

The Role of Participatory Artistic Quilting in Cross-Cultural Relationship Building Among Youth Aged 10-11 Years

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Workshop Outline

- Background: MA Research Project
- Forms of Arts-Based Research and Types of Arts
- Anticipated Research Findings
- Participatory Activity: Quiltmaking
- Discussion
- Questions, Comments, Closure

Workshop Learning Objectives

- By the end of this session you will be able to:
 - Explain the benefits of using participatory quiltmaking for cross-cultural relationship building
 - Appreciate the value of participatory arts in exploring cross-cultural relationship building and intercultural communication

Personal Background

- Academic Background: BEd Degree (Elementary Education), MA Candidate
- International Teaching, Research, and Volunteer Experience
- Facilitation Experience: Social responsibility (Roots of Empathy, Virtues Project, Anti-Racism, Non-violent Communication)
- Instructional Experience: Native Education College
- Educational Development Experience: TAG

MA Research Project (Qualitative)

- Research question: “What is the experience of grade 5/6 students who are exposed to and involved in participatory artistic quilting for peacebuilding?”
- Location: An elementary School, Vancouver, BC, Canada (Diverse: culturally, linguistically, socio-economically)
- Research Project: Ethnographic observations (whole school), participatory artistic quilting project (one class of grade 5/6 students on an identified “issue” from the observations), semi-structured interviews (parents, classroom teacher, student participants), analysis of quilt

Research: Theoretical Frame

- Kathy Bickmore's three types of conflict management activity as identified from conflict and conflict theory (originally applied to international conflicts; now applied to interpersonal and inter-group levels in the context of education, to highlight how interpersonal and social conflict is handled in schools: Peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding
- My focus: Peacebuilding as articulated by Bickmore (2004), which emphasizes the "broadening of democratic space by redressing injustice, rights violations, and participation barriers" (p. 80).

Peacekeeping

- Peacekeeping - reflects containment or security approaches, and relies on the “narrowest repertoire of strategies for controlling behaviour” (Bickmore, 2004, p.77).
- Politically = conservative ideology, attempts to establish security through control.
- School systems - reflected in “burgeoning emphases on violence prevention and zero tolerance strict discipline policies including mandated codes of conduct” (Bickmore, 2004, p. 78).

Peacemaking

- Peacemaking - represents dispute resolution, negotiation, and dialogue approaches (Bickmore, 2004, p. 77).
- Includes peacekeeping as well as conflict resolution; attempts to facilitate conflict management and resolution through dialogue and problem solving (Bickmore, 2004, p. 79).
- Examples - democratic processes: legislative governance, class meetings, student councils, which facilitate collective deliberation and decision making in the face of citizens' conflicting wants and needs (Bickmore, 2004, p. 79).
- Politically = liberal or “middle of the road” ideology

Peacebuilding

- Peacebuilding - supports the redress of underlying inequities and social conflicts in order to restore healthy relationships or to prevent future escalation of conflicts (Bickmore, 2004, p. 77).
- Most comprehensive and inclusive form of conflict management; includes both peacekeeping and peacemaking and adds long-range harm reduction through social reconstruction (Bickmore, 2004, p. 77).
- Politically = radical ideology; linked to structural equity issues and institutional forms of oppression
- Inherently highlights peace education as being highly political, and not simply about re-inforcing a “bland multiculturalism, unquestioning ‘tolerance’ or ‘being nice to each other’” (Davies, 2008 p. 4).

Arts-Based Research Labels & Terms

- **Arts-based research**
- **Visual methodologies**
- **Arts-Informed Research/Inquiry**
- **Arts-based Inquiry**
- **Lyric Inquiry**
- **Image-based research**
- **Performative inquiry**
- **Storywork methodology**
- **Installation art-as-research**

Types of Arts

- **Photography**
 - **Video**
 - **Sculpting/theatre**
 - **Murals/Collage**
 - **Metaphors**
 - **Writing**
 - **Drawing**
 - **Fabric Crafts**
- Cartoons**
 - Graffiti**
 - Maps**
 - Mosaic**
 - Dance**

Arts-Based Research Methodology: A/r/tography

- A/r/tography - research methodology, focuses on individuals being artists, researchers, and teachers, and engaging in and making a commitment to living inquiry (Irwin, 2008).
- A/r/tographical - “living and inquiry in the in-between, of constantly questing, and complicating that which has yet to be named” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxxi).
- Research - an “evocation, a provocation, calling us to transformation” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxx).
- Practices inherent in the work of artists and educators are forms of research, because they are grounded in ongoing forms of recursive and reflexive inquiry engaged in theorizing for understanding. This could be termed as practitioner-based research, which perceives research as a disposition for knowledge creation and understanding through acts of theorizing as complication (Irwin & Springgay, p. xxiii).
- Attention paid to the **aesthetic**, commitment to how the aesthetic elements of an art form can inform research.
- Construct and generate **counter-narratives** and stories through an aesthetic medium because as the people engaged in the study create and analyze their artwork they draw on their own lives, knowledge, and experiences.

Relevant Literature: Communities of Practice

- Communities of Practice (CoPs) - CoPs are “groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 2006, p. 1).
- Relationship to a/r/tographic communities of inquiry and practice

Power and Potential of the Arts

- Arts as a tool for generating counter-narratives (stories we have been told to believe)
- Link feelings to cognitive understandings
- Arts for social change – arts as a collective creation
- Power of the aesthetic – helps people to enter an issue or genre
- Arts as a knowledge creation tool (use of symbols, images, etc).

Anticipated Findings

- Arts, particularly participatory quilting, can influence behaviour in a nonteacher-directed way
- Participatory quilting is a way to “initiate strong kinship bonds, develop intricate networks of friendship, and support personal growth” (Ettinger & Hoffman, 1990, p. 45).
- Peacekeeping and peacemaking are predominant forms of conflict management

Activity: Modeling the Participatory Artistic Quiltmaking Process

- Individually make a quilt block on a given topic (since the conference is on intercultural education, make a square on what intercultural education means to us)
- Work individually – you can chat and engage with others
- When we are finished, we will share our quilt blocks and decide how to bring our blocks together to make a “quilt”

Quiltmaking Process

- Starts with a research question
- Engages individuals in quiltmaking process (generally individually)
- During the quiltmaking process, researcher draws out themes related to the research question(s)

Discussion: Arts-Based Research in Practice

- What was your experience making the quilt square like?
- What surprised you about yourself and the process?
- How might arts-based research inform the work that you do?
- What might some of the possible benefits and challenges be?

Participatory Artistic Quilting Process

- Participatory – participants make decisions from start (what to include, when their work is “done”) to finish (e.g. putting quilt together, ownership)! (this can be challenging)
- Artistic – it is a work of art (staying away from “traditional” notions of good and bad art)

Power of the Participatory Artistic Quiltmaking Process

- Individual yet collective experience (individual blocks that become part of a collective quilt)
- Use of group decision making skills
- Participant ownership
- Challenging conceptions through power of the aesthetic: common conceptions of quilts (soft, warm, comfortable) but message that is portrayed through quilt can upset this notion

References

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