**REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ENTRIES**

**JOURNAL ENTRY 1**

1.  What does the process approach to arts learning mean in practical terms?

A process approach enables learners to develop meaning and knowledge that is constructed through doing - hands on, rather than information based instruction.  Learners "learn" through interactive experiences, which also allow students to be responsible for their own learning and knowledge construction.

2.  What are your ideas of how you think children learn?

I feel children learn through engaging in activities that are based around their existing interests, knowledge and needs, with a hands on, active approach, and opportunities to explore.  Every child has their own learning styles, and children need learning opportunities that are child directed, and that develop imaginative play to support these learning styles.

3.  If someone asked you, "Why do you teach the arts?" how would you respond?

Teaching the arts offers children opportunities to interact to make sense of their world through creativity.  It enables a child to develop in many ways that support their learning, and fosters self confidence through fun and engaging ways.  Children also develop an ability to be creative and think creatively, using imagination, critical thinking, problem solving and making decisions.  Engaging children in cultural arts also develops cultural awareness, and skills in communication. The arts is essential for offering opportunities for children to develop higher order skills, that extends their knowledge, not just within the arts, but across multiple curriculum areas.

4.  What is the value of the arts to a child's growth and development?

There are a wide range of benefits from children engaging and more importantly, interacting in the arts, on their growth and development, including the development of their right brain, which further enhances a child's growth and development dramatically in many areas which include:

      1. Communication skills- such as visual skill development;expression of feelings and thoughts through non-verbal means

      2. Problem solving and decision making-children experiment to test possibilities to make their own assessments of 'how' and 'why' what works and doesn't work.  Children are able to try new ideas and take risks;

      3. Social and emotional skills - children develop skills in taking turns and sharing; acknowledging the skills of others aand their own.  Children also develop a sense of self worth, and pride in their achievement, that are individual or unique to themselves;

      4. Fine motor skills - children develop these skills through the use of paintbrushes, scissors and other equipment;

      5. Self-expression and creativity - "allows children to work through feelings and emotions", as they explore, discover and experiment and develop inventiveness (Kohl, 2014).

      6. Cultural awareness - children can develop an awareness of arts and crafts used throughout other cultures-what, how, and why-and discover new skills and recognition and understanding of meanings in other cultures;

      7. Improved academic awareness - Children who regularly participate in the arts, have been shown to have higher academic achievement across other curriculum areas, than those who do not participate in regular arts opportunities (Lynch, 2014).

      8. knowledge development, understandings and skills that "contribute to intellectual, social, emotional and physical development (Edwards, 2014, p. 16).

Edwards, L. (2014). The Creative Arts: A Process Approach for Teachers and Children. (5th ed.). Essex: Pearson Education.

Lynch, G. H. (2014). The Importance of Art in Child Development. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/music-arts/the-importance-of-art-in-child-development/

Kohl, M. F. (2014). The Importance of Art in a Child's Development. Retrieved from http://www.barnesandnoble.com/u/maryann-kohl-importance-of-art/379002442/

**JOURNAL ENTRY 2**

In your reflective journal write down what experiences you can remember about the visual arts you experienced at school and home. Did it have predetermined outcomes such as the whole class making a snow man that were all exactly the same or was it more individualised? Do you think your visual arts experiences helped or hindered your creativity?

I grew up on a farm, and don't have many memories of a time at home, engaging in the visual arts.  My experiences were mainly with craft activities, such as the old fashioned paper doll-the kind of precut dolls and their clothing that one pressed out of a book; sewing; and cooking -if that could be considered a visual art with some of the creations I made.  Apart from these, there were colouring in books, but my adventures were mainly in the great outdoors creating my own play opportunities.  I don't really remember being involved in art, until my high school years, when I enjoyed being involved in lino prints and art, although I was never good at drawing or being creative with my own ideas, but was good at "borrowing" an idea from a magazine and adapting it to my own ideas.  Any involvement in art, was definitely guided by predetermined outcomes, with lino printing.

I would say my visual arts experiences definitely hindered my ability to be creative in those earlier years, as free play and opportunities to create my own meaning and develop skills in these areas, were not part of my education.

**JOURNAL ENTRY 3**

**Reflection -** **What art 'speaks' to you? What do you like and why?**

Go and visit an art gallery (it can be a virtual gallery online or even the attached PowerPoint, but try to get to a 'real' gallery if at all possible). Choose three pictures that 'speak' to you out of the collection for whatever reason and in your reflective journal, briefly reflect on why those particular artworks impacted on you. Was it the colour? What it represented? The emotion it provoked? For those that visited a gallery, how did the art gallery make you feel? How would children feel there? Why is it important that we understand what art we as teachers appreciate? How can that help the students we teach?

While my local area has a small art gallery displaying works of local artists, it occasionally has much larger displays.  However, this is never quite the same experience as visiting a huge museum in big cities, probably because the aesthetics of the room changes as the area can be utilised for other productions such as author visits and book signings.

When I have looked at artwork online, I try to imagine what I see, as if I'm viewing it in a large art museum to experience the atmosphere, as it is a much different experience visiting the bigger museums.

From the images I have chosen, the colours, followed by the designs and mediums are what has most impact initially.  When I further examine the artworks, I question what message the artist is possibly trying to say, through their use of lines, shapes, mediums used, colours, followed by how the artwork makes me feel - happy, sad, angry, and a whole range of other possibilities.

Children who have never experienced museums, especially large ones in cities, may find the experience overwhelming with the surroundings.  Visiting and viewing art works in real, large museums rather than viewing a museum/images online, offers a whole new world of experiences.  Whether it is the echo, the quiet, calmness of the surroundings, the size of the artwork compared to a much smaller image on a computer screen, the lighting or often, tall, big walls, can create a different perspective when viewing art.

Understanding art teaches us to consider other points of view and to be open to other possibilities, such as knowing what exists, why it was done, the history behind the art and understanding the aesthetics surrounding words.  This is essential for teachers to understand these elements, to enable real world experiences for children to develop their own knowledge and skills.

Our own understanding of the art we appreciate is important to encourage children to view their own world with enthusiasm and create meaning from what they see, hear, touch, feel and think. If we don’t show an appreciation for the elements association with art, it would be difficult to provide learning opportunities that allow children to develop in this way. However, we need to remember, that each of us develops our own meaning from what we see, and it may be entirely different to what a child experiences. There is also probably a different meaning that the artist painted the picture, and what message they hope to send

**JOURNAL ENTRY 4**

**Drawing skills**

**1. Draw a face.** How did you fell with your end product?

I wish I hadn't read the article "Art is making, creating and appreciating", before I attempted this exercise.  As far as drawing a face goes, I only ever used basic eye shapes, with eyelashes and eyebrows; a nose, mouth and ears, but after reading the article, I discovered how to draw a face that is more realistic, with the positioning of the eyes, the addition of the tear ducts and eyelid lines.  Although I have seen the Durer device in action before, I hadn't made any connection, that the eye positions, were so close to the centre of the face.  My drawing of a face, was a little different to the article, particularly with the positioning of the eyes, but generally, was similar.  
  
**2. Draw a map of where you live.** Was this easier? Why?

Drawing a map of where I live was much easier.  I think it was because the position of my location is more relevant to my knowledge developed at an earlier age, and has more meaning to me than drawing faces.  
  
**3. Collect 5  two children's drawings of faces**. What do you see?  
When viewing children's drawings of faces, I saw many of the signs of symbolic stage, where children used shapes to depict body parts in particular; basic blobs for eyes; a swipe of paint, pencil, or crayon line for a smiley mouth, and similar for hair.  Positioning of these features on a face, remarkably, are situated in positions consistent with a real face, which I would think shows meaning from what children see and experience from an early age.

**4. Attempt an 'Upside down Drawing'.** With the drawing upside down, attempt to copy it onto a piece of paper.  
  
**Try and concentrate and draw uninterrupted.**   
  
What happened? What was the most difficult part and perhaps the part you were most dissatisfied with? Why was this so?

I found this exercise quite confusing to master, although it depended on what image I was trying to draw upside down.  A simple sketch or image, was okay to copy, but I didn't have much success with a more difficult image, so I wasn't satisfied with it at all.  I think it is partly due to the connection the brain makes with what is normal in our usual view - we are not used to seeing things upside down, or working in reverse, so it isn't a comfortable way of working - it is outside the norm, or a "mental conflict" (Edwards, 1981).  If it was an exercise we engaged with often, our brains would make the connections between working in reverse.  In saying this, the use of a mirror, to illustrate mirror images, is a useful way to at least begin the exercise to achieve some success.  
  
**5. Draw a Vase -** Draw your profile on one side of your paper. Trace over it a number of times. Without looking at it again attempt to draw your profile again, opposite the first profile. Colour it in. Do you have a vase?

I did end up with a vase, however although the new vase matched the general shape, it did not exactly replicate the size of the original drawing.

**6. Contour drawing -**Look at an object, finger, ring, watch etc and draw without looking at the paper or taking your pencil off the page. How did it turn out. This activity illustrates how to draw what you see and how we interpret what we have drawn by how we know it should look!! This is what intimidates us as we draw!

I used a finger to carry out this exercise, firstly practicing it by looking and copying, which turned out okay.  The exercise drawing the object without looking at the paper or taking the pencil off the page, was better than I thought, but certainly made me value the ability to have visual/sight senses.  I can understand how this intimidates us as we draw.  The way we perceive something and the way it actually is, can be vastly different.  
  
**7. Landscape/house drawing -** Do a drawing of a landscape and/or a house.  
  
**Collect 2 children's landscape drawings. What do you see?**

There were variations in landscape drawings, although most seemed to use the symbolic shapes for houses - squares, triangles; circles for the sun; although further shapes were used to depict rainbows and trees.  Often children appear to be taught to draw objects using symbolic shapes, (as with building through blocks, boxes etc) a square house, with square windows, and a triangle for the roof, and rectangles for doors. Mountains and rivers were generally correct in their shapes, and I wonder if this knowledge comes from their experiences of what they see in books, or experience in their lives.

References:

Edwards, B. (1981). Drawing on the right side of the brain. London: Souvenir Press.

Jane, S. (1999). Drawing a face. *Art is... ...2: making, creating and appreciating*. Qld.: Jacaranda.

**JOURNAL ENTRY 5**

* Did you ever play a musical instrument and do you still?

I have played piano since a young age.  While studies and "life" tend to get in the way at present, I still occasionally get all my favourite pieces out and play them, and at times, find a new piece to learn.  Although as a young child, we owned a keyboard, I didn't engage with it much, however approximately 15 years ago, I purchased an electric keyboard, which has so much more to offer in playing music, with accompaniments; rhythms and sounds, but while both instruments can be used to play the same music, each instrument offers its' own unique styles.  I have experimented with guitar at a young age, but gave up after getting blisters on my thumb.  During my adult years, I recommenced guitar lessons, but again, studies and "life" tended to put a hold on relearning.

* If you did was the decision made for you or by you?

Apparently it was my choice to play piano.  I was left at a family friends house who owned a piano, while my parents attended a funeral.  It was during this time, that I started playing tunes on the piano, after which I asked my parents if I could learn to play the piano.

* Why do you think that might have been?

I have always had an interest in music, and although I can't remember the time when I first experimented with the family friends piano, I believe our desire to engage in forms of art or music, needs to be developed from an interest or natural spark from within.  It may also come from living on a farm, with no access to television, and our only available source of entertainment apart from exploring the great outdoors, was through old fashioned records.

**JOURNAL ENTRY 6**

My Philosophy before reading Module 4:

\* hands on learning

\* consistency

\* diversity

\* enthusiatic

\* fun, fair and friendly learning environment

My philosophy after reading Module 4:

While elements of my philosophy are still relevant after reading this module, I notice that I hadn't included the arts as a basis for teaching and learning experiences, but as an added extra within other curriculum areas.

It is vital to remember that "The arts can provide support for social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development", through a wide variety of areas including drama, music, painting, craft and dance.

**JOURNAL ENTRY 7**

My Philosophy before reading Module 4:

\* hands on learning

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My philosophy after reading Module 4:

While elements of my philosophy are still relevant after reading this module, I notice that I hadn't included the arts as a basis for teaching and learning experiences, but as an added extra within other curriculum areas.

It is vital to remember that "The arts can provide support for social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development", through a wide variety of areas including drama, music, painting, craft and dance.

**JOURNAL ENTRY 8**

* **How confident am I with the arts-the skills, processes, concepts, appreciation, and arts literacy?**

I believe a certain element of confidence must come from wanting to develop a connection with the arts and the way in which I view the arts as an important and essential process for students learning. A necessary part of being able to provide learning opportunities in the arts, is to have an understanding of processes, concepts and knowledge of literacy and appreciation of the arts, to really gain an in-depth knowledge, and for further development. While I feel confident in many areas of the arts, I would find it difficult to pretend I am confident in many areas, as I believe we as teachers, continue to learn alongside our students, and with new ideas, arts, skills, processes and concepts continuously developed, it is important to continuously learn.

·                **How can I improve my knowledge and skills in this area?** Learning by doing; discovering areas and skills that students already have that are different to mine; engaging in practical sessions; reading and extending my knowledge and skills through videos; online presentations; courses; and other people skilled in different areas is important.

·                **Is it important that I have this knowledge?** I believe it is essential to have some knowledge in these areas to be able to competently provide relevant information for students, or to know who else to seek assistance from. It is difficult to pass on relevant knowledge to encourage and develop students’ knowledge, experiences and learning opportunities without it.

·                **How have I learned about the arts to date? Why?** The arts that I have learnt to date have been entirely based on my own interests and opportunities provided throughout my schooling. Some of these arts have engaged me in learning that I would not have experimented with, if the knowledge and opportunities to experience them had not been given by the teacher. Others, have been developed with a personal interest, some of which have been connected to experiences (or lack of), throughout my informative years. An example of this has been through dolls. While as a small child growing up on a farm, I had more of an interest in kittens and cats than dolls; however, in my adult years, the opportunity presented to learn and make porcelain dolls which I took up with great interest.

·                **How has my own learning shaped my attitude to the arts?** My own learning has been mainly product based learning, and this has shaped my attitudes to the arts. While I like to think of myself as creative, I do believe my high school/early adult years were not as creative as they could have been.

·                **What will I teach young children about the arts?** I will guide young children to engage in opportunities that enable them to explore and teach themselves and discover about a wide variety the arts, through hands on learning, inspiring them to be creative, explore different styles and techniques and different mediums that make art such as drama, music, to engage in all their senses.

·                **What do I expect of young children and their capabilities in the arts?**  Some young children may not have had any or very little exposure to the arts. As each child has their own unique talent, knowledge and experience of art, the main expectations I will have of young children and their capabilities in the arts, is that each child has their own unique talent, knowledge and experiences, and expect them to engage in learning that is hands on, fun and fair, that caters for the diversity within the classroom and encourage all children to experiment with opportunities for collaboration.

·                **How have these expectations been shaped?** Through my own changeable and developing knowledge in the arts, and particularly through further readings; and this unit, my expectations have been shaped to understand that being creative is not just about being able to create a product based object, guided by others.

**JOURNAL ENTRY 9**

In the reflective journal discuss whether you feel you were imaginative as a child and why/why not that might have been. Are you imaginative now? Why?

As a young child, I believe I was very imaginative.  I grew up on a farm, and we did not have access to television.  I had an older brother, who had different interests to me, and no-one my age close by to play with, so being imaginative was a way I could engage in safe play, and be entertained rather than bored.  Part of the reason I feel this imagination developed, was through being able to develop experiences that were relevant and real for me and my situation.  Often, this imagination was further developed on real world experiences-I remember being at school, and coming home, to ride my bike around the farm, pretending I was the bus driver; the teacher; and at times the student.  I really enjoyed the school drama productions and Christmas Nativity events at an early age, and wanted to be involved in every one, although we didn't have many

I do believe I am still imaginative, however particularly in the area of painting/drawing, I'm not really imaginative, unless I can build on other ideas.  An example of this was the "tree" I created in my previous workplace, using real sheets of bark, to wrap around an indoor pole.  This idea was developed out of "The Family Tree" book, combined with my own imagination.  As far as imagination with drawing and art, I feel these areas were not developed at an earlier age through experiences that were process based.

**JOURNAL ENTRY 10**

**Think back to the beginning of the semester. Has your understandings of The Arts changed? If so, how?**

**Critically reflect on your own learning, previously, from additional reading and in this unit; if you had the opportunity to effect change overnight about an issue around children and The Arts what would it be?**

**Think about the EYL framework in relation to The Arts. How can the EYLF be present within The Arts curriculum and how do you see the EYLF's overarching influence impacting on your preparation of teaching The Arts.**

**Have you seen any evidence of the overarching influence of EYLF in any of the schools or services you have worked in and if so how?**

Since the beginning of the semester, my understandings of The Arts, has altered dramatically. Although I was aware of many elements within the arts, I had not really considered the advantages of empowering children with opportunities to engage them in process based learning, rather than specifically product based learning and how these opportunities impact on a child’s freedom to explore and create in a safe environment.

If I had the opportunity to effect change overnight, I would ensure children had more opportunities to be creative and learn through other curriculum areas, supported with The Arts. Many children learn product based arts in schools; however, developing an awareness of the importance of process based learning is vital. Therefore, I would embed other curriculum areas, into The Arts, rather than The Arts, as a part of other curriculum areas.  I would also provide more opportunities for children to engage across all the areas of The Arts, as many children may only be given opportunity to learn across minimal areas.  It is important to enable children to learn through all forms of The Arts - Dance, drama, music, media and visual arts.

The EYLF can be supported within The Arts curriculum as areas such as outcome 1 and 5, are particularly relevant to support a child’s development in safe environments. The Arts assists children to feel a strong sense of identity when they can be creative, and when opportunities are given to demonstrate their own cultural identity. Learning outcome 5 also assists children to become effective communicators, through creative means, that is their own creations. I have not yet seen evidence of the overarching influence of EYLF in any of the schools or services I have worked in so far.