year. Specific courses about the Reggio Emelia Approach have been offered during the past year to many teachers in this city. The influence of these courses may have alleviated teachers’ own fears or anxieties about being too directive in the curriculum area. Perhaps the industry is on the verge of significant change. The possibilities for children’s artistic development and growth are significant.

Methodological considerations and implications for future research.

This study is based on observations of teaching practice in four early childhood centres and questionnaire data from a sample of 41 early childhood teachers in Christchurch city. I make no claim that the data from this study are widely representative. However, I do assert that the data characterise the approach to visual art education that is employed in these centres.

In this study I used questionnaire and video data in combination with checklist observations of visual art resources and activities in early childhood centres. The questionnaire data has been very useful in this study as it allowed me to ask a standard set of questions of a number of teachers in a representative sample of centres. However, the use of questionnaire posed some limitations. I asked teachers for instance, to state what they believed one of the principal purposes of an art programme was. I thought when I originally wrote the questions that they were mutually exclusive, i.e., if a teacher responded that a principal purpose of art was to
allow children opportunities to engage in the process of creative expression, then they wouldn't respond that a principal purpose was to develop skills in artistry and understandings of art. There is no reason to expect that teachers would not believe that there was more than one principal purpose of a visual art programme and is likely to be reflected in the responses to these questions. This possibly accounts for the level of agreement in both the 'cognitive' and 'child-centred' oriented questions in that section of the questionnaire.

I worried that use of questionnaires in centres where I was conducting observations could set up the expectation that teachers would think they were supposed to answer a question the 'way I wanted them to answer', thus providing less an account of what the teachers themselves actually believed or did in visual art. To limit the possibility of this situation arising, I effectively presented the questionnaires to two sets of teachers, those in the observation centres and those in the wider sample. This was a wise decision and I believe gives credence to the responses in the questionnaires. There was no notable difference in the way these two groups of teachers responded, suggesting that my fears were unrealised.

When I decided to use video as a way to investigate teaching practice in visual art, I began with the idea that teachers' language would reveal much about the underpinnings of their teaching approaches. However, the audio quality of the video was very poor and I ended up not completing a detailed analysis of teachers' language. I think that this would still be a useful way to study teaching in visual art
education and would certainly reveal much about not only the teachers' philosophies and ideals, but would provide wonderful data about the theories and ideas children work on through visual art media. If I had discussed the videos with the teachers who were recorded I think a much more detailed account of teachers' beliefs would have emerged from the data. By watching the video after the event and discussing why teachers' behaved in particular ways and why even they had provided the experience that was recorded, we could investigate more the context in which these children and teachers worked.

A further implication for future research that has emerged out of the current study is the idea of investigating if teachers approaching visual art with more of a focus on artistic elements and children's artistic skill would result in more collaborative work between teachers and children in this curriculum area. The idea is, I think, a worthy one and given the fact that the sector now has a curriculum document that establishes what teachers are expected to provide in terms of programmes for young children, more curriculum research that uses Te Whaariki as a platform from which to work is, I believe, warranted.

As I remarked early in the report, arts education is particularly central to my own ideals as an early childhood teacher and teacher educator. Through arts education, and visual art in particular, I believe young children can be challenged and nurtured, delighted and amused. The possibilities for visual arts in young children's lives is limited I believe only by the adults who as Marme-Thompson (1995) writes are
responsible, by design or default, for guiding (children’s) course of artistic
development and learning.

In my work as a teacher educator, I continue to help my students in their training, to
be adults who are ‘designed’ to lead children on a meaningful course of artistic
development and learning, and the data and conclusions from this report have served
to support me in this work. If nothing else, this research has reinforced my own
values and beliefs about the importance of aesthetic experience and the arts in young
children’s lives.
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Appendix A – Research Questionnaire

Approaches To Visual Art Education: Beliefs and Practice

Research Questionnaire

Contact: Alex Gunn
xxxxxx Street
CHRISTCHURCH

PH. Xxx xxxx (hm)
Xxx xxxx (wk)

(date)

Dear Colleague

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project, Approaches to Visual Art Education: Beliefs and Practice.

The following questionnaire is designed to enable you to provide valuable information about you and your team’s teaching approach to visual art education for young children. There are four sections to the questionnaire:

• Centre Information
• Visual Art Experiences and Resources
• Teaching Methods in Visual Art
• Approaches to Visual Art Education

Please ensure that one member of your teaching team fills out Section One of the questionnaire, and that all other teaching staff individually complete Sections Two, Three and Four.

I enclose a stamped, self addressed envelope for you to include your replies and return to me by (date).

Thank you once again for taking the time to share your expertise and knowledge.

Yours
Instructions: Please answer all the following questions by ticking in the appropriate boxes or by writing in the spaces provided.

Section One: Centre Information

(To be completed by one staff member)

1. i Name of Centre: __________________________________________

   ii Type of early childhood centre:
   □ State kindergarten
   □ Community Based Childcare Centre
   □ Private Childcare Centre
   □ Playcentre

   iii Age range of children enrolled:
   □ Birth - Two Years         □ Two - Three Years
   □ Three - Four Years        □ Four - School Age

   iv Number of children your centre is licensed for ________

   v Number of children who normally attend the centre:
   Morning Session _______ Afternoon Session _______

   vi Number of equivalent full time teaching staff: ________

Thank you, this section is now complete. Please go on to Section Two.
Section Two: Visual Art Experiences and Resources
(To be completed by each staff member individually)

2a. Which of the following visual art experiences have been provided for children in your centre in the past week?

i Construction

3D Construction

Collage

Papier Mache

Other

 ii Manipulative

Playdough

Clay

Plasticine

Other

 iii Paint

Easel Painting

Other Paint experiences

(specify) _______________
### iv Drawing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Box Marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crayons</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt Pens</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured Pencils</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>□ (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### v Printing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Box Marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screen Printing</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbings</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamping</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>□ (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### vi Sensory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Box Marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cornflour and Water</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap Flakes</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>□ (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2b. *How do you rate the following statement?*

i. The visual art experiences provided for children in the past week are normally what would be provided in our centre.

☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Don't know
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree

If you would like to comment further on the types of art experiences provided in the art programme during the last week please use this space to do so:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Thank you, this section is now complete. Please go on to Section Three.*
Section Three: Teaching Methods In Visual Art Education

(To be completed by each staff member individually)

3a. Please indicate how often children are:

i  given art activity sheets or pictures to colour in or complete.

- Always
- Often
- Don't know
- Not very often
- Not at all

ii encouraged to self select art resources and independently use these in creative and expressive ways.

- Always
- Often
- Don't know
- Not very often
- Not at all

iii encouraged to critically evaluate pieces of art work.

- Always
- Often
- Don't know
- Not very often
- Not at all

iv given special art activities to complete, for example, Easter egg making at Easter time, or art activities as part of a programme focus.

- Always
- Often
- Don't know
- Not very often
- Not at all

v encouraged to look at or discuss famous artworks, e.g., Pictures in art books or paintings at the museum.

- Always
- Often
- Don't know
- Not very often
- Not at all
vi given opportunities to use art resources with no emphasis on producing any product at the end of the experience.

□ Always
□ Often
□ Don't know
□ Not very often
□ Not at all

vii encouraged to share their opinions of art works.

□ Always
□ Often
□ Don't know
□ Not very often
□ Not at all

viii provided with special art activities to use e.g., marble painting, straw or bubble painting.

□ Always
□ Often
□ Don't know
□ Not very often
□ Not at all

ix encouraged to use art resources to make things to help express ideas.

□ Always
□ Often
□ Don't know
□ Not very often
□ Not at all

If you would like to comment further on your personal teaching methods in the art programme, please use this space to do so:

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you, this section is now complete. Please go on to Section Four.
Section Four  Approaches To Visual Art Education

(To be completed by each staff member individually)

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i One of the principal purposes of an art programme should be to provide art activities which support broad programme themes or foci.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii When children work in the art activities adults should mainly teach children about the artistic elements of their work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii One of the principal purposes of an art programme should be to allow children to express their ideas creatively with minimal adult direction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv A central aspect of an art programme art is that adults should place emphasis on participation in experiences related to art history, criticism and aesthetics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v When children work at art activities adults should mainly give positive attention and encouragement to promote creativity and enjoyment of the process of creation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vi  A central aspect of an art programme is that adults should place emphasis on participation in art activities which allow children to engage in the process of creative expression.

vii One of the principal purposes of an art programme should be for children to develop skills in artistry and understandings of art.

viii When children work at art activities, adults should mainly encourage children to ensure they complete the art activity correctly.

ix  A central aspect of an art programme is that adults should place emphasis on completion of specific art activities related to programme themes or foci.

If you would like to comment further on your personal teaching philosophy in the art programme, please use this space to do so:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thank you, this questionnaire is now complete.
Appendix B – Observation Sheets

Event Record

ER Observation

Activity/Area:

Episode No.

Teacher:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VI</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>OC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---
## Time Sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Analysis:

- **VI:**
- **I:**
- **A:**
- **P:**

- **M:**
- **S:**
- **U:**
- **OC:**
Appendix C – Episode Transcript

**Approaches To Visual Art Education: Philosophy and Practice**

**Observation Schedule – Art Experience Language Transcript**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 3 Sep. 97</th>
<th>Centre: CC / P</th>
<th>Staff Member: R</th>
<th>No. Children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. Adults: x2 (1 student = S)</td>
<td>Setting: Inside Playroom</td>
<td>Time Start: 1.11pm (0.00)</td>
<td>Time Finish: 1.41.2pm (29.20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Context**

Sample

The transcript begins on the following page.

**Impressions**
Specialist
Art Activity.
Staff Planned.
Routine
programming
Two activities
presented side by
side. 1 =
Fingerpainting
(paint and glue
mixture in
palettes) 2 =
String Painting.

R helping two
children start
pictures, rolling
up sleeves
S: at string
painting activity
(off screen)
S: talking R (S
off camera)
R writing
children's names
on paper before
giving them
paper to paint on

| R moves paint palettes on table and places one each in front of the two children |
| R puts her hands behind her back, the children imitate |
| R brings hands back in front of body indicating that the children's fingers are their paint brushes |
| R pushes palettes |

<p>| S: R? |
| R: yep? |
| S: can I see if anyone is outside? |
| R: yep |
| S: (inaudible) |
| L: I know, I know how to write my own name |
| R: you do, how do you spell your name L? |
| L: (inaudible) |
| R: (inaudible) |
| E: where's the paint brush? |
| R: I'll show you where your paint brushes are today, do you want to make, put your hands here, put your hands behind your back, wiggle your fingers, wiggle your fingers and (inaudible) there's your paint brush |
| E: your fingers aren't your paint brushes |
| R: we're going to pretend that they are paint brushes today (inaudible) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: (off screen) talks to R</td>
<td></td>
<td>R: you’ve got to hold the paper with your other hand E, that’s right S: (inaudible) R: pardon? S1: (inaudible) S: has it started? R: I have no idea (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New staff S1: enters room</td>
<td></td>
<td>S1: what have we offered during the week? R: well if you have a look I mean there is a lot of constructions and things (inaudible) down there (inaudible) three dimension construction S1: so three D construction’s there R: yep S1: collage R: collage yes S1: no papier mache R: no S1: no other construction R: mind you the constructions outside with the bricks (inaudible) L: (inaudible) S1: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talking: L</td>
<td></td>
<td>R: (inaudible) S1: (inaudible) R: you’re allowed to S1: playdough R: you can mix some of the colours, that looks good, what are you making there? (inaudible) S1: (inaudible) L: a house R: a house E: I’m making a (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: (off screen) talking: R</td>
<td></td>
<td>S: (inaudible) L: (inaudible) E: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: talking: S</td>
<td></td>
<td>R: nods “yes” S: (inaudible) R: yep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New child C comes in door stands and</td>
<td></td>
<td>S1: (inaudible) S: (inaudible) S1: (inaudible) S1: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wishing if the video is on? S1 filling in research questionnaire L wants more paint
| Observes. C turns to leave | R: nods "yes" hmmm  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Ch?: (off screen) talking: R | R: C would you like to come and do one?  
|--------------|-------------------|
| R: talking: L | (inaudible) string paintings  
|--------------|-------------------|
| R moves palette closer to E | Ch?: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: yes well done  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: that's lovely L. Is that the roof?  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | L: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: (inaudible), oh, that looks beautiful E you've used some beautiful colours there  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | L: (inaudible) got worm, um it's got a worm  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: has that bird got a worm? Where's it got the worm?  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | L: um, in its mouth  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: in its mouth and where's it taking the worm to?  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | L: (inaudible) feed it's baby  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: (inaudible) right  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | L: 'cos that's what birds do  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | L: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: (inaudible) the washing? (inaudible) what does it feel like the (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| New staff N comes to door, talks to R, S1 and S about a child with conjunctivitis | N: um, has, has J got stuff in his eyes?  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | S1: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | N: (inaudible) all running down there  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: C I think has spoken to his parents because I asked him and he said (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | N: 'cos he just went like that and touched something else  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | S1: oh yuck  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | N: yeah  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: yeah  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | S1: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | N: yeah  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: yeah, that was last week  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | N: not this week  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: last week, last week and (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | S1: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | N: I did it outside  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | S1: (inaudible)  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| R looks at E R stretches fingers as she | S1 still filling out questionnaire, conversation with N about art activities?  
|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                            | R: E that looks beautiful, you could, that (inaudible) lovely  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>talks</td>
<td>New Staff C2 enters (off screen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: is it just this last week?</td>
<td>New child E1 enters and stands at string painting table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1: (inaudible)</td>
<td>S1: stands and leaves table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2: (inaudible)</td>
<td>R looks back at E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: yeah</td>
<td>Conversation between N and C continues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: but no it won't it doesn't make any difference</td>
<td>N leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: um yeah, yeah</td>
<td>New child (?) enters and looks at both activities then leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: um C, J's eyes are quite bad</td>
<td>New child C2 enters and taps R on back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: very bad</td>
<td>R talking; C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1: can I do one (inaudible), can I do one</td>
<td>R leaves to get a cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: in fact it's running down his face</td>
<td>C2 sits at string painting table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: (inaudible) squish into it, good</td>
<td>L: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(inaudible) E, excellent</td>
<td>R: be careful not to put too much on the paper E or else what will happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td>E: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: right (inaudible) another piece of paper instead</td>
<td>R: or would you like to do a string painting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: (inaudible)</td>
<td>E: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: o.k E I need you to walk, let me get a cloth, wait here (inaudible)</td>
<td>C2: inaudible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R leaves to get a cloth.</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 sits at string painting table</td>
<td>R: I'm going to go and get a cloth E, just wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L:E sitting at fingerpaint table talking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R returns with cloth and wipes E's hands</td>
<td>R: here you go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: (inaudible) wipe my hands</td>
<td>R: (inaudible) oh Manu,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R helping E finish off, E sneezes.</td>
<td>R: did I need you, need you to (inaudible) picture on the table first (inaudible) oh bless you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R hands E his</td>
<td>R: are you going to carry it like that? Put it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture to put away</td>
<td>on the table, on the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R helps E put his picture on the table (off screen)</td>
<td>R: well done, that looks lovely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talking: E (off screen) E leaves</td>
<td>R: oh bless you (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R returns to fingerpainting table where L is sitting.</td>
<td>R: it's not as slimey as it was before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R wipes L's hands, L sneezes</td>
<td>L: yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talking: L</td>
<td>R: (inaudible) is this the bird? With the worm in its mouth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L applies more paint to his fingers</td>
<td>L: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: asking about a child's name</td>
<td>R: (inaudible) what are you going to do now? (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talking: S</td>
<td>R: J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R observes L</td>
<td>R: (inaudible) it looks like you're pinching your paint and dropping it onto your paper (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R turns to watch new child C3 coming in the door.</td>
<td>R: would you like to (inaudible) a painting, (inaudible) would you like to do a painting? (inaudible) to take home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talking: C3</td>
<td>C3: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3: sits at fingerpainting table.</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R observes L</td>
<td>L: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R writes C3's name on paper and hands the paper to him</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C3: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R: you can wash your hands after you've used the paint o.k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C3: (inaudible) my mum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C3: I'm doing one for my brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R: are you? A?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C3: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C3: (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R: good boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C3: you haven’t writed my name
R: (inaudible) on the back of the page (inaudible), which colour
E2: can I do one?
R: um E, would you mind waiting for one of them to finish and then you could come and sit here when L is finished, (inaudible) almost finished, E, E, (inaudible) string

C3: (inaudible)
R: (inaudible) feel like (inaudible)
C3: (inaudible)
R: what does it feel like (inaudible)
C3: (inaudible)
R: (inaudible)
L: (inaudible)
R: (inaudible)
C3: (inaudible)
R: do you?
C3: (inaudible)
R: that looks lovely (inaudible) colours (inaudible)
L: (inaudible)
R: (inaudible)
L: (inaudible)
R: do you?
L: (inaudible)
R: different shapes (inaudible) colours C3: (inaudible)
R: (inaudible)
E2: look there’s a E on there, a E
R: (inaudible) beautiful
E2: and, and that’s um, those are (inaudible) its eyes
R: (inaudible)
E2: but that’s (inaudible) butterfly
R: (inaudible) get a tissue E, you go and get a tissue for (inaudible)

E2: (inaudible) a butterfly
R: (inaudible)
E2: that’s an E
R: (inaudible) your name (inaudible)
| R turns E2’s picture upside down and looks at it R turns E2’s picture upside down again R hands E2’s picture back to her E2 walks back to the string painting table with her picture. R observes L:C3 at the fingerprinting table | E2: (inaudible)  
R: wow, and if you turn it that way there’s the other E  
R: (inaudible) E, (inaudible) on the table to dry  
E2: (inaudible)  
R: oh have you not finished yet  
R: (inaudible)  
L: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible) oh Manu is making a lot of noise again  
L: (inaudible)  
C3: (inaudible) my mum  
R: your mum  
C3: (inaudible)  
R: will she take it or (inaudible)  
C3: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible) she going to pick you up this afternoon  
C3: (inaudible)  
E2: can I watch?  
R: yes you can watch (inaudible)  
C3: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible) picking you up this afternoon, is mummy working?  
C3: (inaudible)  
R: oh  
L: that’s a bigger bird  
R: (inaudible) bird, it’s a nice coloured bird (inaudible) make it purple (inaudible) clever, oh look at that L (inaudible)  
L: (inaudible) E3  
R: here she comes | 121 | Talking about mirror image? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paint Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R observes L:C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L holds his hand up to R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R wipes L’s hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3 stands and holds his hands out to R</td>
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<tr>
<td>R gives C3 the cloth</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3 walks away from the table</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3 walks back to table</td>
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<tr>
<td>R: hands C3 his picture</td>
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<tr>
<td>E2 sits in C’s chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>R writes E2’s name on some paper and hands it to her</td>
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<tr>
<td>R observes L:E2 painting</td>
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<tr>
<td>R observes L:E2 painting</td>
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<tr>
<td>R writes L’s name on another piece of paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L continues to paint</td>
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<tr>
<td>R observes L:E2 painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S (off screen) talks to R</td>
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<tr>
<td>R observes string painting table</td>
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<tr>
<td>R observes L</td>
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<tr>
<td>R is watching string painting</td>
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<tr>
<td>L: orange</td>
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<td>R: orange</td>
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<tr>
<td>L: orange</td>
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<tr>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R: you actually did an experiment, a colour</td>
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<tr>
<td>while talking to L</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Child G comes to the door R looks outside and talks to G at the door. G leaves New child H comes inside and talks to R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talking: L</td>
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<tr>
<td>R talking: H</td>
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<tr>
<td>E2 has folded her picture in half and rubs the paper R observes E2 E2 peels the halves of her picture apart</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

R letting H know she can have a turn soon.

L colour mixing?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R moves resources around the table</td>
<td>R talks: H</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>H asking for a turn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talks: H</td>
<td>R writes E2’s and H’s names on some paper each E2 moves to the chair beside her</td>
<td>R conscious of H’s waiting time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2 moves to the chair beside her</td>
<td>R gives E2 a new piece of paper and places H’s paper on the table next to E2. H sits in the chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>R gives E2 a new piece of paper and places H’s paper on the table next to E2. H sits in the chair</td>
<td>New child E3 comes to the table</td>
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<tr>
<td>E3: can I please do one?</td>
<td>R: you need to wait for L to finish (inaudible)</td>
<td>R asking L if he is finished</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R: you going to go and wash your hands first L and I’ll (inaudible) stuck to the newspaper because it’s got glue in</td>
<td></td>
<td>S asking R about a child’s name</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E3: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R: (inaudible) share your, share your paints,</td>
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<tr>
<td>R: there you are E and H, there you are too, you can use some of these too</td>
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<tr>
<td>L stands</td>
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<tr>
<td>L turns to leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>S: (off screen) talks to R</td>
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<tr>
<td>R takes L’s picture to the drying table as she talks</td>
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<tr>
<td>E3 sits in L’s chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>R returns to the fingerpaint table and moves E3 to another chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>R pulls up H’s sleeves. R moves</td>
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<tr>
<td>E3: (inaudible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R: (inaudible), there you are (inaudible) different colours there are (inaudible) pull up your sleeves (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource around on table</td>
<td>R talks E3</td>
<td>R (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R talks E3</td>
<td>R: would you like me to pull up your sleeves E?</td>
<td>E2: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R observes E2</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R pulls up E2’s sleeves</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R returns to her seat, talks E2</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R observes E3</td>
<td>R: how about drawing a picture on there for me</td>
<td>E3: no I’m not finished</td>
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<tr>
<td>R stands and closes door then sits</td>
<td>R: you’re not finished (inaudible)</td>
<td>E3: (inaudible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R talking: E3</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R observes E3</td>
<td>R: I might do one too (inaudible) so much fun (inaudible) one finger</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R puts paint on her fingers</td>
<td>R: (inaudible) yellow on this finger</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R paints as she talks</td>
<td>R: look at what I’m doing now, I’m swishing it around</td>
<td>H: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R looks at H’s picture</td>
<td>R: you’re swishing it around (inaudible)</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R makes circle shapes with her hand over H’s picture as she talks</td>
<td>R: oh, that looks lovely, look at those beautiful shapes, (inaudible) shapes, look at those round shapes that you’ve made</td>
<td>H: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>R paints</td>
<td>R: very good H</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E3 holds her picture up for R to see</td>
<td>E3: (inaudible)</td>
<td>E: oh, (inaudible) picture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E2 stands</td>
<td>E3: yeah (inaudible) make another colour</td>
<td>R: (inaudible) picture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E3: (inaudible)</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R: (inaudible) enough (inaudible) here now</td>
<td>R: (inaudible)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E3 mixing colours?</td>
<td>E: I’m making a picture for you</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E3 has too much paint on her paper?</td>
<td>R: oh, is that for me? That is beautiful thank you E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not enough space on table?
| R stands | E2 takes her picture to R | E2: (inaudible) you, and that's a picture for you to take home  
R: I'll put it on my (inaudible) thank you very much |
| R puts E2's picture on the table to dry  
R returns to fingerpainting table and sits down  
E2 returns to seat | E3 talking: H  
R starts painting  
R talks as she paints | E3: how (inaudible) circle?  
R: oh, they look lovely don’t they?  
H: (inaudible)  
R: don’t you want to share your (inaudible) newspaper (inaudible) gluey (inaudible)  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible)  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible) all squishy  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: didn’t you?  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible) go and wash your hands (inaudible)  
H: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible) looks lovely, E you need to go and wash your hands love (inaudible) very sticky, they’ve got lots of glue on  
E2: (inaudible)  
H: (inaudible) |
| E2 leaves the table  
R talking: E2  
R stops painting | R talking: E3  
R talking: E2  
E2 walks out the door  
R starts painting | R: oh, lovely shapes you’ve made  
R: E, are you going to go and wash your hands?  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: that’s a good idea (inaudible)  
H: (inaudible)  
R: shall I draw a house too? Draw a triangle for the (inaudible), window, chimney, and what comes out the chimney?  
H: smoke  
R: oh, smoke, smoke, smoke (inaudible) fire going up  
E3 asking H how she made circles?  
Talking about how the paint feels?
| R stops painting and talks to E3 | H: (inaudible)  
R: there (inaudible) over here  
R: (inaudible) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| H observes R and E3             | R: until they dry, they will be stuck together, (inaudible) you’ll have to come home with me  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: you’ll have to come home with me  
H: when I put mine together (inaudible) |
| R and E3 hold hands together    | R: they are sticky aren’t they?  
H: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible)  
H: I don’t know  
R: (inaudible) into the paint  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: glue that’s right  
R: oh,  
E3: (inaudible) |
| H sticks her hands together and pulls them apart | R: would you like to go and put your paper on the table H?  
H: (inaudible) finished  
R: oh haven’t you finished yet, that’s alright (inaudible) |
| E3 and R pull their hands apart | R has noticed that S needs more paper. |
| H paints                        | R and E3 trying to stick their hands |
| E3 paints                       | R talking: H  
R holds paper out  
R observes E3:H  
R paints resources on fingerpainting table  
R observes E3:H  
R moves resources on fingerpainting table  
R and E3 hold hands  
R: (inaudible) see how it’s sticking to the newspaper  
E3: (inaudible)  
R: (inaudible) |
| R observes string painting      | R is concerned at the pictures drying on the table.  
| R holds paper out               | |
R and E3 blow on their hands
H observes E3 and R
H sticks hands together and pulls them apart
H paints
E3 walks towards door holding R’s hand.
R follows E3 outside
H stands and takes picture to table to dry
R and E3 stand outside holding hands
New child C and H1 approach R and E3
R walks back inside with E3
C walks outside
H1 follows R and E3
R points to E3’s picture on the fingerpainting table
E3 picks up her picture
R and E3 walk to table to put the picture down to dry.
R talks to H1 as she walks.

R and E3 go to wash their hands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R: (inaudible) H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Gone outside to dry hands?

R: (inaudible)
R: you’ll have to follow me

R: um (inaudible) your picture and put it on the table

H1: (inaudible) your hands

R: they’re stuck together
H1: well (inaudible) your hands
R: no they’re stuck
S: oh no what’s happened?
E3: we’re stuck with glue

Still holding hands