

Collage Conversations- A Case Study

Sally Appadu, Gilbertstone Primary School

Background

Since July 2007 I have been working on a project entitled Collage Conversations with Linda Jane James, a visual artist.

Our shared interest was based around the power of visual language. We decided to complete our own individual personal collage journals, in 2 books bought from a charity shop. We met in various locations including art galleries and local cafes and created various shared collages. We both brought with us media images from childhood and business which complimented both our professional backgrounds.

As our meetings progressed it became clear that we could not only have non verbal conversations using collage techniques but that this process was an exploratory, thought provoking and a creative one. On our last meeting at the Tate Gallery in London, we completed a collage together. When analysing the finished piece in our discussions we found that key themes from our subconscious minds appeared to emerge. Images that were important to us as individuals stood out as we analysed our finished collage piece.

Practical Context at Gilbertstone Primary

In order to compare a personal experience of collage techniques to the pupil's perspective, I decided to complete a shared collage with my year 1 class. I wanted to answer the following questions:

- ***What images would the children choose from a selection of comics and catalogues?***
- ***Would these images mean to each child?***
- ***What are the conclusions from this research enquiry?***



Pupils selected images that personally appealed to them. Overwhelmingly 27 out of the 27 boys all chose superheroes that they aspire to be like or superhero toys that they were hoping for a birthday or Christmas present.

To support this finding when questioning the children on their selection of images, pupils said.....

“I’ve got the Ben 10 one I want to be like him look at it, its there. I’m going to stick it here....” (in the middle of the paper)

“This is great I love cutting out especially Ben 10”



The images that the girls selected were more varied. They included dolls, jewellery, fairies, suitcases, trampolines and tents.

Following the shared collage, I discussed with the class the collage process and asked them why they had selected their chosen image. The pupils gave me very detailed and enthusiastic reasons about their choice of image. I wanted to see if this enthusiasm would translate onto the page of their news books. So I gave them the opportunity to write a recount on the day we made a class collage.

A Positive response to writing

The children were all very well motivated to write a recount of our collage and this enthusiasm seemed to have a positive effect on their writing. Without exception the pupils' writing for each ability range was of an excellent quality.

Conclusions

The pupils were well motivated to write and this was because they had a positive emotional attachment to the collage process. Writing had a purpose because they wanted to tell the reader about the image that they had selected.

This research enquiry has led me to think that there may be many opportunities to link subjects together to make learning more meaningful for children. In this research enquiry the curriculum links were art and writing and the collage experience directly had an impact on pupils' performance. Making cross curricular links where possible, enables teachers to take a holistic approach to planning and delivering the curriculum and engages and motivates pupils. At Gilbertstone Primary we are planning a creative approach to the curriculum from September 2008 where cross curricular links will play an instrumental role in childrens' learning.