

"A slice of life": The interrelationships among art, play and the "real" life of the young child^[1]

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Abstract:

This study examines the interrelationships among art, play and "real" life, as perceived by young children. Twenty-one children aged four and five in their first year of formal schooling in Ireland, were observed during art-related play activities and classes over a period of four months in 2004. Research data consisted of art works (both original and photographed), field notes, video recordings of children's behaviours and mini-interviews with the children. Data analysis revealed the multifaceted interrelationships between art, play and real life among the children. All children showed evidence of intertwining art, play and "real" life experiences in all strands of the visual arts curriculum. Individual differences in "cognitive style" unrelated to gender also emerged. Some worked quietly concentrating completely on the process and product in hand while others verbalized what was going on as they worked. Just over half of the children extended their actual experiences into the realm of fantasy in their art and play while the remainder tended to be factual, depicting and re-enacting "real" life events as they experienced them. These findings have educational implications as young children's artistic play activities are an important element in pre-service teacher education and in the teaching of Visual Arts at the Primary school level.

Region: Europe^[3]

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