Integrating the Curriculum: Creative Exchange

EDF3303

Assignment Task 1: Research Project

Teaching focus: Emotions
Art disciplines: Drawing & Music
ICT incorporation: iPad/GarageBand Application
Mayer and Salovey (1997 cited in; Weare 2000) discuss emotional intelligence as the ability to recognise, appraise, express, understand and regulate feelings. The term ‘emotionally literate’ is given to children who have the ability to not only manage their feelings in a healthy way, but also have a sound understanding of other people’s feelings. Research conducted by Novick (2004) found that a lack of adult assistance in teaching young children about emotions and how to express them can lead to an increased risk of developing a number of behavioural, emotional, academic and social problems. In support of these findings, it is imperative that children are exposed to a number of strategies during primary school in which to manage and express their emotions in a meaningful and creative way.

Given that children participate in creating artwork from a very young age, it can be a very useful strategy to use drawing as a form of art therapy for children to express and understand their emotions creatively (Russell-Bowie, 2012). Furthermore, with art and music being so closely interconnected, creating music as a form of music therapy can also be an effective task for children to express their emotions. For the purpose of this assignment, the focus will be on teaching emotions, and the two arts disciplines will be drawing and creating a music piece to accompany the drawing. ICT incorporation will be evident when creating a music piece.

Reflection:

Upon making the decision to base my artwork on the emotion sequence of ‘Achievement/Accomplishment/Success/Pride/Triumph’, I went through Russell-Bowie’s (2012) three stages of creating art. These stages took place as follows:

Generating (Designing)

During this stage I closed my eyes and pictured in my head what those emotions mean to me. The things I was picturing were responses to stimuli and past personal experiences. Given I have participated in a range of sports since a young age, the things that came to mind were all sport related. More specifically, I was visualising a triathlon of bike riding, swimming and running, and a celebratory scene where everyone who finished the triathlon was happy and smiling and celebrating together. Whilst visualising these emotions, I tried to put some music together in my head to match what I was visualising. I began to hear up-beat sounds with a fast tempo and high pitch. I heard a piece of music which told a story, as it built up from one instrumental sound to more and more, until the crux of the piece was a mixture of many different instruments including string instruments, piano keys, symbols and drums.
Realising (Making)
After designing my artwork in my head, it was then time to start the creation process. I began by dividing my A3 piece of white paper into quarters, as I had decided to do a montage of what achievement, accomplishment, success, pride and triumph means to me. The entire display was going to convey a story for the viewer. In the first box, I drew a person riding a bike down a steep hill. In the second box I drew a person swimming in the ocean. In the third box I drew people running towards a finishing line of a race, with lots of people on the sidelines cheering them on. In the fourth box I drew a scene where lots of people were all wearing medals and celebrating and congratulating each other for successfully completing a triathlon. Within the illustration I manipulated lines in order to convey depth and distance. The tone was conveyed through shading and the colours used were all bright to give the viewer a cheerful vibe.

When creating the piece of music to accompany my picture/emotion, I designed it based on the elements of music. The duration (including rhythm, beat, tempo, accent and length) was upbeat and fast paced with a blend of a large variety of instrumental sounds and different accents throughout the piece in order to give progression to the story that is being told during the song. The tone colour is mixed with the use of string instruments, wood instruments, symbols, piano keys and drums. Dynamics are manipulated to give the piece light and shade, where there are soft sounds and louder sounds. The louder sounds are brought in during the crux of the piece as the journey builds up. These consist of string sounds through violin work, as I felt it gave a happy, exciting and positive sound to the piece. The structure of the piece is coda, where there is an introduction (a beat is set up with the sound of one bass string instrument), a main section (where a variety of instrumental sounds accumulate and build up) and an ending (symbols to convey celebration).

Responding (Appreciating)
After my artwork was created and refined, I reflected on the processes I went through by analysing each piece including techniques I used, and through the analysis of how I felt towards my work. I was happy with the outcome and I believe my music piece created in GarageBand matched and complimented my drawing perfectly to convey the emotion of ‘Achievement/Accomplishment/Success/Pride/Triumph’.

**See next page for documentation of the design process, and attached mp3 file for accompanying music piece.**
Step 1. Dividing my page
Step 2. Drawing each scene
Step 3. Adding colour
Step 4. Final touches
Step 6. Finished piece
Above: Incorporating strings into my piece.

Above: The final product!
Implementation:

This task is one which can be implemented for children across all primary year levels, as it can be easily modified to suit any age group. Emotional education is a progressive part of the AusVELS Australian Curriculum. For the purpose of this assignment, I have designed a teaching and learning sequence for Grade Five students at AusVELS Level 5. In the Arts domain, students at this level are beginning to use art as a form of expressing feeling and emotion. In addition to this, students are also learning how music can be used to convey mood, emotion and feelings. Russell-Bowie (2012) discusses arts as a form of communication to express values and emotions, where the creation of artwork reflects the artist in relation to beliefs, feelings and prior experiences/stimuli. Russell-Bowie (2012) also highlighted that the production of art to express emotion helps us to understand our own emotions as well as helping others understand them. Furthermore, music is a form of art which can be manipulated into a means of self-expression, as it engages us emotionally and paints a certain picture in our mind of what that music might look like (Russell-Bowie, 2012).

Task:

The teacher will make a list of emotions (and synonyms) and put them into a hat. To make it fair and randomised, students will draw an emotion out of a hat and use that emotion as their work focus. A sample list I used was as follows:

- Happy – Happiness – Joyful – Cheerful – Positive – Merry
- Sad – Sadness – Upset – Heartbroken – Miserable – Unhappy
- Achievement – Accomplishment – Success – Pride – Triumph
- Angry – Anger – Fury – Mad – Irritated – Annoyed
- Lonely – Loneliness – Lost – Lonesome – Isolate – Secluded
- Love – Loved – Treasured – Cherished – Appreciated
- Anxious – Uneasy – Concerned – Worried – Troubled

Students would then be instructed that they are to create two pieces of artwork. The first is to create a piece of artwork to show/express their emotion based on their understanding and personal stimuli. The artwork will be based on the skill/technique of drawing, and other appropriate techniques to refine their drawings can be used (such as coloured pencils, paints, watercolours, crayons and so on). The artwork will be created on an A3 piece of paper.
The second piece of artwork is to use the iPads to create a piece of music in GarageBand to accompany their drawing to further express and convey their appointed emotion.

Prior to being sent off to begin their creation process, students will engage in a quick brainstorm of drawing techniques/strategies and colour conveyance (for example, the colour red would be appropriate to convey anger). The class would look at examples of drawings and discuss what emotion they might be expressing. Students will then have one minute where they will close their eyes and try and visualise what they are going to draw. Once they have found themselves visualising an idea for their drawing, the students will discuss how music can also convey emotion. The teacher will play different music/instrumental pieces (where there are no accompanying words or lyrics) and the students will discuss as a class what type of emotion they feel the music is trying to convey and why they thought this (for example, type of instrument, pitch, tone, rhythm and tempo – and how these aspects of the piece of music manipulates the minds of listeners to feel a certain emotion, for example; soft and slow violin sounds may convey sadness or romance). Once the students have participated in the class discussion, they will be free to start working on their art.

Based on my own process of creating a drawing/illustration and an accompanying piece of music using the GarageBand application on an iPad, it is suggested that this unit of work lasts for roughly 5 sessions. A schedule may look like this:

- **Lesson 1:** Introduction to emotions, artwork to convey emotion, music to convey emotion, visualisation, discussion, drafting.
- **Lesson 2:** Finish drafting, edit, apply colour.
- **Lesson 3:** Finish off first piece of artwork, start exploring GarageBand and creating their second piece of artwork.
- **Lesson 4:** Continue working on their GarageBand piece (possibly finishing).
- **Lesson 5:** Finish their piece of music, optional sharing time with the class, reflective discussion, submission.

I would advise that the first piece of artwork (the drawing) is not assessed by the teacher in terms of content, but rather in skills and techniques used to produce their piece. The content of the picture is personal to the creator and open to interpretation where there is no right or wrong way to convey an emotion. The assessment of the second piece of artwork (the piece
of music) will also be assessed on techniques used; instruments utilised, and features such as appropriateness of tone, pitch, rhythm and tempo.

By the end of this teaching and learning sequence, students should have gained knowledge in new ways to creatively express and understand emotions. This task should have helped the students to indulge in emotions on a deeper and more complex level, by drawing on their own personal experiences and knowledge to create two pieces of artwork which collaboratively express certain emotions. This is important for students to learn and practice during primary school if they are to become emotionally literate and aware and capable of expression and response to a range of emotions in a healthy way.
References

