



Learning Resource

Big Voices: Children's Art Matters

The Barbara Piscitelli Children's Picture Diary Methodology

Early Years Visual Art

Learning in The Arts builds on the Early Years Learning Framework. Students are engaged through purposeful and creative play in structured activities, fostering a strong sense of wellbeing and developing their connection with and contribution to the world.

They explore the arts and learn how artworks can represent the world and that they can make artworks to represent their ideas about the world. They share their artworks with peers and experience being an audience to respond to others' art making.

As they experience the arts, students draw on artworks from a range of cultures, times and locations. They explore the arts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and of the Asia region and learn that they are used for different purposes. While the arts in the local community should be the initial focus for learning, students are also aware of and interested in the arts from more distant locations and the curriculum provides opportunities to build on this curiosity.

As they make and respond to artworks, students explore meaning and interpretation, forms and processes, and social and cultural contexts of the arts. They make early evaluations of artworks expressing what they like and why.

In Visual Arts, students:

- become aware of visual conventions and learn to notice visual detail

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- explore how and why artworks are created and ways to use and apply visual conventions, such as line, shape, colour and texture
- learn how their ideas or subject matter can be developed through different forms, styles, techniques, materials and technologies
- learn about how and why artists, craftspeople and designers present their ideas through different visual representations, practices, processes and viewpoints.

For more information – [Australian Curriculum Visual Arts](#)

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| Unit of Work | Children’s Picture Diary Methodology |
| Key inquiry questions: | <p>Who am I?</p> <p>Who’s my mob/family?</p> <p>What makes me unique?</p> <p>Where do I live?</p> <p>What makes my community unique?</p> |

About

These education resources are underpinned by the methodology developed in communities by Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM.

About the Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children’s Art Archive

The images in the *Children Have Rights: An exhibition of Children's Drawings and Paintings, 1995-1997* are housed in the [Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children’s Art Archive](#). Each picture illustrates a child’s view of the articles that make up the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* including the right to play and recreation, education, home, family and the right to protection from poverty, war, slavery, labour, neglect and abuse.

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The Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive consists of approximately 2500 works by children from Queensland, Vietnam and China and between the ages of 12 months to 12 years. The majority of drawings and paintings are from Queensland children and depict their social worlds, their human rights and their futures. The collection forms a parallel collection to the [Frances Derham Collection of Child Art](#) at the National Gallery of Australia. Derham's collection was built over a period of 50 years (1935-1985) and represents a significant collection of child art of the 20th century.

Introduction: Children's Picture Diaries Methodology

Identity is more than what we do and where we live. It is the sum of all these parts that makes us a unique and valuable person. What we do and what we are interested in, however, is a great starting point for students to explore internal values through storytelling.

The Children's Picture Diaries methodology aims to collect stories about childhood, as told by children in various formats: in story, poem, film, drawing, painting or sculpture. The methodology encourages the development of critical and creative thinking, literacy, intercultural understandings, and personal and social capabilities.

Visual art experiences contribute to literacy development through enabling students to experiment with, examine and reflect on and use a range of languages, symbols systems, forms and technologies to express ideas, feelings and experiences.

The stories are to focus on the key concepts:

- Myself: who I am
- My community: land and people
- Our lifestyle: What I do

The Children's Picture Diary methodology offers a way for teachers to explore the concept of identity with students through story-telling and visual art. These resources are designed so they can be used as a stand-alone unit of work for teachers delivering early years, visual art outcomes and/or as a supporting resource when exploring the *Big Voices: Children's Art Matters* exhibition digitally or onsite at State Library Queensland.

Content Description

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Years P-2:

Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination to create visual artworks and design, including considering ideas in artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists ([ACAVAM106](#))

Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks ([ACAVAM107](#))

Respond to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks, starting with visual artworks from Australia, including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ([ACAVAR109](#))

Years 3-4:

Use materials, techniques and processes to explore visual conventions when making artworks ([ACAVAM111](#))

Identify intended purposes and meanings of artworks using visual arts terminology to compare artworks, starting with visual artworks in Australia including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ([ACAVAR113](#))

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria**Learning Objectives**

Students will explore and experiment with painting techniques using the visual conventions shape and colour.

Students will understand how artists use self-portraits to explore who they are and where they fit using their story writing as stimulus to respond in painting.

Students will consider viewpoints on identity and society. Reflecting on self and how they fit into their social and cultural environments.

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Students will explore the technique of and process of watercolour painting and observational drawing. They will use and experiment with viewfinder technology to creating a successful composition of a landscape. They will use size and shape to determine depth and space within their frame. They will then colour using water colour technique and experiment using value.

Students will reflect on theirs and their classmates choices of composition.

Elements and principles of art explored: line, colour, shape and texture, tone, depth, proportion, composition, space, balance, and contrast.

Success criteria

Students will be successful when they can:

- Combine colour, shape and line to express particular emotions and feelings of their portrait subject and landscape
- Describe the purpose of the portrait and the use of visual arts elements
- Describe how line, shape and colour can be used to express feelings, places and things
- Use visual conventions to create portraits and landscapes
- Interpret and use vocabulary about the topic and new vocabulary drawn from language experiences to label, categorise, describe and explain.

Teaching Notes

Identity through storytelling

Timing

4x 30 minute lessons.

Provide students with time to draft and edit each story with the support of a teacher in between each writing lesson.

Resources

Writing paper and pens/English workbooks

Teaching Notes

Explain to your class you are interested to learn more about their lives in their community.

Describe the scope of the project: they will use storytelling and art to learn about their own and others' identity.

Learning Activities

Writing

Ask the children to write two pieces:

1. A story about themselves – get them to describe where they live, who is in their family, what they like to do (art, sport), their favourite food, and other activities relevant to your class. See the scaffolding questions below.
 - Grades P-2 should complete 5 sentences in their autobiography.
 - Grades 3-4 should complete two paragraphs (50 words) about themselves.
2. A description of their community and its characteristics. (size, location, special features, population, and so on).

Keep these stories with them as they work on their artworks.

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They can work on these short pieces over the duration of the project, and should submit final copies with their resolved artwork/s.

Writing scaffolding:

Autobiography: A story about themselves

- Where were you born?
- Who do you live with?
- What do you enjoy doing with your family and/or friends? (Possible answers: visiting grandma's house, going to the beach, going to a religious organisation)
- Describe your favourite things to do? (Possible answers: art, sport, cooking, sewing)
- Describe some your favourite foods? What foods do you eat with your family? (Possible answers: spaghetti, gnocchi, baclava, meatloaf)

Use these answers to build a story about themselves.

- Grades P-2: Ask each question and get students to draw a picture in their notebook about the question first. Once the students have drawn the picture get them to write their answers in a complete sentence underneath.
- Grades 3-4: Ask each student to answer the question above in full sentences to form the beginning of their stories.

Community: A story about where we live

- Describe where you live?
- Describe the street you live in? Is it quiet? Far away from neighbours or really close?
- What special shops do you like to go to?
- What special activities do you like to do in your community? (Possible answers: fishing, going to the markets)
- How does your family help other families?
- Describe what is in your community? (possible answers: statues, fountains, parks, historical/man made sights or features, natural sights or features.)

Teaching Notes

Identity through Visual Art *Self portraits: Who We Are*

Timing

The painting is a 50 minute session, where children make a portrait. It can be completed at a desk in a regular classroom. Allow an additional 5 minutes set up and 5 minutes pack down.

Resources

A3 cartridge paper & acrylic paints, paint brush medium size round is best, egg carton, newspaper, butchers paper, pencils and rulers, mirror (optional).

Teaching Notes

Each desk:

Place newspaper on the desk to cover. Egg carton for paint: fill cells with basic colours – red, blue, yellow, black and white.

Each student:

One brush, a water jar, a rag and a set of paints. Place an A3 sheet of cartridge on the newspaper in portrait position. Ensure all works are marked with the child's name and the date in pencil on the back of the work before starting.

HB Pencils for sketching.

Learning Activities

Demonstrate vertical organisation of the page for portraits: Use a HB pencil to make a very light mark using four fingers down from the top of the page. Mark the middle of the page and rule a line down the centre of the page. Draw lightly with a pencil a round shape, keeping the middle mark in

the centre of this shape. Draw two short lines down on either side of the shape to make a neck, and two curved lines, going down and coming off the bottom edge of the page to make shoulders.

Review proportions of face, and remind children to capture their features – e.g., hair, eyes, nose. Divide the round shape in half and then divide the bottom shape in half again (see graphic print out in appendix). Top line is the middle of the eyes, second line down is the bottom of the nose and the last line is where the lips meet. Draw the hair around the circle shape representing the hair style they currently have.

Tip: provide a desk mirror for each child to observe their own features.

Review basic colour mixing. Remind students to wash brushes in between colours.

Students paint portraits.

Encourage students to add identifying personal details in the hair and on the clothes.

Support students when requested and supervise actively while students are working.

Leave paintings flat to dry in a draft free zone, making sure they are kept separated from each other and away from other possible disturbances. Once dry, paintings can be mounted on card and framed.

Extension activity one: Ask students to now paint each other.

Extension activity two: Ask students to compare their portrait to the portraits found in the *Big Voices: Children's Art Matters* exhibition.

<https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/bigvoices>. Ask students to answer the following reflective questions:

What makes your portrait unique?

How are you different and how are you the same?

Looking at one of the archived portraits ask: What would you like to know about this person?

Teaching Notes

Identity through Visual Art *Landscapes: Where We Live*

Timing

Two 60 minute sessions: the first session is to make the pen drawing & the second session is to fill in the drawing with inks or watercolours.

Resources

Waterproof black liners – 6mm or smaller, HB pencils, watercolour paints, soft water colour brushes, A4 paper, water, paper towels, drawing boards, viewfinders – pre-made beforehand. Optional materials: newspaper or butchers' paper.

Teaching Notes

Each student:

Prepare a drawing board for a walking excursion to the local area. Load 1 – 2 sheets of paper on the board. Take enough 6mm or smaller permanent black liners and/or pencils with you for each student.

Learning Activities

Find a locally relevant spot and settle a small group of children into looking at the landscape.

Use viewfinders to frame up the landscape, and to focus attention on special features of the environment, whether it is a beach, desert, townscape or inner-city urban space. Focus on finding one main feature and placing that feature slightly off centre within their viewfinders for a good composition.

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Point out and discuss with students the size relationship between items/people further away.

Draw together for about 30-40 minutes, concentrating on the larger objects and main features of their composition. Don't worry about details just yet. Start drawing details if there is time.

Lay out everyone's work on the ground and facilitate a group discussion on why they chose their particular feature/s.

Collect the drawings and photocopy them prior to the second session.

Session 2: Watercolour painting of local landscape

Set up:

Each student: Two tubs of water, watercolour paintbrush (any soft, neat and clean brush will do), landscape drawing, watercolour paint pallet, paper towels. Optional materials: newspaper or butchers' paper.

At the second session, review children's landscape drawings with them as a group. Talk about the solutions to drawing from observation, and discuss innovative and clever solutions to technical problems.

Demonstrate how the watercolour brushes and paints behave. Use paper towel to control the amount of water they have on their brush. Show how to push the paint around on the paper, and how to achieve pale and deep colours using more pigment for intense colour and more water for a wash. Show students how to wash brushes in one tub and then use the other tub to add clean water to the watercolour paint.

Demonstrate brush techniques with a focus on how to keep the fine point on the brush for fine and thin sections. Explore wet on wet paint application as well as wet on dry.

To do wet on wet: fill a section with paint in one colour. Allow to dry a little and drop in other colours while the paint is still wet. You could also add whole salt rocks to the wet paint and then leave on as it dries for texture.

To do wet on dry: wait until paint has dried or use hair dryer to dry section completely, use a stronger pigment or another colour to go over a part of the section.

Assist children as they work.

Complete documentation of the child's name and date on the back of the work in pencil.

Extension:

Have students go back into the painting once it has dried with the permanent fine art markers. Use [cross hatching](#) to add dark values to painting.

Teaching Notes

Identity through Visual Art *Our Lifestyle Stories: What We Do*

Timing

Two 50 minute sessions, plus 15 minute set up and 5 minutes clean up. The first session is to make the printing plate using cardboard, manila folders and glue, and the second session is to print multiples using sponge rollers and tempera/poster paint.

Resources

A3 art paper, scissors or rotary cutters, glue, cardboard for the printing base - cut smaller than an A3 size (old cereal boxes for bases, or the backs of writing tablets), manila folders, recycled tray/s, tempera or poster paint, sponge roller, newspaper or butchers' paper.

Teaching Notes

Each student: A3 paper for planning, scissors, glue, cardboard base.

Each desk: manila folders to cut into shapes, pencils.

Learning Activities

Our lifestyles tell a lot about what we value, so the purpose of this activity is to highlight special characteristics of student's identity through this lens.

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Teachers can start by looking at the wider community they reside in, such as: a farming area, a fishing community, an urban apartment dweller or a large country town. They can then use this framework to determine what to feature. For example, in a school where students have just finished a unit on hunting and fishing, you can make prints of fish, turtle, squid and pig. A class might want to focus on gardening, sport, culture and so on. Whatever you choose, it has to define the students' lifestyle, what they do.

Session 1:

Pre-making lesson: 15 minutes: exploring lifestyle.

Conduct a whole class mind map to elicit ideas around the different activities they do in the community. List the different answers. Discuss whether this could be seen in the lesson they did on landscape, were their features in their community that reflected these activities?

Years P-2: ask students individually to list or draw everything they like and like to do like on a page. These can be things such as animals, friends, or things they like to do. They can either write or draw small pictures. Talk with students about whether some of these are things that they enjoy doing with their families and friends.

Years 3-6: Split class into groups of 4-6 students and ask them to list all the things they like to do in their community and in their special interests. Talk about the common activities. Discuss how students developed these interests, did someone in the family introduce them to the activity or interest?

Making process

Planning the print. Get students to draw their pattern and shapes onto an A3 piece of paper and cut out.

Glue or trace these paper shapes onto the manila folders to make cardboard shapes and cut out the shapes again.

Have the students first arrange the shapes to create their composition on their cardboard base. Then glue the manila folder cut out shapes or designs - these can be a single layer or built up.

Once done, let it dry undisturbed, overnight.

Session 2:

Materials: Recycled tray, tempera or poster paint, sponge roller, A3 art paper, newspaper.

Each student: Recycled tray, sponge roller, A3 paper to print onto, newspaper.

Each desk: Paints to choose from, spare newspaper. Try not to crowd desks.

Prepare the printing materials. In a large recycled tray, put tempera paint or poster paint. Use a sponge roller to spread the paint on the tray and get the paint into the roller.

Set up a piece of newspaper alongside the paint tray. On the newspaper, place the cardboard print base. Roll it with the paint until it is covered with paint. Then, take a clean piece of paper (larger than the print base) and cover the base. Gently rub the paper with a flat hand. Do not rub too hard or too long. Once you think it is fully pressed, lift a corner to check the cover of the paint. If not enough paint, rub again. Then, lift the paper and hang to dry. You can take several prints off the card base. You will need to re-ink the plate each time.

Extension activity: Experiment with building up print templates and layering colours and prints

Leave to dry on a drying rack or undisturbed flat location.

Appendix

Additional Resources – State Library Resources

Children's picture diaries Cherbourg

http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/slq_alma21105952890002061

Children's picture diaries Ipswich

http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/slq_alma21105913630002061

Children's picture diaries Poruma

http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/slq_alma21125489040002061

Children's picture diaries Kelvin Grove

http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/slq_alma21105828460002061

Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive 1986-2016

http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/slq_alma21148451560002061

Fuelling Innovation: starting young

http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/v05410/TN_informit_apaft200307028

Children have rights: Lessons for teachers and the wider world

http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/v05410/TN_springer_jour10.1007/BF03166733

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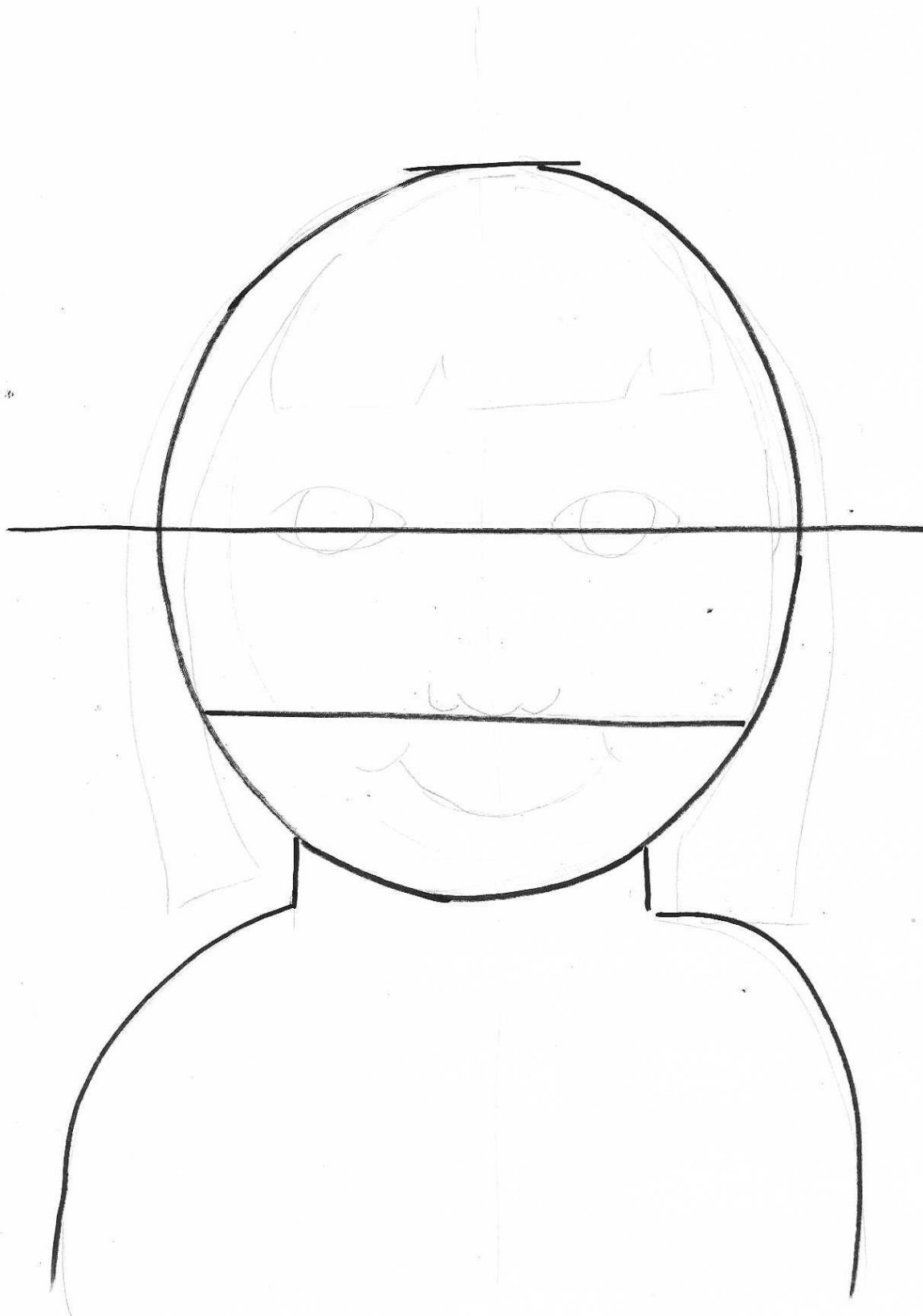
Other Resources

Cross hatching - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=117AN3MQuVs>

Frances Derham Collection of Child Art - <https://nga.gov.au/derham/>

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Portrait proportions



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State Library of Queensland acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their continuing connection to land and as custodians of stories for millennia. We are inspired by this tradition in our work to share and preserve Queensland's memory for future generations.

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