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DOCTORAL THESIS

Art history in an infant primary school
an intervention in the curriculum

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# CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPING THE ISEE STRATEGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I report on the development of a conceptual framework and related strategy for informed interpretation of art, the design of research lessons and selection of artworks. The chapter consists of three sections. In the first, I discuss the conceptual framework and the design of the Interpretive Strategy for Engaging and Enquiring about Art (known as the ISEE) that translated the framework, understood as a curriculum model, into practice. I report on forms of knowledge considered necessary for teaching informed interpretation and review existing models of good practice and strategies I considered. The ISEE strategy is shown in Table 7 together with a rationale for each step. In this second section, I present my categories of art information (I use this term to refer to art history or 'teaching about the art and artist' in this research) and describe the research lessons developed to implement the ISEE strategy as shown in Table 4. In the final section, I report findings of a brief review of literature about young children's preferences in art that informed the inclusion/exclusion criteria I used to select paintings for interpreting in this research.

3.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

After considering the literature discussed in Chapters One and Two, I designed the conceptual framework presented below in Figure 3.1. My understanding was that through a synthesis of three forms of knowledge pupils could construct informed interpretations of artworks.

Fig.3.1 Conceptual framework for informed interpretation
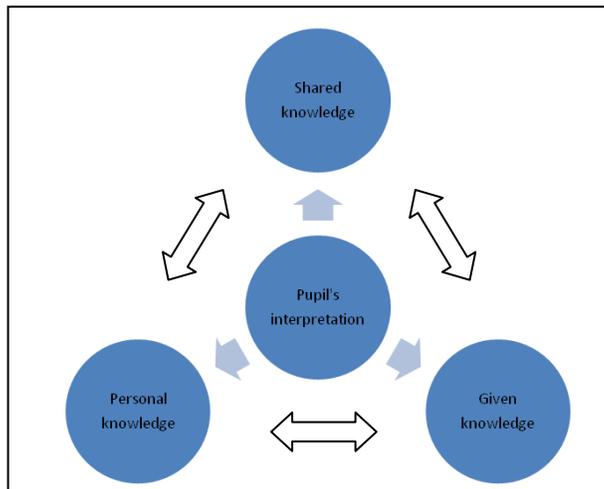
This framework combines a pupil's personal knowledge, prior and current (Bruner, 1966) and their life experiences with shared knowledge gained from social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978) with teachers and peers and given knowledge from art information disseminated by the teachers to construct *informed* interpretations. I anticipated using it in a domains model of the art curriculum where art enquiry is understood to include analytical, expressive and historical/contextual learning.

3.1.2 Forms of knowledge

Cunliffe (2005) and Hickman (2005) identified two forms of knowledge in art education, *knowing that* and *knowing how*. As discussed in Chapter One (page 13), the first is declarative, for example, *knowing that* an artwork was painted by a Japanese artist, Katsushika Hokusai and relies on factual information. The second is procedural and relates to *knowing how* to make or how to interpret art. Hickman (2005) suggests this is sometimes aligned with doing for example *knowing how* to do a stencil or watercolour. In this research, I understood 'knowledge and understanding of art and artists' (National Curriculum, 1999) as pertaining to *knowing about* them and, as a variation of *knowing that*, it also relies on factual information.

Cunliffe (2005:200) suggests there is a mutual relationship between declarative and procedural knowledge that provides the basis for 'being informed'. Given the research aim was to teach pupils to construct informed interpretations, I recognised the need for teachers to provide factual information. As Efland (2002), Eisner (2002) and Hickman (2005) all note, different forms of knowledge refer to different ways of knowing and require different ways of teaching. According to Cunliffe (2005), *knowing how* is generally taught through repetition and practise with the support or guidance of someone who already knows how to do it. In contrast, *knowing about* artworks and artists depends on an informer transmitting factual information to a receiving audience.

3.2 THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS

I examined the conceptual framework for Key Stage One proposed by the primary National Curriculum (2005), to understand how it was structured. It recommends programmes of study to include a framework of *knowledge, skills and understanding*, emphasising a combination of *knowing that* and *how*. At the time the research was carried out, the learning domains in art and design were:

i)   exploring/developing ideas,

ii)   investigating/making art, craft and design

iii)   evaluating/developing work and

iv)   developing knowledge and understanding of the roles of art and artists from different times and cultures (Primary National Curriculum, 2005:120).

Hallam, Lee and Gupta (2007: 211) interpreted this framework as referring to four kinds of art domain discourse: productive, critical and art historical. They can be related broadly to three of four disciplines of art learning, identified in the DBAE curriculum model, namely art history, criticism and studio production.

A review of various influential frameworks found a mixture of the following four domains of historical/cultural, critical/analytical, expressive/sensory and productive art making. Many of these frameworks and others are underpinned by Socractic questioning models. I summarise the various frameworks below:

3.2.1 Historical/cultural and multicultural

Addiss and Erickson (1993) present three main approaches for teaching *about art and artists* that include: as artworks, information and enquiry. They relate to formalist, historical and critical approaches to art learning. In my review of models of good practice, the majority of literature that advocated an historical approach to learning came from the USA and was linked to the DBAE curriculum model. Art educators who used this domain were Addiss and Erickson (1993); Dyson (1982); Mitchell (1990) and Szekely (1988), but most of this writing was over twenty years old. A more recent example includes Chanda (2000). Teaching from this historical perspective was underpinned by theories of historical (typically timeline) learning associated with the discipline of history and based on the dissemination and theorising of factual information about art and artists, in a content-driven model (Addiss and Erickson, 1993; Chanda, 2000)

Cultural and multicultural theories of art education were found in the writings of Chalmers (1992); Chapman (1997); Jeffers (1999); Mason (1995); McFee (1998); Smith and Hancock (1996); Stockrocki (1988) and Zimmerman (2002). According to Larkou (2010:30), the aim

of various models of multiculturalism was to 'integrate minority ethnic and sub-groups into society and school to reduce racist attitudes and prejudices'.

3.2.2 Critical/analytical

The dominant perspective for teaching about art and artists in classroom art enquiry favoured the critical or analytical domain. While Panofsky's (1955) theory of iconography incorporates a build-in model for visual analysis through three steps description, analysis and interpretation, it is Feldman's (1992) ideas that are central to the development of the critical/analytical perspective in the literature. His model includes four steps of description, analysis, interpretation and judgement and is reminiscent of Panofsky's earlier one. According to Fromme (2004:26), Feldman's model offers pupils a sound way of talking and thinking critically about art and he explains the four steps in the following way:

i) **Description:** pupils make an inventory of what is visible in an artwork in terms of expressive lines, colors, shapes, textures, spaces and volumes as well as techniques

ii) **Analysis:** pupils notice how these visual things relate to one another

iii) **Interpretation:** pupils are encouraged to identify themes and ideas in an artwork to find meanings and emotion

iv) **Judgment:** pupils are encouraged to make decisions on the success, value or worth of the art object

In the last step, pupils are encouraged to rank a work of art in relation to other works from the same time or other periods throughout history.

In the UK, Taylor's (1992) model of Content, Form, Mood and Process is often used to examine works of art in the classroom and embodies theories of formalist, expressivist, productive and analytical art enquiry. It mirrors Allison's 1972 'Four Pillars' model of art learning (1988), as well as the DBAE model, but it excludes the historical/cultural domain entirely. Taylor's model employs six universal themes: the human figure; the environment; flora and fauna; events in life; the fantastic and strange and abstract form and meaning, through which to examine artworks. It is used mainly in *critical studies* lessons in secondary art education (Key Stage Four) in the UK and analysis is carried out through the following six posed questions:

Content:	'What is the work about?'
	'What is its meaning?'
Form:	'How is it composed, arranged, designed?'
Process:	'How is it made?
	'What is it made of?
Mood	'How is it affecting you, the viewer, and why?'

(Taylor, 1992: 2)

Although it is an analytical model it does not require critical judgment like, for example, Feldman's (1992) model. In Taylor's model, 'Content' relates to theories of meaning making through an analysis of subject matter (content) depicted in the artwork (Panofsky, 1955). 'Form' and 'Process' are underpinned by theories of formal and stylistic analysis, for example, Wölfflin (1888/1998), in which description and analysis of colour, shape and form contributes to stylistic attribution and the appreciation of composition, style and beauty. 'Process' considers artistic technique and how artworks are made or assembled. Finally, 'Mood' relates to theories of emotion and response, for example, Ingarden (1973), Iser (1978) and Osborne (1970) in the understanding that an individual's response to or the emotions expressed and received through an artwork, play a part in the analysis.

3.2.3 Sensory

Some art educators insist young children need to connect with artworks through their senses. Eisner (1991; 2002), for example, argues that knowledge is acquired through the four senses of visual, auditory, olfactory and tactile and assembled through personal schema. This perspective, influenced by Lowenfeld's (1939) 'haptic-visual' theory of sensory learning (Rouse, 1965: 47), was endorsed by Congdon (1991) and Eisner (1982) and they also recommend using multi-sensory learning environments. Eglinton (2003:29) and Hooper-Greenhill (2004) employ sensory modes of learning in museum education and encourage children to actively select, hear, observe, distinguish and feel visual stimuli in this setting. Hooper-Greenhill's (2004:317) claim that learning about art should be sensory led, was based on her museum surveys which showed younger children prefer to 'look' at artworks and older children prefer 'touching and using' or manipulating art objects.

3.2.4 Art making

The view that art making is part of, and inseparable from, learning about art and artists was found in literature by Charman and Ross (2006); Eisner (2002); Gardner (1999:9); Orbach

(1995) and Taylor (1992; 1999). They identified looking at, in combination with creating artworks as essential for young children's learning to engage with art (Eglinton, 2003; Gardner, 1999).

3.2.5 Questioning Frameworks

It is noteworthy that many of these frameworks and related models rely on a Socratic question and answer approach and are underpinned by constructivist and social theories of learning. Armstrong (1986:48), Strong (1997:39) and Taunton (1983) recommend Socratic questioning as an effective way to engage pupils with artworks. Armstrong's (1986) Inquiry in Art model involves eight steps of setting direction; discovery, visual analysis, classifying, personalising what is observed, hypothesising, reordering, synthesising and evaluating artworks and is propelled by teacher's posed questions. Taunton's (1983:43) questioning strategy, uses Feldman's (1994) steps of description, analysis, interpretation and judgement guide to formulate base questions, but adds additional ones to 'facilitate the process'. She categorises these questions into four types, namely:

i) Cognitive memory questions which require pupils to use facts, formulae and definitions, for example, ***What could you tell us about this painting, if we could not see it?; What words would you use to describe it?***

ii) Convergent questions where there are expectant answers, for example, ***What is the largest and smallest thing you see in this painting?***

iii) Divergent questions where pupils produce their own ideas, for example, ***What do you think was the reason the artist painted this?'***

iv) Evaluative questions where pupils assess artworks based on criteria, for example, ***Did the person who painted this do a good or bad job?***

Housen (2000) and Yenawine (1998) use a questioning strategy called Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) that emphasises open-ended questions and discussion that relies on a structured interaction between teachers and pupils. It is a classroom-based model and teachers act as facilitators using open ended questions (Yenawine, 1998:318). Questions include, for example: ***What's going on in this picture?*** and ***What more can you find***? They also use probing and directed questions, added at a later stage of discussion, where teachers re-phrase their initial questions by asking ***What do you see that makes you say that?*** In

keeping with social constructivist learning, all pupils' contributions are valued (Yenawine, 1998:321) and there is recognition that open ended discussions may be unresolved.

Broudy and Silverman's (1985) model of aesthetic scanning was intended to teach pupils to make informed, aesthetic responses to artworks. The model is underpinned by theories of the senses (for example, 'What does it look/feel/smell like?'); formalism ('How is it composed in colour, line and form?'), production ('How is it made?') and expressivism ('What feeling or emotion is expressed? or What feelings are engendered by it?') and applied through a question and answer approach. According to Hewett and Rush (1987), aesthetic scanning lends itself to this approach by using two types of questioning: initiating ones that ask for information about artworks and continuing ones that probe further on the subject (Hewett and Rush, 1987:42). Teachers are meant to use these questions to redirect, rephrase, prompt, clarify and elaborate on pupils' initial responses. Hewett and Rush (1987: 43) liken this model to a 'treasure hunt' where pupils and teachers are hunters and 'sharp eyes' are their tools.

3.3 Summary

After examining and considering how I might use the models of good practice and underpinning theories, I made a decision to adopt Panofsky's theory of iconography and its associated model as a unit. His model of description, analysis and interpretation along with his explanation of the stages of meaning is a translation of his theory of iconography. I understood the first two stages of primary and secondary meaning to refer to the process of seeing something and making an association or connection with it to deepen understanding. In this, I accepted Panofsky's (1955) assumption that individuals find symbols embodied in subject matter that help them to comprehend meaning. I liked the emphasis he placed on the study of subject matter and adopted his definition that it includes the objects, people, places, events, expressions and gestures depicted in artworks. In keeping with Preziosi (1998:231), I understood Panofsky's model as a 'tripartite system of signification' and accepted his suggestion that it does not have the 'distinct categories of meaning' such as those defined by a semiological approach.

I decided not to include Panofsky's (1955) theory of iconology and the goal of intrinsic meaning, as it is complicated and no longer considered relevant in the twenty-first century

(Addison, 1999; Alpers, 1989; Moxey, 2000). Preziosi (1998:231) contends that Panofsky's theory of iconography is 'based on the assumption that every image contains a certain amount of hidden or symbolic matter [which may be] elicited by close reading of an image and some knowledge of the referential context of the work'. Because of this, I decided to include factual information about the artwork and artist in a third and final step of analysis, in order to provide this referential context that Preziosi (1998:231) talks about.

My decision to adopt, and adapt Panofsky's theory and model was twofold. First, it is an accepted, credible theory in art history for constructing and interpreting meaning in art. I was persuaded by Preziosi's (1998:231) claim that it can provide a 'useful methodological framework for analysis' of not only European but 'non-European figurative art as well'. Second, I understood his three step model for visual analysis formed the backbone of Feldman's influential one used in the discipline based art curriculum, but without the final step of judgement.

I rejected Feldman's model because of his emphasis on making value judgements about artworks, as well as the importance he placed on formal analysis. Furthermore, I agreed with Gooding-Brown's (2000) criticism that Feldman's model ignores the contextual surroundings of artworks that Panofsky claimed were important in making meaning.

I set aside theories of expression and response in my review of literature. My initial objection was that I could not see the relevance of asking pupils to consider 'expressed' emotion in artworks or what would be gained by asking them to discuss their feelings about an artwork. These theories did not seem compatible or conducive for teaching pupils to interpret artworks using factual information about the artist or artwork. More importantly for me, I agreed with Henley's assertion (1991:19) that many art historians 'actively refute the role of emotion in viewers' reception of artworks' and 'consciously avoid consideration' of expressive communication as a way to interpret them. In keeping with this, I held the view that the study of art history is not about examining an individual's emotional responses to artworks.

Despite my reservations about expression and response theories, my knowledge of this age group and literature about learning in early years, led me to recognise that feelings and emotions play important roles in how children think and learn and this persuaded me to

include the question '*How do you feel about this painting*?' in the ISEE strategy, in part as an experiment to be tested.

I re-examined Taylor's (1992) model mainly because it included *content* in the analysis but then rejected it for two reasons. First, I considered his question '*How is [the artwork] affecting you, the viewer and why?*' to be a difficult concept for young children to grasp and judged they would not be able to understand the notion that an artwork can 'affect' them. I found this to be a leading question and one that perpetuates an eighteenth century Romantic vision, associated with Burke (1756) and Kant (1790) and later linked with Osborne's notion of aesthetics (1970:117), that art is 'Beautiful and Sublime' and evocative of emotion and I did not agree with this sentiment.

Second, Taylor's model also places significant emphasis on *form* and *process*. These aspects of visual analysis are not intended for the interpretation of meaning. From the start, I rejected models underpinned by formal analysis (Feldman, 1992; Taylor, 1992) because they focus on elements of art and design rather than meaning making in art and the focus of this research was on interpretation rather than description of artworks. Furthermore, formal analysis represents an early twentieth century, modernist approach to analysing art that is no longer favoured in art history as a result of the more recent influences of critical and postmodernist theories and new technologies (Arnold, 2004; D'Alleva, 2005; Malpas, 2005, Preziosi, 1998).

I found it difficult to design a strategy that introduced factual art information using a sensory, aesthetic or art making model and therefore decided to opt for discourse and questioning about artworks as modes for implementing the new strategy. In the end, I decided that a Socratic question and answer approach would be most useful in classroom settings where teachers extend and support pupils' interpretations. Housen and Yenawine's VTS model, which I had observed in practice at a National Art Education Association (NAEA) conference in New York in 2007, gave me ideas about how class discussion might unfold. I found their sequencing of questions and the repetitive prompting '*Why?*'in keeping with Vygotsky's (1978) notion of facilitating and extending learners' thinking. I thought that a strategy, propelled by a structured set of questions, would best facilitate the introduction of factual information about the artworks.

3.4 DETAILS OF ISEE STRATEGY, ART INFORMATION AND PAINTINGS

This research posited three main aims for pupil learning namely to i) learn a strategy for interpreting artworks; ii) construct personal interpretations of art and artists using knowledge, experience and given information and iii) share ideas about artworks in collaboration with others. Each of these aims required teachers to teach in a particular way and to adopt various roles of facilitator and mediator so as to scaffold and extend new concepts and information (Cohen *et al.* (2004; Goodman and Goodman, 1990). They were expected to guide pupils and challenge them through probing questions to extend their higher order thinking (Vygotsky, 1978) as they interpreted artworks. My expectation for pupils was that they would work individually and in groups as they learned to apply the ISEE strategy to the paintings. In keeping with Bruner (1960) and Vygotsky (1978) and the vast majority of art educators, I wanted pupils to actively construct their own interpretations.

Charman and Ross (2004) suggest teaching young children skills of interpretation requires a structured approach and I concluded that the ISEE should involve a questioning strategy of set questions to provide the necessary structure. Wenham (2003:5) reported that some pupils prefer knowledge or experience as their starting point when they engage with art and after due consideration I decided to begin with pupils' own observations as a starting point (Bruner, 1966) before opening discussion to shared exchanges and information about the artworks to give them ownership from the beginning.

3.4.1 The Interpretive Strategy for Engaging and Enquiring about art (ISEE)

The ISEE strategy is presented in Table 7. (Text shown in **red** indicates later additions made as a result of actions and evaluations in cycles.)

Table 7: ISEE strategy

ISEE STRATEGY
OBSERVATION **STEP ONE:** (Look at, identify subject matter generically, describe) **KEY QUESTIONS** **What is this of? (holistic view)** **What do you see?** (describe in detail) **SUBQUESTIONS** (For example) **How would you describe it/them/this picture…?** **What do they look like?**

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What expressions do you see on their faces?

Description of step: This step is literal description
Teachers:
Begin by seeking a holistic view of painting
Ask pupils what they see, for example **the subject matter** (objects, things, people, events)
Ask them to describe settings, expressive qualities or expressions, gestures, colours, emotion, forms
Link seeing with finding subject matter (like a game)
Encourage pupils to give detailed observations by looking carefully at, identifying and describing in detail the subject matter they see.

Pupils:
List what they see (they can do this mentally)
Identify subject matter
Link seeing with finding subject matter in painting
Examine subject matter for its expressive qualities of objects, people (for example, expressions, gestures, attitudes)
Describe with rich descriptive language.

ANALYSIS
STEP TWO: (Question, analyse and relate to)

Part A: Question and analyse subject matter

KEY QUESTIONS
If the artist painted all the subject matter (objects, people, things, events, action, colour, gestures and expression) in this painting, why is xyz (name subject matter) included in it?

What is the relationship of the objects/people to each other? (For example: Why is the broom lying there on the patio floor?)

SUBQUESTIONS (For example)
What are the people doing?
   Why do you think that?
    How can you tell?
Why are they together? or Q: Why are they with each other?
   Why do you think this?
    How can you tell?

What is the action, event, setting, situation, circumstance taking place?
   Why do you think this?
    How can you tell?
       Description of step:

Description of step:
Teachers
Encourage pupils to consider the presence and relationship of subject matter to the overall painting.
Ask pupils to think about their experiences and prior knowledge as they consider the subject matter.
They may work individually or in group or shared discussion to answer these questions.
Encourage pupils to pose their own questions about the painting

Pupils
Use prior knowledge/experience to analyse subject matter
Pose questions about subject matter **,** artist, painting

Part B: Question and relate to subject matter

KEY QUESTIONS
Has this ever happened to you? (SUBQUESTION, for example: When, what happened?)
Does (or doesn't) this look familiar? (SUBQUESTION, for example**:** Why, in what way?)
How is this different (or the same) as what you know?

Description of step:
Teachers
Ask pupils to use their personal and shared experiences and knowledge to talk about how they relate
to the painting and what associations or connections they draw from them

Pupils
Talk about prior knowledge/experience to answer questions

KEY QUESTIONS
How do you feel about this painting?
What do you feel looking at this painting? (Why?)

SUBQUESTIONS (For example)
How would you feel if this happened to you?
 What are your feelings? (Why?)

Description of step:
Teachers
Ask pupils to consider their feelings about a painting. **(Through posing questions, probe why they
feel this way)**
Pupils
Talk about emotions and feelings for/about a painting **(Explain 'why' they feel this way)**

INTERPRETATION
**STEP THREE: Interpret through synthesis of art information and personal
and shared knowledge and experience**

KEY QUESTIONS
Considering all you have heard, tell us, what is this painting all about?
What story would you tell about this painting?
 How can we find out about a painting?

Answers include:
- From ourselves (using strategy questions), prior and current knowledge, personal
  experiences
- From others (sharing ideas, experiences, knowledge with others)
- From the artist
- From other sources of information: books, TV, internet, teachers/gallery educators etc.

Description of step:
Teachers
Disseminate art information
Provide time for pupils to reflect on information
Answer pupils' questions about painting/artist
Discuss with pupils how they can find out more about the painting and artist.
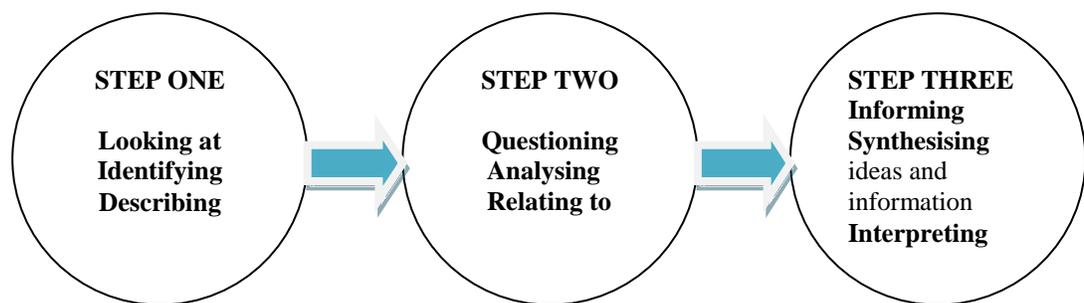Remind them of ways to source information about the painting and artist:
 Pupils
Listen to art information and consider it

Reflect on all these ideas
Synthesise various sources of information
Explain their interpretation of painting

3.4.2 Rationale

The three sequential steps of the ISEE strategy are shown in Figure 3.2. They represent a translation of Panofsky's (1955) steps for interpreting artworks from a literal meaning to a conventional or secondary meaning and then to an informed and broader interpretation. Panofsky views his steps as three synoptic stages and in my strategy the steps are also synoptic. They are understood to encourage three sources of knowledge: personal, shared and given and it is assumed that one does not override the other. The rationale for each step is outlined in the following paragraphs.

Fig. 3.2   Steps of ISEE

STEP ONE

**Looking at
Identifying
Describing**

STEP TWO

**Questioning
Analysing
Relating to**

**STEP THREE
Informing
Synthesising**
ideas and
information
Interpreting

3.4.3 Step One: What do you see?

In this step I was influenced mainly by Arnheim's (1969) ideas about visual thinking and perception. Taylor (1981:52) recommends analysis of any artwork begins with observation and identification of what is observed. The importance of looking and taking time to look at art is highlighted in art education literature (Barrett, 2003; Charman and Ross, 2004; Perkins and Tishman, 2003). The perceptual domain is highlighted in art enquiry and Allison (1998) amongst others, includes it as one of four domains of art learning in his Four Pillars strategy. I decided to pose the question *What do you see*? so as to focus pupils' attention on subject matter (Panofsky, 1955) and initiate the process of looking closely at and considering what they observed. The review of existing strategies revealed that almost without exception the question *What do you see*? is used as a starting point for analysis. Cox (2000), Danko-McGhee (2005) and Labitsi (2007) all lend support to this decision when they claim young children enjoy looking at and playing games of identifying what they see in art. I liked Cox's (2000) analogy of detective, looking for clues in artworks. From the literature, I concluded

that looking at and observing are not the same as perceiving as the latter implies a degree of interpretation (Arnheim, 1969). My intention for this step was to centre on literal observation, identification and description of subject matter.

3.4.4 Step Two: Why is it in the painting? How do you feel about it?

This step has two parts: questioning and analysing subject matter and relating to and making links with it. In the first, pupils' examine subject matter and its relationship to the painting and in the second they consider it using prior knowledge and experience through exchanges with each other, to draw links between them.

3.4.4.1 Part A: Question and Analyse

In this part, pupils are asked to consider why certain subject matter is included in an artwork. With reference to Pitseolak's print, *Facing the Wind* in Figure 1.1, for example the questions might be *Why is an igloo included in this scene of two people crossing a landscape?* or *Why do these people have their hoods up?* or adversely*, Why are there no trees or plants in this artwork?* The purpose behind these questions is to challenge pupils' observations and encourage them to analyse paintings by answering *why*-type questions. This step reinforces Panofsky's (1955) first and second stages of literal and conventional meaning by focusing on visual recognition and analysis of subject matter.

3.4.4.2 Part B: Relate to

In the second part, pupils are expected to make links and relate to subject matter using prior or current knowledge and experience and that of others (Barbe-Gall, 2002). Arnheim (1969:13) argues that 'receiving, storing and processing of information' through memories, past experience and learning leads to cognitive thinking and this was the underlying intention of Step Two. According to Freedman (2003), people construct new knowledge and understanding about artworks based on what they already know and believe. The questions *Does this look familiar or different to what you know?* or *Has this happened to you before?* are intended to encourage pupils to think more deeply about subject matter and to relate it to their own knowledge and experience.

I included the question *What do you feel about this artwork?* out of curiosity. I wanted to see what happened when teachers asked pupils about their feelings. However, I chose not to use

direct questions such as ***What do you think the artist is trying to show you?*** or ***What emotion is expressed in this artwork?*** and ***How does this*** <u>**make**</u> ***you feel***?

3.4.5 Step Three: Interpreting with art information

The last step of the ISEE strategy involves pupils listening to and considering information about the artist and artwork from their teachers. The expectation was they would synthesise the various forms of knowledge used in Steps One and Two and combine it with given knowledge of factual information about the art and artist. Here, the ISEE strategy changes from a question and answer approach to direct transmission of information as teachers inform pupils about the artists and artworks and provide factual material. Pollard (2008:361) and Watkins *et al.* (2007:34) warn there are negative issues related to teaching young children in this way and therefore I decided to rely on the teachers to find a way to transmit this information. After providing time for pupils to consider ideas about an artwork, teachers pose the final question ***What is this artwork all about?*** to make them think about their overall interpretation. Selecting information about the art and artists is discussed in the following section.

3.4.5.1 Selecting criteria for art information

According to Fitzpatrick (1992:64) much of what is taught about art and artists is heavily influenced by decisions individual teachers make about content and how to organise it. In Sabol's (2000:13) view, these are affected by the art teachers' depth of knowledge of art and art history and available resources (books, videos, CDs, websites, reproductions). Searching for advice about this I was reminded of Taylor's (1989) warning that teaching art history to young children is inappropriate as they do not have contextual understanding or intellectual equipment to handle this type of information. Addiss and Erickson (1993:136) explain that the notion of teaching 'history' in art history is viewed as problematic by some school educators, however findings from their own research dispute this. In the USA, Fitzpatrick (1992), notes there is little guidance for teachers about what to include in art history lessons. I studied examples of K-2 DBAE lesson plans produced by The Getty Foundation which were informative. For example, one art history lesson plan titled <u>Framing the Landscape</u>, (<u>www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources</u>, 2008), recommends teachers provide the following art information:

> 'Monet painted *en plein air*, or outdoors.
> This painting is one the artist painted directly from nature.

> He thought it was important to capture what he saw while working
> outdoors.
> The painting shows the kind of attention Monet paid to the world
> around him.

My search for lesson ideas relating specifically to primary pupils learning art history (or factual information about art and artists) yielded very few examples in the UK, with the exception of Cox (2000). Several art educators had designed lessons about *understanding* art (Meeson, 1995:28) or *talking* about it (Barbe-Gall, 2005; Barnes, 2002; Clement, 1993; Dear, 2001) but it was difficult to get a sense of what is expected as art history subject content. I found Barbe-Gall's (2005) book, How to Talk to Children about Art most useful. She (2005:3) suggests teachers get children to 'link themselves' to artists and artworks by discussing events and objects from everyday life depicted in paintings and uses storytelling to engage them. But she does not provide criteria for selecting information to transmit about artists or paintings. In an example when she talked to children aged five to seven years about Marc Chagall's **The Birthday** (1915) (see Figure 3.3), she offered them (2005:147) the following art information:

Fig. 3.3: Marc Chagall, *The Birthday*, 1915, Museum of Modern Art, New York

- *"The painting is of the artist himself, Marc Chagall, who has just been reunited with his fiancée, Bella after a long time apart. They are so happy they want to run and jump and feel as light as birds. Here they are kissing each other.*

- *She's holding a bunch of flowers. He has given them to her for her birthday...The scene takes place in Vitebsk, the [city] in Russia where they were born. In Russia it's not traditional to have candles on a birthday cake. But the cake is ready on the red table.*

- *This painting is a self-portrait."*

From this example, I concluded her art information included facts about an artist and their contextual surroundings, art terminology such as self portrait, and information that is fashioned to appeal to a child's interests and understanding and offered in a language they can appreciate.

In a study of pupils investigating Ndop statues, Chanda (2000) recommended using the categories of provenance, attribution, cultural and social functions and meanings. Bloxham and Wass (2001:55) use the five categories of: period of production; general context; 'effect' then and now; influences and personally constructed meaning of artwork. Addiss and Erickson (1993) were most helpful when it came to advice on teaching about artworks and artists in primary (elementary) education. They offered detailed lesson plans and discussion of various aspects of teaching and learning. In the appendices to their book, Addiss and Erickson (1993:200), provide a useful list of learning objectives and skills for art teachers. I integrated five of their categories for art information in my own list shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Categories for art information

CATEGORIES	Examples of art information sourced from National Gallery education department online material
i) **Artist's name and title of painting***	William Hogarth, *Portrait of the Graham Children*
ii) **General timeframe of creation of artwork***	Painted c.1752, nearly 300 years ago.
iii) **Location** (where original painting is located)*	The National Gallery, London
iv) **Content/meaning:** **Historical context*** ('At a time when....') **Social and or cultural context**	Hogarth was a famous portrait painter, particularly fond of painting children in his portraits. Hogarth was interested in showing what people, places and life looked like at the time he lived. He painted rich and poor people doing everyday things.
v) **Original purpose or intention of a painting** (if available)*	He painted this portrait for Dr. Graham, a rich and well known doctor, at his request, as a record of his children, to display in his house. (Liken to a photograph nowadays)
vi) **Biographical information***	William Hogarth was from England and was born in Covent Garden, London. He painted scenes and people in England. (Note: his connection with The Foundling Hospital, London)

vii) Anecdotal facts	Hogarth was personal friends of Dr and Mrs Graham and knew the children. He painted them in a room in the Graham's house as the setting for this family portrait. Baby Thomas, in the foreground, died shortly after the portrait was completed.

 (Addiss and Erickson, 1993, categories are noted by asterisk)

3.5 RESEARCH LESSONS

As part of the actions of Cycle One, I devised a unit of nine research lessons for the teachers to apply the ISEE strategy in their classrooms. These research lessons represented a translation of my conceptual framework and the strategy into practice. The teachers' implementation of the ISEE represented another. The design of the lessons is discussed below and further in Cycle Two (Chapter Five).

In 2006, Reception pupils in the UK followed a foundation stage curriculum. This was made up of six areas of learning, including physical and creative development; mathematical; personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy development and the development of knowledge and understanding. Although the Reception teachers in this research recognised not all their pupils, aged four and five years, might be ready for the challenge of learning a sequential strategy, they were keen for the opportunity to take part in the art project and to introduce the notion of thinking and talking about artworks in the classroom. They cited continuity in learning as a motivating factor for them to take part in an otherwise whole school initiative to change the art curriculum. They wanted to avoid the separation that sometimes occurs between learning in Early Years and primary education (Bertram and Pascal, 2002) and said they would find a way to implement the ISEE strategy to support their pupils. These Reception teachers felt they could accommodate their pupils' social and emotional development, language and skills if they could actively involve them in whole class discussions that emphasised curiosity, storytelling and were paced appropriately. They were mindful of adapting or altering the lesson plans to ensure pupils were supported in and stimulated by their learning. Debates about the concept of school readiness (NSW, 2003) or more recently 'life readiness' (Pascal, 2010:2) were not as yet central issues in educational policy at the time the action research began, although the introduction of the statutory framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) of learning, introduced in the UK in 2007, meant that the

Reception teachers reviewed the research lesson plans accordingly. Teaching and learning were continually monitored and evaluated by the teachers and me throughout the action research to ensure pupils' learning needs were met and supported.

3.5.1 Design

My original design included ten research lessons but was later reduced to nine. The aim of the lessons was to provide a vehicle for teachers to apply the ISEE strategy. As such, I considered them part of the intervention and did not evaluate their design at the end of Cycle Three. Each lesson incorporated one or all of the three ISEE steps and while they shared the same core aims for pupils to look at, question, analyse, relate to and interpret paintings, some of them (Five, Six, Seven, Eight) had additional aims and objectives related to the lesson plan. I present an overview of the nine lessons taught in Cycle Two (see Table 9).

Table 9: Nine Research Lessons

LESSON ONE

Title: How do pupils make meaning?
Painting and artist: *Tropical Storm, Surprised!* Henri Rousseau
Aims: Diagnostic lesson. For the team to determine pupils' existing strategies.
Learning Objectives:
      Action team: Observe and determine strategies used by pupils.
      Pupils: Lead learning.
Activity Instruction: Pupils are given postcards of painting and asked: *What is this about?* They are given time to negotiate an answer before they are asked to feedback to the whole class. Teacher, TA and researcher observe and record actions.
Preparation: Display poster sized reproduction copy of painting in classroom
Resources: Poster reproduction

LESSON TWO
Title: Learning the ISEE: Step One - Look and Describe **Painting and artist:** *Courtyard of a House in Delft,* Pieter de Hooch **Aims:** Teachers introduce first step of ISEE **Learning Objectives:**   **Pupils:** List what they observe. Understand the first step of ISEE strategy. Look closely and carefully at painting. **Activity Instruction:** Whole class activity led by teacher. Pupils asked to help teachers compile a list of everything they see in a painting. **Preparation:** Display poster. Set up whiteboard or large sheet of paper. **Resources:** Poster/30 postcards/marker pen/whiteboard/sheet of paper.

LESSON THREE

Title: Learning the ISEE: Step Two – Question, analyse and relate to
Painting and artist: *Courtyard of a House in Delft,* Pieter de Hooch
Aims: Teachers introduce second step of ISEE

Learning Objectives:
      Pupils: Learn to ask questions about what they see. Consider prior knowledge about subject
        matter. Make personal links and associations with them. Consider others' interpretations.

Activity Instruction: Teacher led whole class Q and A discussion. Teacher poses questions to help pupils analyse and relate to subject matter in painting.
Preparation: Display poster
Resources: Poster/30 postcards/list of subject matter from Lesson Two.

LESSON FOUR

Title: Learning the ISEE: Step Three – Art information and interpreting
Painting and artist: *Courtyard of a House in Delft,* Pieter de Hooch
Aims: Teachers introduce third step and transmit art information for pupils to interpret.
Learning Objectives:
      Teachers: Transmit art information.
     Pupils: Listen to art information, consider it and synthesise with previously discussed ideas.
        Pose questions about it. Recognise it contributes to overall interpretation.
Activity Instruction: Teacher tells pupils about painting and artist, followed by whole class discussion. Pupils then asked to complete prepared Speech bubble worksheet #1 (see Appendix 17)
Preparation: Display poster
Resources: Poster/Speech bubble worksheet #1

LESSON FIVE

Title: Multiple Interpretations are possible
Painting and artist: *Le Domaine d'Arnheim*, René Magritte
Aims: Teachers demonstrate that multiple interpretations are possible for a single painting
Learning Objectives:
      Pupils: Understand the concept of multiple interpretations
Activity Instruction: Teachers pose voting game questions (see Appendix 20). Pupils participate in a whole class game where they vote for the interpretation they think explains each subject matter. In a feedback session, pupils consider the different interpretations resulting from game and discuss.
Preparation: Display poster at start of the week.
Resources: Poster/Whiteboard/Magritte worksheet #2 and voting game question sheet (see Appendix 20)

LESSON SIX

Title: Learning about the past from a painting
Painting and artist: *The Graham Children*, William Hogarth
Aims: Using the ISEE to interpret a painting in an historical context

Learning Objectives:
      Pupils: To determine and understand differences and similarities between the past and present
        through exploring subject matter in a painting.

Activity Instruction: Teacher led whole class discussion about life in the past and present day. Using the ISEE and art information to determine subject matter and context, teachers lead discussion of differences and similarities between objects from past (in painting) and present. Pupils work individually to complete prepared Past and Present worksheet #3 (see Appendix 17). Whole class feedback and discussion follow.
Preparation: Display 3 posters/Prepare classroom with various copies of painting
Resources: Posters/Whiteboard/computers/art books/Past and Present worksheet #3

LESSON SEVEN

Title: The more we see and know, the more we understand
Painting and artist: *The Fall of Icarus*, Pieter Brueghel, the Elder
Aims: Pupils understand that finding out more about a painting helps them understand it better.
Learning Objectives:

> Pupils: To apply the ISEE with peer group support. Work collaboratively to interpret a
> jigsaw puzzle piece showing part of the painting (see Appendix 21). Feedback as group to
> whole class.
> Listen and absorb art information, use ideas in interpretation of whole painting. Listen
> to story of Icarus.

Activity Instruction: Teacher gives out jigsaw puzzle pieces showing part of Icarus painting to six groups of pupils. In groups, pupils are asked to determine what their piece is about and to complete Icarus worksheet #4 (see Appendix 17). In whole class activity, pupil-led groups feedback their interpretations. Teacher displays oversized poster reproduction of entire painting, followed by teacher-led discussion about what it is all about. Teacher delivers art information in discussion. Teacher concludes lesson by reading/telling Greek legend of Icarus.
Preparation: No display of painting. Cut out jigsaw puzzle pieces showing part of Brueghel painting.
Resources: Oversized poster for display/6 pieces of smaller poster cut into jigsaw puzzle pieces (see Appendix 21), Icarus worksheet #4 (Appendix 17).

LESSON EIGHT

Title: Understanding the context of a painting
Painting and artist: *Portrait of Mr and Mrs Andrews*, Thomas Gainsborough
Aims: Pupils understand the context of an English landscape painting
Learning Objectives:

> **Pupils:** Understand about context and setting. Able to rationalise choice of animal cutout
> to include in the Gainsborough landscape

Activity Instruction: Whole class discussion about painting using ISEE. Teacher disseminates art information about context and setting. Afterwards, pupils are asked to move to tables to select a cutout animal card (details of animals taken from 26 paintings) appropriate for the setting and context of Gainsborough's landscape painting. Whole class discussion follows with pupils explaining their choices.
Preparation: Display 3 poster reproductions. Set up classroom tables with selections of 26 cut out animal details from other paintings/prints (Appendix 22).
Resources: 3 Posters/laminated cutout animal cards

LESSON NINE

Title: Interpreting a non-figurative painting
Painting and artist: *Untitled, Grey and Brown*, Fiona Rae
Aims: The ISEE is tested on a non-figurative painting
Learning Objectives:

> **Teachers and pupils:** Able to analyse and interpret painting.
> **Pupils:** Consider art information and shared discussions to interpret painting. Choose a new title
> for painting and explain their choice.

Activity Instruction: Using the ISEE, teachers lead discussion to interpret the painting. Discussion including art information. Then teachers asked pupils to think of a new title for painting and to explain their choice.
Year One and Two pupils complete the Rae Title Card worksheet #5 (see Appendix 17)
P**reparation:** Poster on display
Resources: Poster/Rae Title Card worksheet #5/pencils

3.6 SELECTION OF ARTWORKS

Following the main literature review in Chapter One, I conducted a review of literature on young children's preferences for artworks and developmental theories in art education which might explain their age-related likes or dislikes (Piaget, 1969; Parsons, 1987). This was intended to inform my selection of artworks. I reviewed research and literature in the USA and UK, in particular art and museum educators and their writing about art preferences of young children (Chanda, 2000; Cox, 2000; Danko-McGhee, 2006; Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1995; Parsons, 1987; Taylor, 1992 and Taylor, 1999). In the review, I found rationales for selecting artworks were almost entirely non-existent and therefore, it was necessary to create my own inclusion/exclusion criteria to select artworks for the research.

3.6.1 Using fine art 'masterpiece' paintings

From the beginning, I was aware my selection would have a significant impact on teachers and pupils and the implementation of the ISEE and was keen to make informed decisions. Given the research focus on teaching about art and artists from different times and places, I anticipated using fine art exemplars. My background training and interest in art history meant I knew and was confident to work with these examples. Downing and Watson (2003) and Taylor (1999) claim these two factors influence most teachers in their choice of art exemplars. My rationale for using fine art examples was fourfold. First, there is agreement, underlined by its inclusion in the primary and secondary National Art and Design Curriculum (1999:120), that studying artworks from the past can inform pupils about other cultures and themselves (D'Alleva, 2005; Dewey, 1934; Fernie, 1995; the Getty Institute, 1993; Goodman, 1968; Taylor, 1999). Second, national collections are available to the public. Third, published information is available on most renowned artists and artworks in gallery and museum archives, books and internet websites and this would allow teachers access to educational material about them. Fourth, I was able to offer my expertise in art history to discuss the artists and paintings. I also held a deep seated interest in testing them out with teachers and pupils.

After much thought, I made the decision to use only two dimensional (2D) artworks such as paintings and hand-pulled, stenciled or woodcut prints. I considered other forms of art such as sculpture and installation art but decided against them on the grounds they were three dimensional (3D) which would necessitate viewing them in the round. Photo

reproductions of 3D artworks are seldom used in classroom study because of this and I considered it would undermine an artwork, its purposes and meaning to see a photo of it. I decided to use 2D paintings or prints for two reasons. First, because reproduction paintings and prints translate well into a format for display purposes and showing pupils art images in a classroom setting and second, I considered it important for teachers to be able to source inexpensive, easily accessible poster reproductions from a wide range of printed or internet website-linked art images.

3.6.2 Informing the selection process

According to Fitzpatrick (1992) selecting artworks for pupil discussion and interpretation can be problematic. Not only are there curricular issues to consider, but arguments noted in Chapter One about privileging some artworks over others, for example 'masterpieces' versus 'popular art' are also raised in school art education. Choosing artworks alien to the culture of pupils can also present problems (Fitzpatrick, 1992). Furthermore, Fitzpatrick (1992:84) warns that selecting artworks for art lessons can sometimes 'sits at odds with' curriculum coordinators such as headteachers and teachers as well as pupils and their parents.

Another aim of this review was for me to identify good practice in selecting artworks. From the start it was evident that research on young children's aesthetic preferences in art is limited (Epstein and Trimis, 2002; Savva, 2003, Danko-McGhee, 2006). In the twenty-first century, Danko-McGhee (2006) acknowledges Parsons' (1987) five stages of aesthetic development of young children preferences for artworks continues to provide a benchmark of what artworks appeal to young children. Danko-McGhee (2006:224) supports his view that young children's aesthetic response to artworks is developmental and age-related.

Parsons' (1987: xx) theory claims young children understand art through a five stage process of favouritism; realism; expressivism; formalism and judgement. In classroom studies conducted more recently with young children, Aripze and Styles (2003) and Schiller (1995) applied Parsons' theory and drew similar conclusions. For this reason, I re-examined Parsons' first three stages as they related most closely to the sample population in the research.

In stage one (favouritism), Parsons (1987:22) highlights young children's (four to six years) 'intuitive delight' for some artworks. He maintains liking or disliking subject matter in

paintings influences their preference in art. He suggests children experience strong attractions to bright or 'saturated' colours. Gardiner and Gardiner (1978), Gibson, Gibson, Pick and Osser (1962) and Taylor (1992) all make similar claims. Parsons (1987) and Taylor (1992; 1999) report that subject matter related to mood, emotion and senses also capture young children's attention to artworks.

Danko-McGhee (2000), Gardner (1982) and Kervalage (1995) and Parsons (1987) all suggest subject matter influences children's preferences for artworks. Parsons' (1987) second stage identifies realism in representation of subject matter as having an effect on young children's (six to seven years) preferences and he suggests realistic representation helps them to understand artworks. Piaget (1991) expresses similar views and maintains young children prefer looking at artworks when they can relate to and recognise what is represented.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), finding a way to hook viewers, by which she means grabbing their initial attention and interest, confirmed my decision to focus on subject matter that might appeal to pupils. In the end, I accepted Hubard's (2006:164) finding that pupils respond to *most* artworks given an opportunity to examine them closely and repeatedly. Her suggestion that pupils build relationships with artworks, first on their own terms (generally through attraction or interest in subject matter) and then from a desire for more information about them led me to believe subject content should be relevant to pupils' interests, experience and knowledge. A general consensus in the literature was that subject matter including animals (wild and domestic family pets), action scenes, events, settings that recall childhood memories and objects including toys, children, colourful forms and emotion are most appealing to young children.

Hooper-Greenhill (2004) suggests narrative images affect children's choices or preference for art because of their fondness for storytelling. Aripze and Styles (2003) also claim young children are drawn to works that amuse, delight and challenge them which suggested to me that selected artworks should include paintings that appealed to or encouraged pupils' curiosity and humour. Taylor (1999) reports that artworks which evoke viewers' moods and emotions, encourage greater reflection and response.

3.6.3 Issues in selection

I revisited the issue about using adult exemplars of fine art in art instruction with young children (Feeney and Moravcik, 1987; Taylor, 1989; Thistlewood, 1992). A debate, raised first in the Lowenfeldian years of the 1950s and 1960s, centred on concerns about influencing, repressing or stifling (Taylor, 1992:6) young children's creativity and imagination by offering them adult examples as models. DBAE programmes in the USA challenged these views in the 1980s and more recently, in primary and secondary art and design practice in England, there is a renewed tendency to use fine art masterpieces as exemplars to support pupils' art practice in school art (Downing and Watson, 2003; Moon, 2001).

From my reading, I became aware of issues in art education relating to a wider and more diverse canon of art. Downing and Watson (2003) and Taylor (1999) suggest a teacher's cultural and social background and past experience working with particular artworks influence the selection they make for art lessons. In the twenty-first century, the dominant view in art education is that choices of artworks should reflect postmodernist values and beliefs of a broadened and inclusive nature (Hickman, 2004). Despite this, I was also conscious of the impact of using artworks teachers found difficult to discuss for reasons of lack of confidence, subject knowledge, cultural understanding and motivation, all problems highlighted by Fitzpatrick (1992). She also warns about selecting artworks pupils find culturally confusing.

I considered whether to use original artworks or reproduction copies to engage the pupils in observation and dialogue. Art educators such as Read (1943), Osborne (1991); Taylor (1989) and Taylor (1992) in the UK and Gardiner (1973, 1978) and Zeller (1983) in the USA, recommend engaging with original artworks, wherever possible. Mead (1960:19) warns teachers against the 'aesthetically mind numbing affect' of reproductions when engaging with artworks. Taylor (1992: 6) suggests there is a 'thrill' in the experience of engaging with originals not experienced with reproductions. Zeller (1983:43) reports that all too often pupils' entire experience of artworks is carried out through looking at reproduction copies which can create a blurring between original and reproduction copies of artworks. Another consideration is scale when artworks are viewed only in reproduction. For example, extremes of size can alter viewer's reception and response to artworks when seen in the original.

Sometimes this is part of the artists' desired effect and it is lost in reproduction. In the end, I accepted Zeller's (1983:44) conclusion that 'reproductions rule!' in classroom discussions of art but decided to select paintings located in public collections in London and the locality in the hope that pupils might see them on school or family visits.

3.6.4 Criteria for selecting artworks

I paid particular attention to criteria used by teachers I worked with in the gallery and authors, including researchers and scholars involved in studies of young children engaging with artworks. Few examples offered advice or criteria for selecting artworks. I noted teachers in Charman and Ross's (2006:33) action research said they made 'personal' choices of artworks to discuss or looked for themes while a study by Cosier and Sanders (2007) indicated participants chose art to support topic work. In the end, I generalised that in the majority of studies art was selected for purpose, such as supporting identified themes (Taylor, 1992), topics or discussion points (Chanda, 2000; Cosier and Sanders, 2007) or personal reasons influenced by individual backgrounds, values and beliefs (Charman and Ross, 2006; Taylor, 1999). No dedicated guidelines were found to inform my selection of artworks.

3.6.5 Inclusion and exclusion

Table 10 lists the inclusion and exclusion criteria I created to select paintings for the research. The list was also intended for teachers to use in future research.

Table 10: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting paintings

INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
2D artwork: paintings or hand pulled prints	3D artwork: sculpture, installation art, multimedia, photographs,
Figurative, identifiable subject matter	Non-figurative or abstract
Western and non-western	Eurocentric, male dominated
Subject matter with narrative or storytelling potential or realistic representation	Artworks with one, single recognised meaning
Descriptive, dramatic, emotive and/or gender-based content	
From any period up to and including the present (for example, cave paintings to contemporary art)	
Accessible national/regional or local public art collections in London or surrounding	Inaccessible artworks

area	
Artworks with available art information, such as works in galleries and museums	Difficult to source art information
High quality, inexpensive, hard copies of reproductions or web-based computer images for power point and interactive smart board use.	Expensive or low resolution reproduction copies

3.7 SELECTION OF PAINTINGS

3.7.1 Rationale

It was necessary for me to source reproduction copies of paintings and prints for the teacher training, data collection instruments and research lessons. I tried to work from the perspective of a generalist teacher to determine what was readily available, particularly in large, poster sized reproduction format, from public art institutions. Finding and sourcing high quality, suitably sized examples proved difficult. Most art galleries or museums had limited choices of large reproductions available which meant my selection of artwork was restricted to images deemed appropriate by the institutions.

With very few exceptions, poster reproductions depicted examples of Western fine art examples. Some non-Western examples were available; but only in postcard size format from the British Museum, Royal Academy and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Another complication was that written material about these non-Western paintings was limited or unavailable. Museum and gallery art education websites provided access to a greater variety of images online. Downloading and printing enlarged, hardcopy reproductions, however was problematic and resulted in poor, grainy, washed out images or colour discrepancies. These problems are discussed further in my reflections on artwork at the end of this chapter. Accepting these and other limitations, my final selection of paintings are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Selection of paintings for data collection instruments and research lessons

Data collection instrument and purpose	Title	Artist	Location	Criteria for selection
Staff questionnaire and Pupil interview schedule Task One: Respondent are asked to select a painting that interests them and explain why	Mixed group of 12 paintings and prints (Appendix 13) Table 12	Mixed group of 12 (Appendix 13) Table 12	Mixed group of 12 (Appendix 13) Table 12	Mixed reasons
Staff questionnaire : Task Two: Respondents were asked to look at the painting shown and comment on it (written)	*The House of Cards*, 1736 (Appendix 10)	Chardin, J-S	National Gallery, London	Example of traditional figure painting Potentially provocative Subject matter: Young child engaged in play Symbolic Potential discussion of childhood games, play Historical/social/cultural
Pupil interview schedule: Task Two: Pupils were asked to look at the painting and tell the researcher about it (verbal)	*Allegro Strepitoso*, 1932 (Appendix 14)	Weight, C	Tate Modern	Subject matter Action, dramatic event Animal Facial expressions Colour Narrative potential
InSET training morning: **Demonstration lesson** painting used to apply ISEE strategy	*The Carpenter's Shop or Christ in the House of his Parents*, 1849-1950 (Appendices 10; 23)	Millais, J	Tate Britain	Double title offered two discussion points for interpretation: *Symbolic *Narrative Subject matter of setting/child/animals
InSET training morning **To practice ISEE strategy** Compare and contrast subject matter	*The Minotaur*, c.1849 *Elephant Fed by his Keeper*, 16th c. (Appendix 23)	Watts, G Unknown, Mughal miniature	Tate Britain Victoria & Albert Museum	Subject matter of large beasts Cultural/mythical example Storytelling
Teacher training and practice session (2) To practice ISEE strategy	*The Cornfield*, 1862 (Appendix 23)	Constable, J	National Gallery, London	Current exhibition of Constable's works on display/media coverage Subject matter, English landscape, Action, event of boy shepherding sheep/dog Traditional example
Teacher training and practice session (3) To practice ISEE strategy	*No Woman, No Cry*, 1998 (Appendix 23)	Ofili, C	Tate Modern	Provocative subject matter Media coverage Contemporary Mixed media with paint Cultural/Historical/Social
C(2) Lesson One	*Tropical Storm: Surprised!*1891 (Appendix 24)	Rousseau, J	National Gallery, London	Subject matter Colour/movement Dramatic event/action

				Potential familiar painting
C (2) Lessons Two, Three, Four	*The Courtyard of a House in Delft,* 1658 (Appendix 24)	De Hooch, P	National Gallery, London	Subject matter, child in everyday scene Abundant detail Clarity of detail High quality reproduction
C(2) Lesson Five	*Le Domaine d'Arnheim*, 1947 (Appendix 24)	Magritte, R	Private Collection	Subject matter Ambiguous Clarity of detail Narrative potential
C(2) Lesson Six	*The Graham Children*, 1742 (Appendix 24)	Hogarth, W	National Gallery, London	Subject matter, children at play Historical
C(2) Lesson Seven	*The Fall of Icarus*, c.1558 (Appendix 24)	Brueghel, P	National Gallery, London	Storytelling potential Subject matter Lent itself to jigsaw game with 5 specific actions taking place in painting Obscurity of main character
C(2) Lesson Eight	*Mr and Mrs Andrews*, 1750 (Appendix 24) Details from 26 paintings/prints (Appendix 22)	Gainsborough, T	Tate Britain British Museum National. Gallery, Tate Modern V & A	Large landscape, played host to animal cutouts game Setting/context Portrait figures Historical/social/cultural
C (2) Lesson Nine	*Untitled: Grey and Brown*, 1991 (Appendix 24)	Rae, F	Tate Modern	Semi abstract example Cartoonlike characters Colour Details
C(3) Lesson One	*The Whole World*, 2006 (Appendix 24)	Teevee, N	Private Collection Original stonecut Inuit print exhibited in school	Subject matter, animals, Setting, figure Colour Original vs reproduction Storytelling narrative Cultural/social

I chose a group of 12 postcards of paintings for Task One of the staff questionnaire and pupil interview schedule (see Appendix 13). They consisted of Western and non-Western examples of 2D media in various styles from a range of periods including early 6th century BC to contemporary examples from the twentieth century. Table 12 lists the 12 paintings selected for by artist, title, medium, location and criteria of selection.

Table 12: List of pre-selected group of 12 artworks for Task one (Questionnaire and Interview schedule)

ARTIST	TITLE AND DATE	MEDIUM	LOCATION	CRITERIA
Karel Appel	Kind, 1951	Oil on canvas	CoBrA Museum, Netherlands	Abstract, colour, shapes, subject matter, whimsy
Germaine Arnaktauyok	In return I give you water, 1987	Stone cut print on paper	British Museum, London, Inuit Collection	Cultural, subject matter, animal, action
Luca Giordano	Perseus turning Phineas and Followers into Stone, 1682	Oil on canvas	National Gallery, London	Dramatic action, gender bias, subject matter

Vincent van Gogh	Wheatfield with Cypress, 1889	Oil on canvas	National Gallery, London	Colour, lines, shapes, expressive landscape
William Hogarth	The Graham Children, 1742	Oil on canvas	National Gallery, London	Historical, cultural, subject matter, realism
Katsushika Hokusai	The Great Wave, 1831	Coloured print	Hakone Museum, Japan	Cultural, dramatic action
William Holman Hunt	Our English Coasts: Strayed Sheep, 1852	Oil on canvas	Tate Britain, London	English, landscape, colour, subject matter
Ben Nicholson	June, 1937 (Geometric Blocks)1937	Oil on canvas	Tate Modern, London	Abstract, colour, formal qualities, shapes, lines
Chris Ofili	No Woman, No Cry, 1998	Acrylic, oil, resin pencil, paper collage, glitter, elephant dung on linen	Tate Modern, London	Subject matter, colour, emotion, textures
Pablo Picasso	Child with a Dove 1901	Oil on canvas	National Gallery, London	Subject matter of child and bird, colour
William Turner	Houses of Parliament, 1902	Oil on canvas	National Gallery, London	Abstract, colour
Unknown	Egyptian Pharaoh feeding the birds 4th c. BC	Greek fresco painting	British Museum, London	Historical, cultural, subject matter

I selected five other paintings for training purposes. They are shown in Chapter Four along with the rationale, to accompany the description of actions undertaken in Cycle One. A single painting was selected for each of the nine research lessons for the teachers to apply the ISEE strategy (see Appendix 24). The rationale for them is provided below.

3.7.2 Tropical Storm, Surprised! (Lesson One)

Fig.3.4
Artist: Henri Rousseau
Date: 1891,
Oil on canvas
The National Gallery, London
Size: 129.8 cm. x 161.9 cm.

The aim of the lesson was to diagnose pupils' existing strategies for interpreting paintings. Therefore, it was important the painting appealed to them. This painting was selected because it depicts a tiger caught in a rain storm with windblown trees and flashes of lightning bolts against a darkened sky. I thought pupils would be attracted to the dramatic action taking place and the ferocious look of the tiger in mid-ground with bared teeth. I was aware some teachers had seen this painting on the National Gallery educational website '*Take one Picture'* and had received positive feedback from them about using it. Furthermore, I hoped pupils might be familiar with it as it has been reproduced frequently in The National Gallery art education material and children's art books, for example, Nilsen's (2005) Art Fraud Detective and posters.

3.7.3 Courtyard of a House in Delft (Lessons Two to Four)

Fig. 3.5
Artist: Pieter de Hooch
Date: 1658, Oil on canvas
The National Gallery, London
Size: 73.5 cm x 60 cm.

This painting was selected for Lessons Two, Three and Four. The aim of these lessons was to introduce and apply the three steps of the ISEE. The main criterion for the selection of the painting was subject matter. I thought it was likely to appeal to young children as it depicted a child of similar age and set in the realistic and recognisable setting of a house, in a courtyard with surrounding sheds. Other clearly identifiable subject matter included, for example, a bucket, broom, two women and natural objects such as trees, shrubs and flowers. I identified three discussion points for teachers and pupils', namely:

i) the relationship between the child and adult

ii) comparison of the setting with the pupils' own physical surroundings of home

iii) everyday activities or events

I chose the painting for its potential for descriptive and narrative discourse that would encourage pupils to apply the ISEE steps of looking carefully at, questioning, and making links to the subject matter and interpreting it. This one met the criteria and offered a wealth of detailed subject matter for discussion. I considered there was ample material for teachers to initiate discussion about people/objects/events. My intention was to use the same painting in three lessons so as to reinforce the notion of three sequential steps in the ISEE. I hoped this would augment and link learning with previous lessons. On a pragmatic note, I was able to source a poster-sized reproduction with superb clarity of detail from The National Gallery bookshop at an affordable price. Postcards and a variety of smaller reproductions were also available. A key consideration in selecting the paintings was that teachers could access accurate art information about the artist, painting, period and context of creation. Educational material was available on the National Gallery Collection and Education websites.

3.7.4 Le Domaine d'Arnheim (Lesson Five)

Fig. 3.6
Artist: René Magritte
Date: 1947, Gouache on paper
Private Collection, UK
Size: 73cm. X 100cm

I selected René Magritte's painting, *Le Domaine d'Arnheim* although it was not in a public London art gallery or museum collection because it exemplified ambiguity and contained multiple narratives. The lesson aim was for teachers to demonstrate that multiple narratives are possible for a single painting. I hoped this example would intrigue pupils and they might raise questions about it. Some children's art books featured this painting and others by Magritte, for example Michelthwait (1991). Furthermore, it was accessible in large poster reproduction format through online art poster websites and I was able to source three copies, one for each classroom, to display during the week prior to the lesson.

3.7.5 The Graham Children (Lesson Six)

Fig.3.7
Artist: William Hogarth
1742, Oil on canvas
The National Gallery, London
Size: 160 cm. x 181 cm.

In Lesson Six the aim was to consider a painting in an historical context. I selected this painting because it was an example of an 18th century fine art portrait painting. My intention was to select an artwork which illustrated the past through setting, subject matter, attitude and atmosphere. I was able to source two high quality poster reproductions of it and A3 mini prints and postcards from the National Gallery bookshop. In this lesson, several reproductions of the painting were displayed in various sizes, for example in books and magazines and as images on classroom computers and whiteboard screens. I knew that research information and interactive online educational material was available through the

National Gallery's education website as it had featured in a ***Take one Picture*** workshop in 2001.

At Key Stage One, the primary National Curriculum (2005) emphasised British history and the pupils in the school were investigating Victorian times. I selected this painting because it provided an opportunity to engage in discussion about differences and similarities between the European way of life in the past and present.

3.7.6 The Fall of Icarus (Lesson Seven)

Fig.3.8
Artist: Pieter Brueghel
c. 1558, Oil on canvas
National Gallery, London (on display 2007)
Musée des Beaux Arts, Belgium
Size: 73.5 cm. X 112 cm.

The lesson aim was for pupils to understand that gathering information about a painting can help them to interpret it. In small groups, teachers asked pupils to play a game where each group was given one cut-out piece of a jigsaw reproduction of the painting (see Appendix 21) and asked them to determine what was happening in it. I chose this painting because of its element of surprise in the drowning figure of Icarus in the bottom right corner and for the potential storytelling narratives it offered pupils such as seafaring tales, farming labours and imaginative fairytale settings. It contributes to the genre of legend and myths with the story of Icarus as it illustrates details from the Greek legend of Icarus such as King Midas' ship returning to Crete in the midground, the castle with the minotaur on the far left and the figure of Icarus falling into the water in the right foreground.

3.7.7 Portrait of Mr and Mrs Andrews (Lesson Eight)

Fig.3.9
Artist: Thomas Gainsborough
 c.1750, Oil on canvas,
Size: 69.8 cm. x 119.4 cm.
The National Gallery, London

In Lesson Eight the aim was for the pupils to understand about the context of a painting. I chose it as an example of an English landscape/portrait setting.

In conjunction with this painting, I selected details of animals taken from 26 paintings, engravings, drawings and prints in public collections in London (see Appendix 22). From reproduction copies, I cut out the animals and laminated them for pupils to handle and use in the lesson activity. These cut out details represented a mixture of styles, media and included a variety of Western and non Western examples from the British Museum, National Gallery, Tate Britain and Modern and Victoria and Albert Museum. In the lesson activity, pupils were asked to choose an animal detail that was appropriate to the setting of Gainsborough's painting and to explain their choice using evidence they found in the artwork.

3.7.8 Untitled, Grey and Brown (Lesson Nine)

Fig.3.10
Artist: Fiona Rae
Date: 1991, Oil on canvas,
Tate Modern, London
Size: 213.3 x 198.1 cm.

The plans for Lesson Nine changed in the action research because the participating teachers asked to try out the ISEE with an 'abstract' painting. Hence, the aim of the lesson was to test out the ISEE with a non-figurative work of art. In selecting this painting, I made a conscious effort to choose one by a living, female artist as I was aware of the scarcity of women's paintings in my previous examples. After much thought I selected a quasi-figurative painting as I decided it

might be helpful for teachers when they posed questions about it. According to Eckoff (2006) cartoons are useful entry points for talking about artworks with young children and while this painting was abstract, there were some discernible cartoonlike shapes in this painting and in particular a figure resembling Disney's Donald Duck. Thus, my rationale for selecting this painting was that it was:

i) a contemporary work of art (painted in 1991)

ii) by a female artist

iii) on display at Tate Modern

iv) colourful and quasi figurative

v) had potential for storytelling

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I discussed the design of a conceptual framework for informed interpretation and the related ISEE strategy to put it into practice. Panofsky's (1955) theory of iconography and his model of three steps (description, analysis and interpretation) were chosen to underpin the ISEE. As such, the analysis of meaning embodied in subject matter, the objects, people, places, events, expression and gestures represented in artworks was chosen as a useful way for teachers to interpret paintings with young children. A Socratic approach of questioning and answering, such as VTS devised by Housen (2000) and Yenawine (1998) in their Visual Teaching Strategies, influenced the design of questions for the ISEE. The proposed ISEE strategy along with its rationale and the planned research lessons in which to implement it were reported. Finally, findings from two reviews of literature about young children's preference in art and selected content for teaching art history to young children were discussed. These findings informed the categories I selected for art information and the choice of artworks to accompany the research lessons and data collection instruments.