Early years curriculum materials

Looking at art and becoming artists





© The State of Queensland (Queensland Studies Authority) 2006; 295 Ann St Brisbane Queensland. PO Box 307 Spring Hill Qld 4004 Phone: (07) 3864 0299 Fax: (07) 3221 2553 Email: office@qsa.qld.edu.au Website: www.qsa.qld.edu.au

Links to early learning areas	Background This case study covers a 3–4 week period in a preparatory classroom in Term 4. Activities occurred throughout a variety of learning contexts — play, real-life situations, focused learning situations routines and transitions, and investigations. At the conclusion of the unit, and after visiting the Queensland Art Gallery, the teacher and children built an art gallery in the classroom. The case study includes the teacher's monitoring and reflections and the major links to the early learning areas of the <i>Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG)</i> .	Teacher monitoring and reflection
	Week 1	
	Observing and becoming aware	
Active learning processes — Imagining & responding Identify a variety of ways in which people, animals, places, and experiences are represented through the arts.	Story time: Viewing and interpreting the art elements at work Books used: The Very Blue Thingamajig by Narelle Oliver The Shape Game by Anthony Browne During story time, I focused the children's attention on the illustrations in the books selected (a list of all the books I used is at the end). I encouraged the children to compare illustrators from other stories. We discussed techniques used — drawings, photographs, paintings etc. We looked at the types of lines, shapes and colours that could be seen in the illustrations and discussed how they were used to create the illustrator's message. For example, we looked at how the illustrator outlined pictures to make the shape stand out.	The children were interested in focusing in on the illustrations. YS could quickly recognise an illustrator's style. The Shape Game story: children were interested to take this home in the take-home bag and play it with their family. The bags contained a story sketchbook and pencils.

Imagining & responding

Experiment with materials, processes, tools, movement, sounds or props while the children construct and create.

Explore and play with colour, line, shape, texture, size, and repetition while the children draw, paint, print, sculpt and model.

Investigation time Exploring the art elements

During investigation time children worked in small groups of three or four.

Day 1

The set investigation was to discover as many different types of lines that they could make. Children were given a variety of pens and pencils of varying thicknesses. At the end of their group time the children discussed words to describe the types of lines, e.g. *zigzag, dotted, straight, curved, curly, wavy, thin, thick*.

Day 2

The set investigation was to create the same type of lines using different mediums — paints vinyl, watercolour, pens, pencils, crayons and charcoal.

<image>

Day 3

The set investigation was to use the string line to create different shapes and describe these shapes. The group leader recorded the shapes made.

Day 4

The set investigation was to create a picture by using given attribute blocks. Each group was given the same combination of blocks. At the end of the activity time the children used a hot-potato technique to visit each group's work.

Day 5

The set investigation was to create as many different colours as possible from the three primary colours by mixing only two colours together.

Group work worked well due to modelling using the fish bowl technique on day 1.

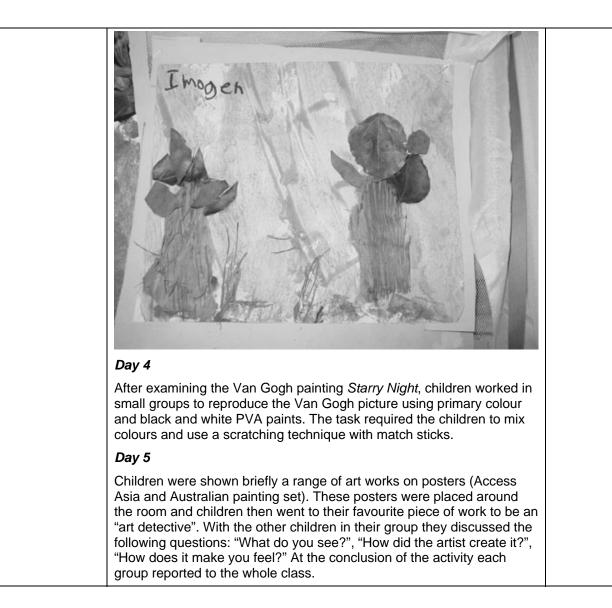
Group work activities separate JM, JF. Teacher aide to stick with HD.

Next time get children to do painting away from the carpeted area.

Oral language	Transition time	JM, GG, DR had difficulty with
Learn new vocabulary and extend language	1. Children were asked to describe the type of line drawn using one or two describing words, e.g. long, straight line or short, thick line. One child drew a line and chose another child to describe it.	difficulty with describing words.
structures in a range of contexts.	2. Surprise picture: I started out with one shape on a page and, as children went out the door, they added a line or shape to the picture.	Children loved the surprise picture activity.
Oral language Learn new	Language-learning time Developing a common language	Great conversations were happening.
vocabulary and	Day 1	Children were so
extend language structures in a range of contexts.	Children formed small groups and played a game of Eye Spy using the sheets that they created during investigation time, e.g. " <i>The line I can spy is a yellow curly thin line</i> ."	surprised that pictures were different.
Imagining &	Day 2	
responding Work	Children worked in pairs, collected a book from the library shelves and searched for different types of lines.	
collaboratively on a project or	Day 3	
real-life problem while the children generate, act upon, and evaluate ideas,	Listen and draw pictures: Children listened to my directions and added the given type of line or shape to the picture. For example, I would say, "Add a long squiggly line to the smallest shape on the page", or "Add a shape that has curved and straight lines". When the activity time was complete they shared their picture with a friend and discussed the differences between how they chose to add their features.	
designs and actions.	Day 4	
	Hot-potato pictures: Children sat in a circle with a drawing board, sheet of paper and pencil. I used describing words to indicate to children what to add to the paper. After each direction the children passed the paper to the next child in the circle in a clockwise direction.	
		This could have worked better if I had modelled the process first, and stressed to the children that they should add to the picture to make it look like something.

Imagining & responding Explore and play with colour, line, shape, texture, size, and repetition while the children draw, paint, print, sculpt and model.	Day 5 The discussion centred on messages that colours send (picture reading). For example, looking at the picture of a tap, I asked, "How can I tell it is a hot or cold water tap?" Street lights: "Can I go or stop?" "Day or night: "Is it light or dark?"; "How does camouflage work?" The book <i>Look: Body Language in Art</i> by Gillian Wolfe was used to discuss the messages that lines send. We looked at windy days when hair was blowing, how lines make facial expressions and the like.	Could extend this to give children the opportunity to add messages to pictures by adding colour or lines.
	Week 2	
	Exploring technique	
	Day 1 and Day 2: Let's be copy cats!	
	Investigation time	
	We took a good look at Eric Carle's work in his books:	
	Draw me a star.	
	Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What can you hear?	
Imagining &	Hello Mr Fox.	
responding Explore and play with colour, line, shape, texture, size, and repetition as they draw, paint,	Then we researched his technique (<i>The Art of Eric Carle</i>) and copied it. The children worked in small groups to create the base paper to work from. They dabbed colour on tissue paper. The different coloured paint pots were moved between groups using a hot-potato technique. With each new colour added to the tissue a different brush technique was used. For example, long brush strokes followed by short ones, and finally dabbing.	
print, sculpt and model.	The next day children worked in new groups of three, deciding which part of the Eric Carle's picture they were going to reproduce — the rainbow, trees, house, sun etc. They had to collect the squares of paper they needed from the previous day, draw the shaped needed and cut it out. When they had all their pieces they then glued them on to the whole-class picture sheet.	YS, IW, JW, AS, RT, LM all followed through at indoor time. They had fun experimenting
Imagining & responding	During indoor time some children worked to add the background using crayons.	with the materials.
Work collaboratively on a project or real-life problem while the children generate, act upon, and evaluate ideas, designs and actions.		Tissue paper background was very messy. Children loved the nature hunt and worked well creating pictures.

Imagining & responding Explore and play with colour, line, shape, texture, size, and repetition while the children draw, paint, print, sculpt and model.		YS expresses herself easily using knowledge of art elements.
Imagining & responding Reflect on artistic experiences and have children respond to their own and others' art works.	<i>Day 3</i> After looking at Jeannie Baker's stories, The Hidden Forest and Grandfather, the children created a collage background using blue and green tissue paper painted over with watered down craft glue. Later in the day the children went on a nature hunt to find and collect some bark, brown and green leaves, grass and dirt. When they returned with their packet full of materials they set about creating their own tree picture using a Jeannie Baker technique.	



	Our Starry Nights	
Imagining & responding Experiment with materials, processes, tools, movement, sounds or props while the children construct and create.	 Whole-group time Twenty minutes was set aside each day for children to draw from observations. Children sat in a circle while they drew a still-life picture. Each day a different medium was used: lead pencils, charcoal, felt pens, crayons. We discussed "point of view". The circle of children rotated around to help the children realise points of view. We discussed what could be seen and what sort of shapes and lines would be used to produce the still life. Children then worked on their own interpretation of what they were seeing. We used note-sized paper. 	Allowing children to work daily on observational drawings has provided for a build-up effect of skills. Children's pictures are more detailed.
Oral language Learn new vocabulary and extend language structures in a range of contexts.		Loved live models. EF, AS, HE, LM, YS, RT, TS, SW did fantastic work.

Imagining & responding Work collaboratively on a project or real-life problem while the children generate, act upon, and evaluate ideas, designs and actions. The subjects used: Day 1: old fashion set of scales Day 2: pencils in a container sitting on a box Day 3: artist's model. As a class we discussed how to use real-life models to sketch people doing different things. Using an artist's wooden model of a person, we investigated body proportions and positioning of limbs. I discussed and modelled how to add features and details to basic outlines. Children practised sketching using the model. Day 4: Live models: A child adopted a freeze position of throwing a basket ball. Children tried sketching from the front position and back position. Day 5: Children broke into small groups of five. Each child had a turn at being a model. Children chose their best sketch, cut it out and added it to a whole-class background.

	Week 3	
	Let's be artists: Making connections	
	Real-life experience During the week, two artists (grandparents of two of the children) came to visit. They brought framed works of art and all their tools. They spoke about why they painted, how they did it and the messages behind their paintings. Children asked questions at the end of the talks.	Great for children to see that artists are just like normal people. JW, LM and DD asked very good questions.
Imagining &	Whole-group activities	Children loved
responding	Investigations and focused learning & teaching	the competitive element. All
Work collaboratively	Day 1	groups worked well.
on a project or real-life problem while the children	Backgrounds: We looked at some artwork and discovered that most work has a foreground and a background. Very few works have white paper showing in the background. In groups of three we set about making backgrounds.	<i>Pictures would</i> <i>be better if the</i> <i>green in the tree</i>
generate, act upon, and evaluate ideas, designs and actions.	The set investigation was to discover the quickest way to make a background using wide or thin brushes. Children thought about and discussed which tools would be the quickest to use, and then they set about testing their ideas. One person was the judge while the other two children had a race to cover their half of the paper using the thin brush with green paint or the wide brush with blue paint. They swapped roles and retested their results.	was different from the green in the background. Having many
Imagining & responding Experiment with materials, processes, tools, movement, sounds or props while the	Later in the day we looked at these sheets of paper and discussed how the blue looked like the sky and the green could be the grass. We decided to do an outside painting using an easy subject — the children agreed on a tree. We discussed artist's tools: palettes, thin and thick brushes, water pots. We collected our own tools and went outside to paint the big tree. We talked about the shape and size of the trunk, branches, type of brush strokes needed, and we looked at the leaves and how the sky could still be seen through some parts. We decided on a dabbing technique for the leaves.	washing boxes worked well. Scraping off left over paint from pallets made great brown colour. Use tomorrow.
children construct and create.	When the children finished their work they cleaned their brushes, pallets and water pots, ready for use another day.	Repetition of tree subject allowed for build
	Later in the day we revisited these paintings to sign them like artists do. We discussed what the children thought looked effective and why, and which brush was best for which job, etc.	up of skill. All children's skills improved. HD, JM, JD, JR, needed support.
Imagining & responding Respond to situations and problems by imagining or envisaging alternatives and new possibilities.		Most children chose water colour backgrounds — quick and easy. Lots of positive comments about each others' work.

-

Imagining &	Day 2	
work collaboratively on a project or real-life problem while the children generate, act upon, and evaluate ideas,	Children made watercolour backgrounds for another tree painting. We discussed the horizon and how it could look different by varying the type of line and its position on the page. Children painted their background and compared it with a friend's painting. While the backgrounds dried, we went to look at the trees in the playground. We decided to paint a large yellow flowering tree. We discussed its features, the brush techniques to use, how to create the varying shades of green by using white and black. Children collected their tools, found a place in the playground to position themselves and set to work reproducing the tree.	Loved this activity. Stimulated lots of conversations among the children. Some groups had trouble agreeing.
designs and actions.	Day 3	
	Your choice	
	Children prepared a background using water paints, vinyl paints, crayons or torn paper. Later in the day the children used these backgrounds to go outside and paint a picture that had more than one tree but less than four trees. Children chose their own trees and revisited them when the paintings were dry. Children chose partners and went outside to see which trees were in the painting.	
	Day 4	
	Children went on a search with magnifying glasses and bottles for insect collecting. What can we find near and on trees? We returned to class with our bottles filled — ants, a bee, a lady beetle and daddy long- legs spider. Children formed groups and observed the insects in the bottles. The groups moved around the bottles using a hot-potato technique. The class discussed how to draw the features and size of each of these creatures. Children then collected one of their tree paintings and, using felt pens, added some creatures and children to their paintings.	
	Day 5	
	Designing backgrounds	
	We looked at <i>Bollygum</i> by Garry Fleming and discussed the different types of backgrounds that could be used — bush, desert, beach, etc. Children were shown a stimulus picture of two animals fighting; the background was just white. Children formed small groups and in their groups created their background. Later they returned to their work and placed the animals onto the backgrounds. The class group reflected on their finished work and discussed the techniques used to camouflage the animals or make animals stand out. Children were encouraged to compare the colours used in the different backgrounds.	

	EF: C-H-	
Oral language	Indoor playtime	CH, LM, YS had detailed
Exchange information by providing, and listening for, ideas and information	During indoor playtime children continued to experiment with the techniques that they discussed during investigation time and they produced their own artworks. I encouraged the children to discuss their artworks during reflection time. Children decided to make a mini-gallery in the classroom for all these works of art. Children who had been to a gallery became the experts in small groups and discussed things that they had seen there and their understanding of how a gallery worked.	knowledge of galleries. CH, SW stimulated the café idea. HD,
using explanations, descriptions, and recollections to make meaning.	We then met back as a whole class and discussed the rules of a gallery and the types of work found in them. We talked about the need for signage and framing. The owners of artworks titled and framed their works while others made signs for the gallery ("Please don't touch", "Open", "Closed", "Camp Hill Prep Gallery"). The gallery walls were made from material sheets hung over the classroom wires. Throughout the week the children's play centred on the gallery. The children set up a gallery café. A tour guide conducted tours of the gallery. Security guards patrolled the area and artists contributed more artworks.	JR joined in. They don't usually mix. DD added a great block sculpture to the gallery. By the end of the week most children in the class were involved in gallery play.

	Story time	
	I read stories about art galleries in order to stimulate the children's interest in going to visit the Queensland Art Gallery. I used:	
	Katie Meets the Impressionists by James Mayhew	
	Dogs' Night by Meredith Hooper and Allan Curless	
	The Gallery Cat by Stella Blackstone and Tony Ross	
	Let's go to the Art Museum by Virginia Levy.	
	Real-life experience	
Thinking Plan, gather and organise information to help manage a task or situation, or solve a	The children decided that they would like to visit the Queensland Art Gallery, so I organised an excursion to the gallery. (I had already organised and booked this excursion in expectation of the children's interest.)	
	Together the children and I planned the day.	
	The children:	
	helped to make the permission notes to the parents	
real-life problem.	set the expectations for behaviour during the excursion	
	• made their own checklists of things to bring on the excursion day	
	organised the tour groups for the gallery visit	
	helped organise the timetable for the day.	
	(They decided that they wanted to have morning tea in the gallery café.)	

Week 4 Gallery visit:		
Imagining & responding Reflect on artistic experiences and have children respond to their own and others' artworks. Oral language Exchange information by providing, and listening for, ideas and information using explanations, descriptions, and recollections	 Day 1 Language-learning time Following the gallery visit, children took part in reflection time. An inside–outside-circle-sharing technique was used for this time. Children shared their ideas about the excursion. Children then recorded a personal reflection about artworks by drawing the one they like the most. They used computers to record their matching stories. Investigation time Dead flowers: Children worked as a team. Each team was given a different medium with which to work — pastels, crayons, watercolours, vinyl paints and pencils. The children discussed what the flowers would have looked like before they died and produced a picture of them. When each group was finished one spokesman for each group spoke about the features, choice of colour, shape etc. they used to create their picture. 	Reflections revealed how much children gained from the Gallery visit. More than I thought! Children's reflections were very detailed. Genuine interest was shown in viewing others' work.
to make meaning. Oral language Learn new vocabulary and extend language structures in a range of contexts. Imagining & responding Work collaboratively on a project or real-life problem while the children generate, act upon, and evaluate ideas, designs and actions.	Day 2 Language-learning time I gave half the children a photo that I took during the excursion. (I gave these to beginning writers.) They chose a partner, discussed the picture and recorded their ideas with their partners. Investigation time Children worked in small groups. I gave them a list of objects to collect. They needed to collect the objects as a team and work together to construct a sculpture. At the end of the activity time the children viewed each group's work and compared their ideas.	Worked well teaming writers with those still beginning. Easier this way to get around to all groups. HD, JM and GG had problems cooperating with group. JF, JD, JM, DR had poor cutting and framing skills, needed support.

		JR offered to be computer technician for sign making. DR, JM, HD, GG were the only ones who needed support.
		JM, GG only two who didn't organise time to get an invitation done before tidy- up time. TS, SW, SM RT, JW, IW, CH, BW had great patterning.
	Day 3	Children had fun
Early literacy	I gave children time to view and reflect on all the artwork they had produced over the previous few weeks. They discussed with a friend the works they liked the most and why.	doing this. JM, HD, GG needed support.
Construct and co-construct different types of texts for a range	After looking at all the wonderful work it was decided that we should have a special art gallery showing for the parents and school community to come and enjoy. The walls of the room were sectioned off so that each child had their own space. They busily made computer-	YS, LM supported them.
of personal and group purposes.	generated signs for their gallery area and framed their paintings. A web was used to collaboratively plan the event with the children. This included:	EL, TS, SM all took on the measuring of the
	invitations	water. EL had problems
	• signage	with counting.
	• gallery — jobs, entry tickets, different types of art hanging	DR, CH, AS, SW took on the
Thinking	 café — food — biscuits and a cool drink (water) 	ticket-making
Plan, gather and organise information to	 people on the day — human sculptures, security guards, tour guides, café staff. 	role. DR needed help with numbers past 10.
help manage a task or situation, or solve a real-life problem.	We discussed the time and date and marked them on the calendar. I produced an invitation template on the computer with the help of the children.	EF, BW, DD, EL, HE, RT did a good job of describing what they had done and why.
L		•



GG, HD, JD didn't contribute to their groups.

Indoor playtime

During their indoor play, it was each child's responsibility to produce their invitations. They organised their time to print out a copy, write who it was to and decorate it.

Children made signs for the gallery and café. Each letter needed to be patterned and cut out. Children happily took on this task.

Transition time

I gave each child a letter that made up the two signs. The words were on the white board. They needed to organise themselves into the word groups and then into the correct order. When the children were organised they sat down and as a class we checked the result. The children who made the sign for the café put cardboard backing in their letters. After each child put their letter up on the wall for the café sign and gallery sign, they moved off to the lunch area.

Day 4

Indoor playtime

Children were involved in:

- making jam drop biscuits
- filling the water containers with enough water for 35 visitors
- making tickets to admit people into the gallery
- as well as their usual self-directed play.

Investigation time

How does your garden grow?

Children worked in groups of four. I gave each group a different medium to work with — blocks, collage, water paints, pastels, clay. Children worked together to design, create and communicate the idea of a growing garden. At the end of the activity time, a hot-potato strategy was used to share their work. One member of the group stayed with the artwork to answer any questions.

Open day for the Prep Gallery and Café		
Thinking Plan, gather and organise information to help manage a task or situation, or solve a real-life problem.	Open day for the Prep Gallery and Café Day 5 At the start of the day the children worked together to create the café area outside the classroom. The children worked in teams to: • move tables and chairs • create a serving counter • organise the cups, plates and water bottles • set up a cash register to collect the coin donation. Inside the classroom teams of children: • moved unnecessary furniture to the sides of the room	Day worked well. Parents, and year 1 Teachers provided very positive feedback. All children took their role seriously and carried it out well.
	 moved dinnecessary furniture to the sides of the form positioned drama boxes for the live sculptures set up a front-desk counter with a cash register to collect coin entry in exchange for an entry pass. All children were allocated jobs (live sculptures, café waiters, food preparers, security guards, tour guides, front-desk staff) and work badges. Children formed groups with others that had the same job and discussed what their job would look and sound like. Group leaders reported back to the class for feedback on their ideas. The children and I discussed and modelled different roles. 	Tour guides gave great explanations and answered questions well. Security guards spoke to a couple of people but handled it really well.

Useful books to stimulate ideas and reinforce concepts		
	Mayhew, James, 1999, <i>Katie Meets the Impressionists</i> , Orchard Books, New York.	
	Reynolds, Peter, 2003, The Dot, Candlewick Press, Cambridge, MA.	
	Wheatley, Nadia and Ottley, Matt, 1999, <i>Luke's Way of Looking</i> , Hodder Children's, UK.	
	Blackstone, Stella and Ross, Tony, 2004, <i>The Gallery Cat</i> , Barefoot Books, Bath, UK.	
	Micklethwait, Lucy, 1994, <i>I Spy a Lion: Animals in Art</i> , Greenwillow Books, New York.	
	Micklethwait, Lucy, 1996, <i>I Spy a Freight Train: Transportation in Art</i> , Greenwillow Books, New York.	
	Northeast, Brenda, 1995, <i>For the love of Vincent</i> , Reed Books, Australia (at <u>http://www.bearsgallery.com/</u> , accessed 21/12/2005).	
	Northeast, Brenda, 1997, <i>For the love of Auguste</i> , Reed Books, Australia (at <u>http://www.bearsgallery.com/</u> , accessed 21/12/2005).	
	Bancroft, Bronwyn, 2005, <i>An Australian ABC of Animals</i> , Little Hare, Australia.	
	Morgan, Sally, 1996, Dan's Grandpa Fremantle Arts Centre Press.	
	Queensland Government, ArtWorks Queensland (at <u>http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/publicartagency/art_built-in_projects.asp</u>), accessed 21/12/2005.	
	Green, Mona, 1984, <i>The Echidna and the Shade Tree</i> , Scholastic, Australia.	
	Wolfe, Gillian, 2003, Look: Body Language in Art, Francis Lincoln, UK.	
	Levy, Virginia, 1983, <i>Let's Go to the Art Museum</i> , Veejay Publications, Pompano Beach, FL.	
	Carle, Eric, 1995, <i>Draw me a star</i> , Penguin Books.	
	Martin Jr, Bill and Carle, Eric, 1997, <i>Polar Bear Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?</i> Puffin Books.	
	Carle, Eric, 1998, Hello Red Fox, Simon & Schuster.	
	Eric, Carle, 1996, The Art of Eric Carle, Philomel Books.	
	Oliver, Narelle, The Very Blue Thingamajig, Scholastic Australia.	
	Fleming, Garry, 1995, <i>Bollygum</i> , Weldon Kids.	
	Baker, Jeannie, 2005. The Hidden Forest, Walker Books.	
	Baker, Jeannie, Grandfather, Scholastic Australia.	
	Browne, Anthony, The Shape Game.	
	Hooper, Meredith and Curless, Allan, Dogs' Night.	

Reynolds, Peter H., The Dot.	
Moon, Nicola, <i>Lucy's Picture</i> .	
Chambers, Joan and Watson, Sophia, Art in the Sun.	
Art Picture Pack, Lower Primary Blake Education.	
Stimulus cards for a meaningful Visual Arts program.	
Poster set: Access Asia and Australian painting set.	

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Felice Eastwood, teacher at Camp Hill Infants State School and the children in the Prep Year.