DOCTORAL THESIS

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

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Award date:
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Awarding institution:
University of Roehampton

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CHAPTER SIX: TEACHERS’ LESSONS AND EVALUATION

6.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I report on the actions, reflections and evaluations of the third and final cycle when teachers designed and taught their own lessons using the ISEE. In the first section, I begin by describing the teachers’ two taught lessons and related reflection and evaluation. The middle section reports on a final summative evaluation of the action research and ISEE strategy in a meeting which included the input of all the participants namely, the observation and action teams and pupils. In the last section, I reflect on the action research as a whole before identifying emerging themes I analysed in more depth in Chapter Seven.

6.1 CYCLE THREE

6.1.1 Aims

This cycle had three main aims. The first was for the teachers to design and teach two lessons of their own, using the ISEE strategy. The second was for all participants to carry out a final summative evaluation of the action research, learning and teaching and selected artworks. The third and final aim was for me, as researcher, to carry out a reflection on the whole research and from this to identify themes for analysis in the next chapter.

6.1.2 Timetable

The table below provides a timetable for the actions undertaken in this cycle.

Table 26: Timetable for Cycle Three actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson title</th>
<th>Selected artwork</th>
<th>Aim for teachers</th>
<th>Aim for pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson One</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Ningeokuluk Teevee: The Whole World</td>
<td>Source art information and design and teach lessons</td>
<td>Learn about another culture through an artist’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>Inuit stonecut print</td>
<td>using ISEE</td>
<td>representation of a story of creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team meeting</td>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Two</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Lesson Title</td>
<td>Selected artwork</td>
<td>Aim for teachers</td>
<td>Aim for pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>13 June</td>
<td>A Victorian Seaside</td>
<td>Eugene Boudin: <em>The Approaching Storm</em></td>
<td>Select and source an artwork and related art information and design and teach a lesson using ISEE</td>
<td>Interpret a single painting using ISEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>11 July</td>
<td>By the Water</td>
<td>André Dérain, <em>Boats in Collioure</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>27 June</td>
<td>Exploring a painting</td>
<td>Pieter Brueghel, the Elder, <em>Children’s Games</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(set out over four days)</td>
<td>4 July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team meeting</td>
<td>11 July</td>
<td>Evaluation Lesson Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group interviews (pupils)</th>
<th>Aim for Lead researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>To capture pupils’ evaluative comments on the art project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative evaluation meeting</td>
<td>18 July</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.3 Participants

6.1.3.1 Action team

The action team included the same four classroom teachers, headteacher and me, as in previous cycles. There was no observation team as the TAs were needed elsewhere to assist with other classroom tasks.

6.1.3.2 Pupils

As in Cycle Two, pupils participated in the research lessons and as before they were conducted during their regular weekly curriculum. At the end of Cycle Three, three groups of six pupils from each class were chosen by their teachers for informal, semi-structured interviews with me, held in the school library.

6.1.3.3 Researcher

One of my roles in this cycle was to observe and record the teachers’ lessons and write about them. Another was to co-ordinate data gathering, coding and storage and transcribing audio tapes from lessons and action meetings. I continued to co-ordinate team meetings to reflect on and evaluate actions. Near the end of the cycle, to widen the scope of our
triangulation, I carried out group interviews with pupils. Finally, I led a summative meeting attended by both the action and observation teams. At the conclusion, as lead researcher, I carried out an overall reflection and evaluation that led me to identify three themes.

**6.1.3.4 External consultant**

The local authority (LA) consultant in charge of monitoring school improvement was informed about the action research by the headteacher at the beginning of Cycle One (September, 2006). He was interested and asked if he could observe a lesson during this cycle.

**6.1.4 Details of action**

Actions in this cycle took the form of teachers designing and implementing their own lessons including selecting artwork and art information and reflecting on and evaluating them. Because of increasing time pressures with end-of-year activities and a pending Ofsted\(^1\) Inspection, the teachers did not want the extra work involved in completing record forms. Lesson One was scheduled in May and Lesson Two in June, 2007.

Towards the end of the cycle, I conducted three semi-structured group interviews with 18 pupils chosen by their teachers, from the three ability sets: able, less able and more able. The purpose of the interviews was to include the pupils’ evaluation. It also provided me with an opportunity to observe pupils’ use of the ISEE at close quarters.

Prior to the final meeting, I provided teachers with a list of evaluation questions to reflect on (see Appendix 31).

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\(^1\) Ofsted Inspection: The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED) is a non-ministerial government department of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector for Schools for England which inspects schools standards on a rolling programme.
**Fig 6.1 Cycle Three: Two strands of action research**

![Diagram showing two strands of action research: Research Lesson 1 and Research Lesson 2 leading to Summative evaluation, with Ongoing overall R & E throughout cycle and My final overall reflection and the identification of themes.]

**R & E = Reflection and evaluation in team meeting**

### 6.2 LESSON ONE

#### 6.2.1 Planning

The classroom teachers were given free rein in their design of lessons. Although the original expectation was that they would select their own artwork for the lesson, a decision taken by the team in Cycle Two (Team meeting, 6/3/07) meant this lesson was situated around an original Inuit stonecut print by Ningeokuluk Teevee’s titled *Silarjuaq* or *The Whole World* (Fig.6.2) which was on display in the school. The teachers had expressed interest in working cross-culturally and this print also gave them the opportunity to work with an original artwork. The idea of including a practical art making activity was mooted by the headteacher during planning although the team discussed other cross-curricular themes such as ‘cultural diversity’ and ‘comparative creation stories’ (6/3/07).

One week prior to the lesson, the headteacher sought permission from the teachers for the LA consultant to observe them as part of his regular school monitoring schedule. It was arranged that he would move freely between the three classrooms observing the ‘art project in action’ (HT email: 3/05/07) but on the day, he decided to observe each lesson in its entirety before meeting with the teachers to provide oral feedback. Prior to his observation, I briefed him about the overall aims of the art project and the lesson, at a meeting with the headteacher (8/5/07).
6.2.2 Selected artwork

All three teachers used the same stonecut stencil print by an Inuit artist shown in Figure 6.2.

Fig. 6.2: Ningeokuluk Teevee, *Silarjuaq (The Whole World)*, 2006, Cape Dorset, stonecut stencil, No.24/50, 18.1 in. x 24.5 in.

6.2.3 RECEPTION CLASS LESSON

6.2.3.1 Preparation

Teachers A and B planned and wrote the lesson plan (shown in Table 23) together and Teacher B taught it. She set out an easel at the front of the class, beside her chair. In an annexed room, a large children’s table was set up with seven place settings. At each setting there was an A3 sheet of white paper, a tray of paint pots with green, blue, yellow and red paint, a large paintbrush and a thick black marker pen.
Table 27: Lesson plan written by Reception teachers (A and B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Activity title: Inuit Art</th>
<th>Explanation of whole class inputs</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Intention for Pupils:</strong></td>
<td>Activity: Referring to the print we have discussed as a class, ask pupils to think about a suitable shape to show their world. (Show mine as a demonstration).</td>
<td>Show pupils the Inuit print. Discuss using the three steps of ISEE: 1. Look and list (what in it?) 2. Question and relate to (Question: Why has the artist included these things? Why have they used these colours? What questions would you like to ask the artist?) 3. Discuss the artist and print. Tell pupils a little about the artist and her techniques, her culture and the legend of Sedna, to develop their understanding and appreciation of the print. Discuss what pupils might include in their own painting of their world.</td>
<td>Single artwork: Inuit print. The Whole World, Ningeokuluk Teevee. Two A3 laminated copies of print. Paint pots with four colours: red, blue, green, yellow. Black marker pen. A3 sheets of white paper. Six large paint brushes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To represent themselves and their world.</td>
<td>Ask them then to think of at least three things that are really important to them, that tells their story. (Give my examples). Show how we can draw an outline of our world and then three shapes (no detail). Use black pens to go over the outlines and then paint the shape to create a bold powerful image, as the artist has done.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw an outline of their 3 most important ‘things’.</td>
<td>Ask pupils to describe their paintings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose their favourite colour and paint each shape.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question: Can you tell someone all about your painting?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.3.2 Description

Teacher B began by telling the pupils the print was ‘quite different’ (Tape: 1:36) from the paintings they had seen before but did not say why. They chatted with each other while looking at it. Teacher B asked them the following five questions, three of which came from the ISEE strategy and two were her own:

1. **What can you see?** (ISEE strategy)
2. **Where is this?**
3. **Why do you think this?** (ISEE strategy)
4. **Why do you think the artist put these objects/things you see in the painting?** (ISEE strategy)
5. **Why has the artist used these colours?** (LWfieldnotes, 8/5/07)

After a short discussion about subject matter in the print, one pupil asked, Why did they only paint black ‘things’? (Tape: 7.06; with reference to the silhouette shapes of the sea creatures, a walrus, seal, mermaid, etc.) Teacher B did not explain but said the artist used only a ‘few colours’ (Tape: 7:28). After 10 minutes she informed pupils about the artist, where she came from, her age, the title of the artwork and gave contextual information.
about Eskimo [Inuit] people and how they used to live. She used information taken from some website material I had recommended (see Appendix 32).

Immediately afterwards, she told them the story of the Inuit legend of Sedna the Sea Goddess (see Appendix 33). She combined action and dramatic voice to accentuate the storytelling. Next she asked pupils, Does the shape of this picture remind you of anything? Two pupils suggested ‘a man’s head’ and ‘ice on the ground’ (Tape: 14.42). Fifteen minutes into the lesson, the pupils were split into four groups of six or seven. Some pupils were sent outside to play while others did unrelated classroom activities. One group of seven pupils were asked to go to the paint table.

Fig. 6.3 Reception pupils’ artwork illustrating their ‘world’

Teacher B said they should think about ‘how to draw your own world’ (Tape: 18.12). Then she asked them, What is special to you? What shape would you make your world? She asked them to remember what was important in the Inuit world and to notice what the artist chose to include in her picture. Pupils called out names of different animals such as ‘dog’ and ‘walrus ‘and mentioned ‘snow’ and ‘ice’ (Tape: 19:46-20:06). They were asked to think of three things they might include in a picture of their own world. A girl said ‘I’m not very good at drawing but I would put in a seal and a walrus’ (Tape: 21.16) which was
clearly influenced by the print. Other pupils, who understood the question better, suggested for example, family members, pets, the sun and God.

Pupils drew outlines in pencil on the paper to represent their world. The teacher asked them to go over them in black marker pen ‘like in the Inuit print’ (Tape: 21:40). Then she asked them to fill in the faces of the people and animals saying, ‘You can’t see the faces, the faces or the eyes’ (Tape: 21:48) and then instructed them to paint the rest of the shapes. The pupils had difficulty manipulating the paintbrushes so she found smaller ones. Afterwards, in a short discussion, they reported their choices of ‘God and me’; ‘my mummy and my dog’; ‘a moose and a seal’; ‘a mermaid and my Mum’; ‘a Daddy jaguar and a baby on top’; and ‘a walrus and a seal’ (Tape: 26:02-27:05). When Teacher B asked the last girl why she chose a walrus and a seal, she said, ‘because I like really like them’ (Tape: 28.12). The lesson lasted 28 minutes.

6.2.4 YEAR ONE

6.2.4.1 Preparation

No written lesson plan was forthcoming. Teacher C taught the lesson which lasted 26 minutes. She arranged the classroom as usual with the Inuit print on an easel beside her chair at the front of the class. Under her instruction, the TA had organised seven thick A3 sheets of white card, seven black sheets of A4 construction paper, pencils, scissors and Pritt stick glue on six tables. She had also set out a laminated A4 copy of the Inuit print on each table for reference.

6.2.4.2 Description

The teacher gathered the Year One class around her, sitting on the floor, as in previous lessons. She began by explaining what would happen in the lesson and telling pupils to look at the print while she told them a story about it. She said ‘a lady artist made this print and she’s an Eskimo, not British’ (Tape: 2.10). She told them it was ‘original’ and posed the question, What can you see before asking them to tell their partners. Pupils chatted animatedly for several minutes. Next they were asked to stand up and speak into a plastic microphone, telling the whole class what they saw. Their responses included ‘a deer’, ‘a person’, ‘dogs’, ‘a kind of bird’, ‘a penguin’ (Tape: 5:05-5:58). The teacher posed the question, What type of animals do you see in this print? (Tape: 6:01) and a boy answered ‘animals that live in cold places’ (Tape: 6.06). When she asked Why? he said they were
‘winter animals in the wild’ (Tape: 6.19). Another pupil said, ‘You can see animals like this in the South Pole’ (Tape: 6.42). The pupils discussed the snow and being cold and a boy pointed to the silhouette figures and said, ‘I was thinking that might be, like a jacket, like you see – like you wear when it’s cold’ (Tape: 7.49).

The teacher gave contextual information about ‘Eskimos’ (Tape: 7.58). She said, ‘in the olden days, and even sometimes now, they hunt animals and depend on eating what they catch’ (Tape: 8.15). She said they used animal skins for clothing. Then she read them ‘a legend’, she described as an ‘old story’ (Tape: 8.19). She asked them to ‘imagine the story’ and look for the animals as they listened (Tape: 8.24).

Afterwards, Teacher C asked pupils to make a stencil in the shape of their ‘world’ (Tape: 10.53). She explained the print reflected Sedna’s world (the main character in the story, Tape: 10.59) and asked them, What is in your world? (Tape: 11.08). The pupils moved to the work tables to draw and cut out a shape to illustrate their world. The teacher asked them to draw ‘things’ that were important to them on a piece of black construction paper, then cut out and stick them onto the shaped pieces of paper (Tape: 12:06). Pupils had difficulty using the blunt scissors to cut out the small detailed things they had drawn.

They worked independently, chatting to each other and adults at their table. Afterwards Teacher C asked three of them to show their cut outs to the whole class and explain why they included them. Their choices included the following:
A tree and water because we need them to live (24:17)
Parents because they take care of us (24:24)
My sister because I want her with me (24:31)

Following this short feedback, Teacher C drew the lesson to an end.

6.2.5 YEAR TWO

6.2.5.1 Preparation

For Teacher D’s lesson plan (see Table 28) she prepared a tape of Edvard Grieg’s music, In the Hall of the Mountain King and assembled a PowerPoint presentation of various Inuit artists’ work illustrating the story of Sedna. In the classroom, she arranged the Inuit print on an easel at the front of the class. She prepared story picture planner2 worksheets (see Appendix 34 and Fig. 6.5) and provided writing paper and pencils. On three art tables, the TA set out slabs of red clay for clay making and aprons and pens. She distributed 12 laminated A4 copies of the Inuit print to the pupils. Teacher D provided the following lesson format.

Table 28: Lesson plan written by Year Two teacher (D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>WHOLE CLASS ACTIVITY</th>
<th>TEACHER INPUT</th>
<th>TA INPUT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Looking and listing: What can you see?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questioning and relating to – Why is it there?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How does it make you feel?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss and find out – What is the story? What is it all about? Reflect.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2: Talk about artist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Show map of world to explain where she lives and tell legend of Sedna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(prompt sheet)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask chn what elements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Pupils in this school regularly use a story picture planner to identify important points of a story they want to remember for their writing up. It is comprised of an A4 piece of paper sectioned into 4-5 blocks for pupils to draw in. The exercise is not intended as artwork but rather as an aid for writing and storytelling.
using tools and materials independently
- Experience use of clay
- Modelling skills and techniques
- Create 3D clay work using joins and hollows

**Literacy:**
To discuss and compare story themes
To predict story endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>ICT Power point Presentation</th>
<th>Story picture planners to retell story</th>
<th>Clay to make own interpretations of character in traditional story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Part 3**
Think of how we could make something from story – how, what, look at power point of sculptures of Sedna
Clay model of Sedna – What should be included? Can they explain why these could/should be there?

10 min.

**Part 3**
While we look at PP, get clay etc ready for group. Use circle tables.

Keep your group on focus and move rest of chn round to retell story while teacher starts clay group. More will join as we go on.

Record observations on planning.

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6.2.5.2 Description

Teacher D seated Year Two pupils on the floor in rows in front of her, facing the Inuit print on the easel. She said they were going to do something ‘very different because this is the real thing’ (indicating the print/Tape: 0.34). She explained it was ‘precious’ and therefore under glass to avoid finger marks that could damage it. She began by asking pupils which four questions they asked themselves when looking at a painting. They gave three questions *What can you see?, What do you feel?, What’s it all about?* and the teacher reminded them of the remaining question, *Why is it in the picture?* (Tape: 1.42) Then she explained they would look at the Inuit print and listen to information and a story about it before she gave out story picture planner worksheets (Appendix 34) to retell the story. Then they should find a partner to talk with about the Inuit print before moving to the clay table to ‘make a model’ (Tape: 2.25).

The teacher gave pupils the laminated A4 copies to share. She reiterated the question, *What do you see in this picture?* (Tape: 4.52). Pupils’ answers included: ‘a stag’, ‘dogs’, ‘a mermaid’ (Tape: 6.34) before describing things in closer detail, for example, one boy said he saw ‘a dog sled pulled by huskies’ (Tape: 6:47) and one girl mentioned ‘all the living things are black’ (Tape: 6.50). Teacher D asked them, *Why do you think these people,*
animals and things are included in this picture? (Tape: 8.31). After two minutes of thinking time a boy suggested, ‘He (the artist) wanted to show the roots and plants that live in this land’ (Tape: 8.40). Another pupil said, ‘He (the artist) wanted to show the differences between the animals, those in the sea and on the land’ (Tape: 8.47). When she asked where the animals came from one boy answered: ‘Finland, or somewhere cold, because it looks cold and there are icebergs’ (Tape: 10.13).

During discussion, Teacher D periodically asked pupils How does the picture make you feel? which solicited responses such as ‘cold’ and ‘chilly’. She agreed saying ‘the blue makes me feel cold too. The artist has used cold colours. I don’t think they are very warm colours at all’ (Tape: 10.58).

Afterwards, Teacher D explained how the stonecut stencil print was made and reminded pupils of print work they had done in a previous lesson. She asked if anyone knew the story behind the ‘picture’ but no one did. She told them the artist was an Inuit or Eskimo woman. They laughed when she struggled to repeat the artist’s name ‘Ningeokuluk Teevee’ but took time to look again at the print. The teacher used a PowerPoint projector to show a large image of a world map on the smart board so pupils could see where Inuit people live. She continued, telling them that snow and ice covered the land for much of the year. She said the artist ‘tried to make a picture of what she could see around her’ (Tape: 14.15) and to ‘tell a story about her world and how it was created’ (Tape: 14.31 and 14.54). Then she told them the story of ‘Sedna’ and acted out parts using different voices for the characters over the next nine minutes. When it was over, she showed them a PowerPoint show³, accompanied by the music tape (LW/fieldnotes 8/5/07). She asked pupils to ‘look carefully and see if you can see Sedna’. The video showed several versions of ‘Sedna’ created by different Inuit artists, in media ranging from 2D printwork to 3D narwhal and antler bone and soapstone carvings. She asked them to focus on how artists captured the ‘character’ of Sedna and what they chose to include about her. Pupils noticed she was brushing her hair in some versions and suggested her hair was important. Others mentioned she had no fingers as they had been chopped off by her father in the story.

³ Teacher D made a compilation from various images of Sedna done by different Inuit artists and sculptors she found on the internet
After half an hour, Teacher D gave out the story picture planner worksheets #6 and asked pupils to do ‘quick sketches’ (Tape: 31.10) to remind them of the story and help them in making their clay model. As they completed them, Teacher D asked *What kind of story is this?* She suggested, *If I said it starts ‘long, long ago and in a faraway land’ what would you say?* One boy answered ‘fiction?’ and Teacher D agreed, ‘It does have elements of a traditional story in the way it begins and the way it is told’ (Tape: 31.32). She likened this to creating a painting. She drew a comparison between an artist planning her artwork and someone planning a story and instructed them, ‘you can leave out bits in your picture planning but you need to highlight the important bits to help people understand the story’ (Tape: 35.41). Pupils could be overheard questioning each other about their picture planners, for example one girl asked another, ‘Are her eyes closed or open? Is she dreaming then? In the water?’ and several asked ‘What’s going to happen next?’(LWfieldnotes: 8/5/07).

Fig.6.5 Year Two pupil’s completed story picture planner
For 15 minutes, pupils rotated between activities of story planning, talking with partners and making clay models to ‘show the story of Sedna’ (Tape: 36.23).

At the end, pupils looked at one another’s finished models. Out of the 22 models, a majority depicted the figure of Sedna and featured her hair, tail or fingerless hands. Others represented birds or sea creatures from the story.

Teacher D asked pupils to explain their models. The girl who created the Sedna figure shown in Fig. 6.38 explained, ‘Sedna was so happy even though she had lost her fingers in the sea’ (Tape: 35.12) and another girl showed Sedna’s fingers changing into sea creatures ‘to make a happy ending’ (LWfieldnotes: 8/5/07) . The lesson lasted for 51.33 minutes.
### 6.2.6 Meeting with LA Consultant

In the feedback meeting, the LA consultant raised two points. First, he thought Step Two was not being used effectively to draw links between the subject matter of the print and the story. Second, he likened the ISEE to ‘intelligent questioning’ and said he thought it had worked well when teachers repeatedly posed the questions *Why do you say that?* and *What makes you think that?* He commended Teacher D for providing ‘strong scaffolding for pupils’ (LWfieldnotes: 8/5/07) that helped them make the necessary associations between the Inuit print, the story of Sedna and the art activity they were given.

### 6.2.7 Team reflection and evaluation

The action team met later to evaluate the lesson without the consultant. Two of the three teachers expressed disappointment and frustration because they told us they tried to show too much and pupils ended up rushing to produce a finished piece. They felt this had been done for the sake of the visiting consultant. Teacher C said the ‘brief was too much, all in one go’. The teachers agreed the lesson did not ‘reflect the best of the art project’ or ‘show the quiet reflection’ pupils had become capable of when looking at a painting (LWfieldnotes, 8/5/07). Teacher C was surprised after ‘months of hard work talking about paintings’ how difficult it had been for Year One pupils to demonstrate their interpretations in their own artwork. Given their age, the team agreed it was easier to identify pupils’ interpretations from what they said rather than their representations.

Team reflection centred mainly on difficulties experienced in assessing what the teachers called *slow*, then later *deep learning*. The headteacher described it as a ‘wait for it’ moment in learning, ‘when the light bulb goes on’ (Tape: 12.42). She also suggested that trying to assess art interpretation is counterproductive. There was collective agreement that using pupils’ artwork to assess their interpretive skills inadvertently focused attention on the product and away from the process being undertaken. Time or lack of time, was cited by several teachers as a critical factor preventing pupils from thinking about, analysing and interpreting art and then making it. The team recognised there was not enough time in lessons for pupils to take the necessary step back and absorb their own ideas or those of others and to listen to and consider art information. Some pupils made quick interpretations that did not change regardless of what they heard or talked about with others. The concept
of deep learning was helpful as it alerted us to the danger of being too impatient for results in our evaluation.

The LA consultant’s question about who selected the artwork prompted me to discuss this with the teachers. They told me they wanted more control in selecting artwork and felt it would give them opportunity to combine art information with their own knowledge of other curriculum areas for discussion. Three teachers wanted to link lessons and artworks to class topic work\(^4\) in future lessons. We revisited the purpose and implementation of Step Two again as the LA consultant had expressed confusion about how it was being applied.

### 6.2.8 Researcher reflection on Lesson One

I noticed that although teachers used the same Inuit print and story, the three lessons were completely different. Pace and timing of the lesson, new questions, teachers’ research into cultural context and discussions about media and techniques were amongst some of the variances as well as teaching styles. I was struck by the level of confidence one teacher demonstrated and how she linked discussion points. A review of the questions posed by teachers showed that none of them asked pupils for a holistic view of the painting in this lesson. Although teachers had researched the cultural context, I was disappointed none of them had sourced information about the artist, Ningeokuluk Teevee, as I had provided links for websites\(^5\) where biographical profiles and photographs were available.

As the print was an example of artwork from a different culture, I had expected at least one teacher might focus on the theme of *creation stories*, possibly through a comparison between different cultures. I was interested that all the teachers used the lesson to focus instead on art making and wondered if they welcomed the chance to return to more familiar art activities.

In two classes, teachers actively encouraged mimesis by selecting similar looking art materials and techniques and asking them to recreate the print. Teacher B directed Reception pupils to use black marker pens ‘to outline the shape’ of their world ‘like in the Inuit print’ and fill in the faces of people and animals as ‘you can’t see them’ (LW

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\(^4\) Tann (2004:213) explains ‘topic work’ as an approach to learning taking into account pupils’ concerns and involving them in planning, executing, presenting and evaluating in a negotiated learning experience’. According to Cohen *et al.* (2004) the use of topic or themed topic work has been a feature of primary classroom learning for a while and is recognised as part of a child-centred teaching approach.

\(^5\) [www.canadahouse.com](http://www.canadahouse.com) and [www.dorsetfinearts.com](http://www.dorsetfinearts.com)
fieldnotes). The Year One teacher asked pupils to ‘make a stencil like the Inuit print’ and to ‘cut out shapes from the black paper and glue them onto the white card’ like the silhouettes in it. I noticed the animals some pupils included in their ‘world’, for example, seals and walruses did not reflect their own surroundings but mirrored those in the Inuit print.

I was not surprised the Year Two teacher designed an interdisciplinary lesson that combined art with literacy, as the latter was her specialist area. She used resources the pupils were familiar with (internet; PowerPoint; story picture planners) and designed art making and writing activities. I was interested in the links she made between Teevee’s print, story writing and the story narrative.

My underlying concern following observations of Lesson One was the evident difficulty teachers had posing the Step Two question Why are these objects included in the painting? I noticed Teacher B posed only the first question What do you see? I agreed with the LA consultant’s concern that the question Why are these objects included in the painting? had been ‘neglected’. As time was short, I wrote to team members re-explaining my rationale for this question and left it in their pigeon holes at school. One teacher thanked me but there were no further comments.

6.3 LESSON TWO

6.3.1 Reception Class

6.3.1.1 Teacher A’s selected artwork

Fig. 6.8 Eugene-Louis Boudin, The Approaching Storm, 1864, oil on wood, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Teacher A explained she chose this painting because she wanted one that illustrated a Victorian seascape. It linked closely to Victorian topic work being done in Reception that term. Pupils were therefore familiar with the setting and subject matter in the painting.
During planning Teacher A asked me to recommend some artists and examples of seaside paintings for her to choose from. She made her selection from my recommendations.

6.3.1.2 Preparation
No lesson plan was forthcoming. Teacher A taught the lesson and it lasted 30 minutes. She arranged the classroom in the usual way with a single A2 sized reproduction painting set on an easel beside her chair. She also made 30 A5 laminated copies for pupils to handle and created a classroom display board (see Fig. 6.9) with photographs from a recent class visit to the seaside when pupils dressed in Victorian clothing.

6.3.1.3 Description
Teacher A introduced the painting using the artist’s name and title. She asked pupils to sit quietly and think about it but immediately they began to chat. She began by asking them What do you think this picture’s about? One girl suggested ‘a bathing machine’ (Tape: 2:36) which prompted a class discussion. Teacher A posed further questions, Where is this happening? and What’s the place? They offered suggestions such as ‘It’s a festival because there’s lots of people around’ (Tape: 3.08) and ‘There’s a sea and a boat is sinking because the pointy bits are pointing down into the water’ (Tape: 4.57) and ‘This bit of sand is dark and those light bits are where the sun is shining on it’ (Tape: 5.35). Teacher A used this opportunity to discuss how the sun casts shadows on the sand and sea. Pupils described the sky as ‘grey’ and ‘cloudy’ but a girl said, ‘But there’s a blue patch that means the sun’s coming out’ (Tape: 5.45). One boy noticed the flag on the flagpole was blowing in a certain direction and said there was a ‘big wind’ (Tape: 6.21).

Looking at the painting, a boy pointed out ‘a little white thing’ and said it was a dog. The teacher followed this up with questions such as, Is that dog with anyone? Where is its owner? Do people mind it running on the beach? They continued the conversation. She asked them, What is the lady holding in her hand? (Tape: 8:28). When a pupil said ‘an umbrella’ she asked why it was included in the painting and if it was ‘normal to take an umbrella to the beach?’ (Tape: 8.35). A pupil shouted out ‘It’s a parasol, you use when it’s really hot, to hold over your head, that’s why it’s there’ (Tape: 8.48). The teacher continued this way, asking pupils questions about everything they mentioned and why it was included in the painting. When the dialogue turned to the clothes people were wearing, Teacher A produced photographs from their class trip to Brighton when they dressed up as
Victorians. She drew their attention to similarities between their clothing in the photographs and the people in the painting and asked them what they would wear nowadays at the beach.

![Image](image-url)

**Fig. 6.9 Photographs of Reception pupils at seaside**

An animated discussion followed about suntans, wearing hats, colours and textures of materials in the clothes worn by some figures in the painting. Teacher A demonstrated how *bathing machines* were used in Victorian times. Pupils pointed out the wheels on the machines and recognised they were for pulling on the beach. A boy noticed numbers on the bathing machines that reminded him of locker numbers at a leisure centre where he swam with his family.

When Teacher A posed the last question *What do you feel about this painting?*, the majority of pupils said things like ‘happy, to be going to the beach’. One girl said she felt ‘relaxed’ (Tape: 25.48) and a boy said ‘crowded’ before explaining there were ‘too many people’ (Tape: 26.30). For the last three minutes, Teacher A talked to pupils about the artist and painting. She reminded them about the title, *The Approaching Storm* (fig. 6.8) and asked them for clues to support it. They mentioned the flag and ‘dark shadows’ on the sand. She explained the artist was called Eugene Boudin and came from France and told them he lived at the same time as Queen Victoria but in a different country. She said the artist was interested in showing light and dark colour contrasts and liked to paint shadows and clouds in skies. She asked them to look for this in the painting. She said many of his paintings
show people enjoying themselves outdoors in ‘settings’ such as this. Pupils looked at the painting and nodded their heads and chatted to each other (LWfieldnotes 13/6/07).

6.3.2 YEAR ONE

6.3.2.1 Teacher C’s selected artwork

Fig. 6.10 André Derain, *Boats in Collioure*, 1905, oil on canvas, Dusseldorf Museum, Germany

Teacher C told me she chose André Derain’s painting of *Boats in Collioure* (fig. 6.10) because it linked to a Year One science term topic ‘Investigations of water and ponds’. Furthermore, she said she liked the colours, particularly the blue and had a fondness for landscape paintings about water (LWfieldnotes 11/7/07). She told me she sourced it from a teacher’s Art Pack kit⁶ in the school’s archive of educational art material.

6.3.2.2 Preparation

No lesson plan was forthcoming. The teacher taught the lesson and it lasted 35 minutes. She arranged the easel and a poster sized reproduction of the painting as usual. She also converted pupils’ classroom tables into art tables and set out four colours of tissue paper (dark blue, turquoise, green and orange), white A4 card, pencils and Pritt stick glue. She had laminated 30 A5 copies of the painting for pupils to look at.

6.3.2.3 Description
Teacher C showed pupils ‘the first picture I’ve been able to choose’ (Tape: 0.23) and asked them what they could see. After several replies she told them she could see ‘a jetty in the foreground’ (Tape: 2.42). Next she asked them to describe the picture to their partners. Their conversations were mainly about colours, for example, ‘a sea picture with nice colours’, ‘colourful blobs of blue’ (LWfieldnotes: 11/7/07). One boy said it was ‘different’ and concluded, ‘He [artist] painted it like a mosaic’ (Tape: 9.22). Teacher C said ‘the word for this type of art is pointillism, little blobs of colour’ (Tape: 9.31). She told them ‘I read about it on the artist’s card’.

She asked pupils the following questions **What do you think they (the people in the painting) might be doing?**; **Why are these boats altogether?**; **Can you describe what you see?**; **Why do you think he painted this?**; **How has the artist painted the water?** As pupils answered them, one boy spoke about the colours saying, ‘He’s used all the night colours and blue and green for seaweed’. Teacher C agreed and said dark blue water meant it was cold and she reminded them of a recent fieldtrip to Painshill Park where they did watercolour sketches of a pond. She asked them to remember the colour of the pond water and they recalled it was green and grey (Tape: 21.33). One boy judged the ‘bluey green water in this picture makes it look like the sea’ (Tape: 22:22)

Fig. 6.11 Year One pupils discussing *Boats in Collioure*

7 ibid.
Next Teacher C explained they would make some pictures. She asked, *How are you going to make it look like this painting? Cut up lots of tissue paper?* When a pupil asked, *Do we have to do the same thing?* Teacher C said, ‘No, but it should have water and boats in it’.

Some used pencils to outline a design. Others cut out squares of tissue paper while some tore and scrunched it up into balls to glue onto the paper. Most pupils did not mix the coloured tissues together and kept them in orderly rows or blocks of colour. At one table, one boy announced, ‘If you squint your eyes it *Boats in Collioure*, fig. 6.10] starts to look better. It looks normal because the colours mix together’ (LWfieldnotes 11/7/07).

When the pupils finished they handed their work in without comment for their teacher to display on the classroom walls.

**6.3.3 YEAR TWO**

**6.3.3.1 Teacher D’s selected artwork**

Fig. 6.13 Pieter Brueghel the Elder, *Children’s Games*, oil on panel, 1560,161 1x 118cm., 63.4 x 46.5 in., Kuntshistoriches Museum, Vienna, Austria
The teacher selected an artwork she had previously worked with on a professional training day for the Local Authority. She explained it had potential for discussion about social activities, relationships and storytelling and wanted to use it in an interdisciplinary lesson involving art and literacy. Moreover, she had access to an over-sized poster reproduction.

6.3.3.2 Preparation

No formal lesson plan was forthcoming; however Teacher D gave me the following timetable for activities. She taught the lesson in four sessions, totalling four hours and 17 minutes and timetabled it over the three days of the school’s Ofsted\(^8\) Inspection on the 4\(^{th}\) to 6\(^{th}\) July, 2007.

**Table 29: Timetable for Year Two lesson (2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day One</th>
<th>27 June, 2007</th>
<th>22 minutes</th>
<th>Whole class discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day Two*</td>
<td>4 July, 2007</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Playground sketches and photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Three*</td>
<td>5 July, 2007</td>
<td>60 minutes (am)</td>
<td>Playground sketches and painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45 minutes (pm)</td>
<td>Whole class discussion: What? Why? How do you feel looking at this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Four*</td>
<td>6 July, 2007</td>
<td>75 minutes</td>
<td>Writing newspaper articles: art and literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*School’s Ofsted Inspection 4\(^{th}\), 5\(^{th}\), 6\(^{th}\) July, 2007)

Each day the teacher arranged the classroom slightly differently with pupils facing her as she sat in a different spot in the room. On Day One, the pupils sat on the floor of the classroom for whole class discussion; Days Two and Three, they worked mainly in groups at classroom tables while one group went outside to the school playground in turns to photograph pupils’ playing using a digital camera. The teacher provided pupils with sheets of A2 paper to write on and paints and pencils for them to sketch and paint. She downloaded the photographs and printed them from the computer so they could cut out and glue them onto the A2 paper.

6.3.3.3 Description

On Day One, Teacher D showed pupils the large reproduction. Some of them shouted out ‘Wow!’ . They spent the next 15 minutes looking at and talking enthusiastically about it.

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\(^8\) Ofsted Inspection is the office for standards in education. It is the government department responsible for inspection of schools and Local Educational Authorities (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))
She began by asking **What can you see?** followed by **Tell me some things you do in the playground?** Pupils named various activities such as playing football, tightrope walking, playing cricket, jumping, playing tiles, hopscotch, skipping, catching balls, snakes and ladders, leapfrogging, acting, dressing up and playing ‘it’. She gave them several minutes to look again at the painting to see if any of these games were being played. They talked to each other as they pointed out different sections of the painting on their postcards.

Next, each pupil was asked to name an ‘object or thing’. After each response, Teacher D posed the questions **Why do you think its included in the picture? Why would that be there?** and **How does that help you to understand what’s happening?** One girl mentioned, ‘Children have taken their hats off. They’re jumping around and playing ‘leapfrog’, otherwise [their hats] would just fall off’ (LWfieldnotes: 25/6/07). One boy noticed three ‘boys riding on the fence’ and said they were ‘holding sticks in their hands to make their horses go faster’ (LWfieldnotes 25/6/07) which combined Steps One and Two together. Afterwards, pupils were asked to get out their ideas book and ‘jot down’ further ideas for later. She gave them five more minutes.

One week later, on Day Two, Teacher D brought out the large reproduction again and asked pupils **What was this about?** Their suggestions included, ‘a festival’; ‘Hallowe’en’, ‘a birthday party’, ‘children playing’ and ‘some kind of celebration’. After a short conversation, she put them into two groups; one went outside to the playground, using school cameras to photograph play, while the other worked at classroom tables drawing sketches of playground games from imagination. Later, she switched groups so each of them had a chance to use a digital camera in the playground. No questions were posed.
The morning of Day Three, pupils were given A1 card to mount their photographs and finish sketches of pupils playing in the playground. They worked individually or together on these tasks for nearly an hour. Later that afternoon, Teacher D led a whole class discussion about the painting and posed three questions from the ISEE strategy:

*What is going on?*

*Why are these things in the painting?*

*How do you feel about this painting?*

After a short exchange of answers, she divided pupils into groups of five or six to talk about writing a ‘column for a newspaper’. She asked them to act as reporters reporting on events taking place in the painting and to describe one or more activity in it. Pupils chatted
and wrote down ideas for the next 45 minutes. Occasionally they went over to look again at the large reproduction.

On Day Four, pupils continued to work on their playground sketches and write up newspaper reports. The teacher left them to work without her guidance or input. Every pupil rotated taking part in these two activities during the morning.

Fig. 6.16 Pupils’ newspaper copy

6.3.4 Team reflection and evaluation

Overall, the team was delighted with Lesson Two and agreed it came closest to how they thought a lesson framed around the ISEE should work. Reception and Year One teachers judged the lesson met their aims as they were able to design a lesson for pupils to interpret a painting focused on a class topic. In their overall evaluation of the ISEE, all the teachers considered Steps One and Two had been successful this time. Teacher A recognised this was because she had formulated many sub questions after posing the ISEE question *Why is this included in the painting?* Two teachers said the art information in Step Three had furthered class discussion (Tape: 8.17). Teacher D did not use any art information and therefore could not evaluate Step Three.

I asked the teachers to reflect on why the lesson was successful. One teacher told us ‘all the right factors were in place’ (Tape 11:12) and listed the following:

i) a relevant choice of artwork linked to class topic work
ii) teachers well prepared and ready to talk about the artist and artwork
iii) sub questions formulated to extend discussion
iv) pupils on task and engaged
v) teachers able to set their own pace and lesson timing.
vi) time to reflect on what was said and the art information

Commenting on her lesson design, the Reception teacher told us she focused pupils’ attention by asking them to find clues to support the title (*The Approaching Storm*, fig. 6.8) and this encouraged them to reason ‘why’. After reviewing the lesson transcript, she concluded pupils had used knowledge from previous lessons and childhood memories to help them understand the Victorian seaside paraphernalia like bathing machines, parasols and people’s clothing. Under her direction they shared ideas together in a class discussion. She told us she had no idea where discussion would lead in this lesson but the team concluded that her sub questions had shaped and guided the discussion.

Teacher C judged her lesson was successful because of the art information. She was particularly pleased when one boy mentioned the colours looked like a mosaic as it gave her an opportunity to inform the class about pointillism. She told us she wanted to say more but lost her nerve (LWfieldnotes 11/7/07). She said she mentioned the colours of the painting because she liked them (Journal 12/7/07).

Teacher D told us she did not provide art information because ‘they had enough on their plates’ (LWfieldnotes 11/7/07). Her lesson aim was to ‘investigate a painting through literacy’ (Tape: 26:43) and she was delighted by the lesson outcome and spreading it over four days (Journal 7/7/07). Steps One and Two had helped her to encourage the pupils to look closely at and think about the events taking place in the painting. She thought they engaged with the painting because they understood what the children in it were doing on a personal level. The majority of them interpreted the painting as a ‘celebration’ and from this she guessed they were associating with the children in the picture and linking subject matter to ‘Hallowe’en’ because of the masks, ‘the feeling of excitement in the painting’ and ‘the brown and orange colours’ used by the artist (Journal 7/7/07).

A teacher said the lesson had empowered her and others agreed. They recognised creating links between the painting, class discussion and topic work had strengthened pupils’
interpretations. They valued the lesson because it had reinforced ongoing learning in other subject areas. For the teachers in Reception and Year One, using art information had ‘enriched’ the lesson.

As the last team meeting of the cycle, I asked team members for their views on the reflection and evaluation process. Comments included, for example ‘less threatening than in the first cycle’ and ‘eye opening to see what others think’ (Journal, 11/07/07). One teacher told us it had forced them into deeper discussions about practice and given them an opportunity to change their teaching midstream. Another teacher concluded that reflecting on practice was a ‘natural way to inform teaching’ (Journal 11/7/07). There was unanimous agreement that the ‘team’ had worked effectively to carry out the research.

6.4 EVALUATION OF ACTION RESEARCH

6.4.0 Introduction
I took two actions to inform the final summative evaluation. The first involved sending out a list of evaluation questions for teachers to reflect on prior to the meeting. In the second, as a result of the teachers’ recommendation in Cycle One to have pupils contribute to the final evaluation, I carried out three group interviews with six pupils from each class. The group interview schedule, design and description are reported now.

6.4.1 Group interviews (Pupils)
I decided to conduct group interviews rather than individual ones. Emery (1989:237) claims that pupils often operate as ‘animated clusters rather than as individuals’ in the classroom and this partly influenced my decision. In the action research, social interaction was understood to play a significant part in pupils’ learning to interpret paintings and this led me to believe group interviews would be useful. On a practical level, they were also less time-consuming and time was short. Thus, three semi-structured interviews were carried out with a group of six pupils from each class.

6.4.1.1 Group interview schedule
I designed the group interview schedule (see Table 30) with the aim of attaining pupils’ evaluation of the ISEE, art project and selected artworks. A secondary aim was for me to gather evidence of pupils’ awareness and use of the ISEE. The schedule consisted of five
questions and the first involved a task for pupils. The same schedule was used with all three groups.

**Table 30: Group interview schedule (pupils)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question One (Task):</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>On the table I’ve set out all the paintings we looked at in the art project. Please choose one and tell us about it. What is it about?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Allow pupil/s to initiate discussion and prompt with <em>How do you know this?</em> or <em>Why do you think so?</em> if there is no explanation. )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Two:</td>
<td><em>What do you know about the artist?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Three:</td>
<td><em>How do you figure out what's happening in an artwork?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Four:</td>
<td><em>What do you think about the paintings we looked at in the art project?</em> (gesture to the copies on the table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Five:</td>
<td><em>Do you have any recommendations of things you would like to have done in the art project?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6.4.1.2 Detail of group interviews**

All three groups willingly took part in the interviews. None of them showed any reluctance to participate. I began by explaining the reason for them and asked for their permission to take part. All of the interviews lasted between 15 and 20 minutes and took place in the headteacher’s office with pupils sitting on comfortable chairs surrounding me. I conducted each interview myself and tape recorded it. I used the term *art project* to refer to research lessons in Cycles Two and Three and the ISEE strategy.

I set out small A4 sized copies of the paintings used in the research lessons on a table in front of pupils and asked each of them to choose one to talk about. Reception and Year One did so individually. However, in Year Two, the structure of the interview changed because several pupils asked if they could talk about them jointly. As such they made their own selections but others joined in discussion. The pupils answered five structured questions and a summary of their responses follows.

**6.4.1.3 Summary of group interviews**

**Question One (Task):** Pupils in all three classes chose the same four paintings: Hogarth’s *The Graham Children* (fig.5.8); Magritte’s *Le Domain d'Arnheim* (fig.5.6); Rae’s *Untitled, Grey and Brown* (fig. 5.13) and Rousseau’s *Tropical Storm: Surprised!* (fig.5.2).
All of them offered an interpretation of the painting they selected, regardless of age. At times it was necessary for me to prompt them by asking *Why do you think so?* Some constructed new interpretations of their painting while others remembered what was said before in research lessons and repeated it.

**Question Two:** Pupils in all three groups remembered the artist Fiona Rae by name and William Hogarth because of his friendship with the children in the painting. They talked mainly about the artists in the third person, saying for example, ‘he showed us’ (Y1, boy); ‘it looks like they spilt ketchup here’ (Y2, boy) and ‘the painter could tell you that’ (RC, girl).

**Question Three:** When they were asked the question *How do you figure out what’s happening in an artwork?* all the pupils gave suggestions that reflected the steps of the ISEE strategy. For example, Reception pupils suggested ‘look very carefully to see what’s in it’ (Tape: 14.02); ‘ask somebody’, ‘ask a friend’, ‘the painter could tell you’ (Tape: 14:21-14.39) and ‘see other paintings by the same painter and try to understand them’ (Tape: 14.58). Year One pupils told me ‘look at it’ (Tape: 9.42); ‘see if it’s man made’ (Tape: 9.53) and ‘find information on a card or read about it’ (Tape: 10.15). In Year Two, pupils’ answers were ‘make sure it’s the right way round’ (Tape: 17.35); ‘get a friend to help you’; ‘read the story about it’ (Tape: 17.46); ‘use the internet to look up the artist or picture’ (Tape: 18.19), ‘ask the artist, if he’s alive’ (Tape: 18.38) and ‘join up your ideas with someone elses’ (Tape: 18.05).

**Question Four:** When I asked pupils what they thought of the paintings used in the art project the majority gave positive responses. I realised there was probably an element of trying to please as some pupils were overly enthusiastic and kept repeating how much they liked them. One or two pupils said they had a ‘favourite’ and pointed out the subject matter in a painting, for example ‘I love the tiger, it’s scary’ (RC); ‘I like those children’ (RC, Y1, Y2) and ‘the mummy and her little girl’ (RC, Y1). Several pupils expressed disappointment about Brueghel’s *Fall of Icarus* (fig. 5.9) and explained they ‘didn’t have a chance to look at it’ (Y2 boy). The painting *Untitled, Grey and Brown* (fig.5.13) by Fiona Rae created the most controversy across the year groups and continued to draw judgemental comments such as ‘it’s just so silly’(RC, Y2), ‘messy’ (Y2); ‘splodged on’ (Y1); ‘accidental’ (Y2); ‘crazy”; ‘unfinished’ (Y2) and ‘cool’.
Question Five: Each group made recommendations for the art project. Three pupils (one from each class) wanted opportunities to look at and copy the painting. One girl in Reception suggested looking at paintings to give them ideas for making their own art. A boy in Year One wanted to use the paintings to make up stories (Y1) and several others (RC and Y1) wanted to see the ‘real things’ (originals).

6.4.1.4 Analysis of group interview findings

I transcribed the three audio tape recordings immediately after the interviews and analysed them in conjunction with comments I had recorded in my journal. I noted all the pupils expressed themselves through dialogue, facial expressions and gestures. I was impressed that each pupil appeared confident to talk about the paintings and art project. The following exchange between two boys in Year Two offers an example of the thoughtful reflection that characterised some pupils’ comments by the end of the research:

Pupil (1): I really think it’s just absolutely a mad painting (Tape: 1.59)

Pupil (2): ‘Yes, that’s true. But, it’s...when I look at it, I think it’s still a picture’ (Tape: 2.39). (Untitled: Grey and Brown, fig. 5.13)

I was unable to assess pupils’ use of the ISEE, however, their responses to Question Three gave me evidence that pupils in all three classes knew the ISEE steps involved looking carefully at artworks, using ideas from others and finding out information to understand them. I concluded they interpreted the paintings in three ways: through literal description of subject matter, by imagining ideas about them and by using their prior knowledge or art information they remembered. These modes of interpretation are shown in the following exchange between Year One pupils discussing Magritte’s Le Domaine d’Arnheim (fig.5.6):

Pupil (1): The top of a mountain looks like an eagle and the bird’s nest looks like it’s on a balcony (Tape: 4.16).

Interviewer: Why do you think the eagle and nest are included in the painting?

Pupil (2): (using a pretend baby voice) I think it might have been a bad bird leaving her nest, all alone (Tape: 4.51).

Pupil (3): I have another idea. The mother bird might have been sitting on the nest, warming them up and maybe she flew off to get some food and she flew over the mountain and maybe that’s where the other birds are living (Tape: 5.07).

Pupil (4): People climb mountains. They make sculptures of things. So, they might have made this eagle sculpture here in the rocks (Tape: 5.28).
Some pupils used feelings and emotion to interpret paintings, for example when a girl talked about *The Graham Children* (fig.5.8), she told the group, ‘He’s made them look quite calm. And when people look at this it makes them relax. They feel happy. This is a happy picture’ (Tape: 6.21).

There was some evidence that pupils had listened to, understood and absorbed art information; for example when a Year Two boy explained, ‘I remember this, [Teacher D] told us the baby died right after the people got this picture of their children, right after. That’s because lots of children died in those days’ (Tape: 5.54). However, this did not necessarily translate into their interpretations of paintings.

Overall, their responses and enthusiasm indicated the art project had been an extremely positive experience for them and they had enjoyed the research lessons. They had taken away some information about the artists and paintings and were interested enough to remember it.

**6.5 SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

**6.5.1 Details**

I conducted the summative evaluation meeting on 18 July, 2007 with the headteacher, teachers and TAs. We used the aims of the research and action research cycles and evaluation criteria for the ISEE. Sharp and Dust (1997:81) define evaluation as the process of making evidence-based judgments about the value of a project, so I asked participants to reflect on the aims of the art project and provide evidence or examples. All the teachers brought written notes (see Appendix 31) which they referred to, to give substance to the evaluation. The meeting was a formal evaluation but ended in a social gathering. In this final summative meeting the headteacher, teachers and I, all emphasised our work together as a team. The agenda for the meeting is set out in Table 31.

**Table 31: Agenda for final summative meeting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda: 18 July, 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For evaluation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) ISEE strategy as a framework for interpreting paintings – 3 steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Strengths and weaknesses (examples/evidence) for learning and teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Interpreting art with information: teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Recommendations for ISEE (assessment/evaluation/questions/art information)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5.2 Action research

Without exception, every team member and TA judged the action research to be a success. The teachers were especially positive about having had the chance to work together. They saw their actions as unique against a backdrop of other schools’ initiatives. Pupils’ oral responses and reactions to the paintings and their participation and confidence in lessons played a key role in team evaluation. We cited pupils’ enthusiasm in the lessons, their increasing ability to look at paintings carefully and describe them in detail and the inclusiveness of interpreting art in the classroom as positive factors for the research and the learning and teaching. Teachers said they were delighted by ‘how much the pupils enjoyed the paintings’ (Teacher B) and their excitement when they repeatedly asked What picture this week? (Teacher D).

Three teachers said they had benefited from the action research from a personal standpoint, for reasons such as feeling supported, having good resources, liking the paintings they worked with, appreciating having time to think about their practice and feeling increasingly confident about talking with others about paintings. One teacher said she felt ‘great satisfaction’ when she reflected on the learning and teaching that had taken place. Another said her growing confidence to talk about paintings had had a ‘knock-on’ effect on pupils’ learning. All the teachers said they looked forward to ‘embedding’ this learning in future by personalising lessons (Tape: 12.25, 18/07/07).

By the end of Cycle Three, roles and responsibilities for the research had changed and this resulted in a greater sense of teamwork and a more equal or shared power base. The team recognised it had taken time to work out and feel comfortable about given roles in the research. More than this, both the teachers and I were aware of coming to terms with our own separate issues in the research. The struggle for the teachers was teaching unfamiliar material that moved them from their areas of expertise and impacted on their confidence and leadership. For me, it was learning about educational theory and gaining greater insight into the teachers’ roles, issues they faced and teaching practice. It transpired that not all the teachers felt happy about assuming more responsibility for the research in Cycle Two as
some of them admitted they did not feel they had control over the teaching. But ownership, or a shift in ownership had occurred gradually. The shift in roles and ownership of the research across each cycle is illustrated in Figure 6.17.

**Figure 6.17 Changing roles and responsibilities by cycle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre action</th>
<th>Cycle One</th>
<th>Cycle Two</th>
<th>Cycle Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art history expert</td>
<td>Lead researcher</td>
<td>Lead researcher/ co-ordinator</td>
<td>Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School governor/ External art history researcher</td>
<td>Art history expert</td>
<td>Art history subject trainer/co-ordinator</td>
<td>Research co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research initiator</td>
<td>Art history subject trainer/co-ordinator</td>
<td>Overall reflector</td>
<td>Overall reflector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational researcher</td>
<td>Research designer</td>
<td>Teacher trainee</td>
<td>Teacher trainee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>Action team member</td>
<td>Action team member</td>
<td>Action team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISEE and art history trainee</td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ISEE teacher</td>
<td>ISEE teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom researcher</td>
<td>Classroom researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joint leaders</td>
<td>Joint leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changing roles and responsibilities:  **My roles** vs. **Teachers’ roles**

* Graduated tone and outline of each cycle indicates the teachers’ increasing ownership and responsibility

**6.5.3 Evaluation of ISEE**

Teachers acknowledged the ISEE had provided them with a way to begin to talk about and interpret paintings with their pupils. One teacher said it enabled her to open up discussion, pose her own sub-questions and support pupils’ learning through a ‘step by step process’. Another teacher said it helped her ‘direct’ her own thinking about paintings. A third teacher concluded the ISEE questions were ‘general questions’ but effective because they tapped into pupil’s existing knowledge, experiences, memories and feelings (Teacher D). In Cycle Two, some teachers had criticised the ISEE for rigidity and prescriptiveness but after repeated use they had changed their views. But in the end, one teacher said it gave her ‘something to hang her hat on’ when she interpreted a painting and the others agreed.

The new question **What is the painting of?** was judged to be a necessary addition to the start of the ISEE as it provided a holistic view and this was welcomed. One other amendment was made with the inclusion of the question, **What story would you tell about this painting?** to accommodate the literacy teacher. Each ISEE question was examined and judged to support the development of pupils’ skills for interpreting paintings. The question **How do you feel about this painting?** was understood to be particularly effective for
building pupils’ interpretations. The teachers agreed that many pupils were able to better communicate their interpretations when they associated them with emotions, memories, past experiences or familiar situations from everyday.

The participants reviewed the ISEE goals of looking carefully at, questioning and linking to and interpreting artworks. Previous concerns about pupils not taking enough time to look carefully at paintings were revisited and there was agreement that they were able to sustain longer periods of time reflecting on, considering and looking at the paintings by the end of the research. One teacher re-opened the question of passivity in learning but sufficient evidence was put forward to suggest pupils had been active participants even in art information discussions. An example was given that pupils rarely engaged with paintings in silence, preferring to chat together or talk aloud to themselves while looking at them.

Pupils’ ability to pose questions about the paintings was one of the evaluation criteria. The team found less evidence than anticipated which was disappointing. Teachers mainly agreed that their pupils were able to reason explanations when they posed questions for them. All of them thought this was a significant outcome of the research and that it had implications for infant primary school teaching of core thinking skills such as reasoning (primary National Curriculum, 2005).

### 6.5.3.1 Weaknesses

Although the teachers identified positive benefits of teaching art interpretation using the ISEE, they acknowledged there had been problems conceptualising the purpose of Step Two. Transcripts from team meetings (27/3/07 and 8/5/07), email exchanges and feedback from the LA consultant (8/5/07) bore evidence of the struggle teachers had with the question *Why are these objects included in the painting?* Designing the final lesson helped the teachers to re-conceptualise how they used this question and they concluded it was more successful.

Evaluating art information in Step Three was a problem because the teachers used it erratically. Some teachers judged it was not effectively integrated in all the research lessons I designed and this had left pupils with ‘add-on’ information they did not know how to incorporate into interpretations. The participants found few examples where they could clearly identify pupils’ using art information in their interpretations. The teachers and I concluded this was because there was a lack of sufficient time for pupils to reflect on and
absorb the art information. Despite this, the majority agreed that pupils appreciated knowing about a painting or artist and this was evidenced by examples when they brought worksheets home to tell their families or collected postcards of paintings to bring to school. So, pupils were able to find some of the information interesting. The teachers judged that anecdotal and biographical stories captured pupils’ attention and claimed that storytelling, game playing and answering pupils’ questions directly were more useful ways to disseminate art information that by direct transmission. In the end, there was agreement that art information had added to pupils’ engagement with paintings and should be kept in the ISEE strategy.

6.5.3.2 Implications of interpreting art in the classroom

Pupils in all three classes were able to interpret paintings by the end of the art project. The finding from the initial pupil interviews that some pupils were more motivated than others to volunteer their interpretations continued to be true at the end of the research. A general consensus was that more pupils were able to offer reasoned and informed interpretations following the action research. Interpreting art was judged to be a useful way to develop their interpretive skills. All four classroom teachers, but especially those in Years One and Two, agreed that interpreting art contributed to the development of various skills and attitudes. For example, they reported it sharpened pupils’ skills of:

- Observation: looking carefully, closely and in reflection on paintings
- Questioning: questioning and answering
- Reasoning, speculating
- Interpreting: looking, analysing, interpreting
- Collaborative learning
- Speaking and listening, offering opportunities to practice it and increased their:
  - Ability to consider possibilities
  - Levels of confidence to interpret artworks
  - Levels of confidence to share ideas with others
  - Ability to consider the artist as creator and as a person

There was unanimous agreement that interpreting art offered social learning opportunities. There was evidence that pupils had relied on peers and/or teachers’ ideas to interpret the
paintings and that whole class discussion, paired and group work had been useful. By providing extra time in lessons to look at and think about a painting and take time to talk about it, the teachers concluded they were able to help pupils develop reflective thinking dispositions. Constructivist and social constructivist approaches to knowledge acquisition were understood to underpin the learning and teaching in these lessons. The teachers judged that they had been successful when they acted as facilitators, posing questions and quizzing pupils about their responses. Social interactions between pupils and teacher and pupils and pupils had helped the pupils build their interpretations. Through them, the pupils were able to take in art information and learn about the artwork or artist, for example de Hooch’s interest in perspective painting, and to draw parallels between the artworks they talked about and their own artwork or ideas. In the social opportunities provided by whole class discussion that included teacher and pupils, the teachers were able to prod pupils into making more of these associations by repeatedly asking them to explain their answers. The pupils also learned their input was valued by the teacher and pupils.

Analysis of lesson transcripts confirmed the pupils’ descriptive vocabulary had improved over the seven month period. While the teachers expected general improvements over two academic terms, they thought asking pupils to describe their observations in detail had helped them (including younger ones in Reception) to develop their general vocabulary.

6.5.3.3 Limitations of interpreting art
The teacher found it difficult to assess pupils’ learning to interpret paintings and therefore to evaluate it. A conclusion was drawn that deep learning of this kind is problematic for both. The team agreed they would pursue these lessons in future and the headteacher gave her full support for them to teach without the usual pressures of assessment.

The teachers expressed concern about timetabling art interpretation lessons in the art curriculum because of time pressures. This concern led to their decision to link art interpretation to class topic work and integrate it in subject areas other than art.

6.5.4 Methodology for changing practice
The action team evaluated the action research as a methodology for changing practice and judged it had been successful. There was a general agreement that reflecting on practice had given the teachers an opportunity to broach a new area in the curriculum. Several
teachers felt that initial problems experienced with collective reflection at the beginning of the research were due mainly to inexperience with the methodology and the dynamics of a new working relationship. The teachers concluded that sharing ideas aloud had been more difficult than they had anticipated and some were more challenged than others. However, the teachers agreed that through the systematic process of reflecting on and evaluating their actions and those of their colleagues, they were able to reconsider their views about teaching the art curriculum and this had supported them in making changes. They attributed having time ‘ringfenced’ for them to reflect on practice in an unhurried setting as being an important factor contributing to the success of this methodology.

6.5.5 Evaluation of selected paintings

The teachers wanted to be included in the selection process for artworks but recognised they might need expert assistance in selecting and sourcing artworks for future lessons. When we evaluated the selected paintings, one teacher judged that some were more useful for interpreting than others because they lent themselves more readily to questioning. Two artworks, *The Fall of Icarus* (fig. 5.9) and *The Whole World* (fig. 6.2) depicted stories or myths and the teachers found this affected the way pupils and teachers interpreted them. There was a realisation that when artworks illustrate a strong narrative or storyline it may become more important than the artwork as pupils tend to engage with the narrative plot rather than what is being portrayed.

The teachers liked having the opportunity to work with paintings or artists they already knew about and did not find it difficult to work with fine art paintings. The participants concluded that many pupils were excited by the prospect of being able to visit galleries to see these paintings and for some this had extended their engagement with them.

Pupils’ evaluation of selected artworks showed they were mostly enthusiastic about them. They expressed very positive views about three particular paintings, Hogarth’s *The Graham Children* (fig.5.8), Magritte’s *Le Domaine d’Arnheim* (fig. 5.9) and Rousseau’s *Tropical Storm: Surprised!* (fig.5.2). The painting, *Untitled: Grey and Brown* (fig.5.13) although not favoured by all the teachers, provided controversy and debate and pupils enjoyed this.
6.6 FINAL OVERALL RESEARCHER REFLECTION

The final action in this cycle was for me to carry out a deeper reflection about the whole research and in doing so, to analyse data to answer the research questions. Reflective analysis was used to examine and identify themes arising from the data that I considered important to examine further in a thematic analysis. This resulted in a full review, re-examination and reflection on data gathered in the research.

After the action research, I spent several months reflecting on the outcomes and my thoughts about them. I reviewed findings from the literature reviews and reflected on theories that underpinned or explained them. This reflection took a considerable amount of time as I re-examined transcripts of research lessons and team meetings, teacher and observer record forms, my fieldnotes, journal and other gathered data reported in the cycles. I reviewed the patterns emerging from the data and the categories and sub-categories I had created. I tried to question all the actions and decisions that were taken in the cycles, to be objective. I revisited Willig’s (2001:10) notion of personal and epistemological reflexivity and asked myself questions such as those reported on page 68 about how participants, as well as the design of research contributed to findings. In the end, I grouped the categories into overarching concepts and identified three themes for analysis in Chapter Seven. In this next section, I report my researcher reflections on and evaluation of the action research, what was learned about the methodology for changing practice; teaching and learning the ISEE and pupils’ modes of engagement with paintings when they used the ISEE.

6.6.1 Action research, a methodology for changing practice

I reflected on the methodology and agreed with the conclusion made at the summative evaluation meeting that reflection and evaluation of actions had become easier for the team as time progressed. Perhaps, because of the repetitive nature of the cycles it became a habit or a lived experience (Ellis and Flaherty, 1992; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006) and the team was more comfortable carrying it out. Comparing the quality of team reflections at either end of the research showed that discussions had become more focused by the end and this resulted in changes made by teachers in their teaching styles, pace and management of lessons.
The passage of time and team effort to work collaboratively united the team by the end of Cycle Three. In reflection, I recognised that over the course of the action research the teachers and I had reversed roles. Having led the teacher training and designed much of the research in Cycle One, our roles began to merge during Cycle Two when the teachers taught the research lessons. In the final cycle, my role as lead researcher diminished and shifted so the teachers could take more ownership; I became an educator-in-training as I observed the teachers leading actions by designing and teaching the lessons. Figure 6.17 shows the evolving roles and changing ownership and responsibility between the teachers and me by the end of the research. As expected, the teachers’ ownership changed directly in proportion to their sense of control and authority for the actions in the research. From this I learned that having a leader to direct actions may be beneficial for planning and co-ordinating actions but it had a negative effect on the team’s sense of collaboration and teamwork. I found the role of leader in a directed collaboration to be divisive at times, particularly if that person is viewed as an outsider to the community, by virtue of their position, training or practice. I report on conclusions drawn from my reflection on these findings in Chapter Eight in a final discussion of action research, as a methodology for effecting change in practice.

6.6.2 Teaching the ISEE strategy

From the summative evaluation, I understood the action research was considered a success by all participants. Moreover, the ISEE was judged to be useful as a framework for interpreting paintings despite the fact that one step was applied inconsistently. I reflected on issues that had emerged from team reflections and evaluations in the cycles, as well as my own. In all of this, I recognised the teachers were an enigma in the research.

Issues arising from the meetings typically focused on the teachers’ implementation of the ISEE, their levels of confidence and dissemination of art information. I examined whether teachers altered the ISEE or added sub questions. Some of their questions had changed the way pupils interpreted paintings. I studied the lessons designed and taught by the teachers and considered whether they had taken ownership of the ISEE. I reflected on my choice of art information and how they handled dissemination and how these decisions had affected the research.
I spent some time reflecting on problems that arose in the Inuit lesson. Two teachers had replicated my research lesson plan format with little change and I asked myself whether this was because they lacked ownership of the research or were disinterested in it. I recalled Stringer’s (2007:57) claim that ‘much research is confounded by the lack of interest of the participants’ and tried to ascertain whether this was an explanation.

While the teachers understood the ISEE strategy as a helpful guide, they conceded teaching art interpretation was ‘hard work’ (TM 8/5/07). I considered Dana and Yendol-Hoppey’s (2009) advice about coaching *throughout* teacher enquiry to boost the quality of work and in hindsight concluded I should have demonstrated another lesson or carried out further practice sessions to tackle problems related to Step Two. This would have offered them support midway through the research.

I was concerned that none of the teachers challenged me about, or sought additional advice or support in teaching the ISEE or using art information. No comments or questions were raised or opinions offered about my selection of artworks. This made me think again about my initial expectations that the team would debate, discuss and share expertise and I questioned whether this had been realistic.

Throughout much of the research, the teachers reported a growing confidence about interpreting artworks with pupils. Outside of meetings, two of them told me they felt ‘quite confident’ as they had ‘enough subject knowledge’ to answer pupils’ questions (Journal 23/2/07). When I reflected back on this, I was puzzled by one of them who continued to ask for my reassurance in lessons.

Inevitably, I recognised that the teachers’ different attitudes towards art, teaching styles, modes of delivery, curiosity, motivation and commitment to the research affected how they understood and used the ISEE and therefore, how the teaching and learning unfolded. It was evident from the gathered data that different teachers produced different lessons. Unsurprisingly, therefore, I identified the ‘teacher variable’ as a key theme for further reflection and analysis.
6.6.3 Learning the ISEE strategy

I reconsidered TAs’ comments about timing and pace. They judged the research lessons had differed from other lessons because of the slower pace. I thought about the new rhythm and the less assessment-driven emphasis of these lessons. I agreed with the teachers that pupils had profited from being given time to look carefully. By comparison to earlier lessons, pupils in the last cycle used their time more effectively to gather information about the paintings. When I reflected on this I was able to better understand the teachers’ concern about providing time for pupils to step back, reflect on and absorb what they heard and talked about the paintings.

I questioned how the teachers viewed teaching art interpretation. It was apparent in the final cycle that all of them were considering ways of linking interpreting art with other school subjects such as literacy and citizenship. Consciously or not, they had adopted an instrumentalist perspective to art education. In one of the last team meetings (11/6/07), I asked the teachers whether the research had changed their views of learning to interpret art. I asked them whether they perceived it as contributing to art or general education and there was unanimous agreement that developing interpretive skills was beneficial for other subject areas as well as art. I reflected on Leshnoff (2005) and other art educators’ claims of a current trend in general education to link arts to other curriculum or subject areas. Hudson and Hudson (2007) and Richards and Gype (2000) also report that teachers and pre-service teachers tend to integrate art into other learning areas and so I was not altogether surprised by the teachers’ attitudes or their decision to make these lessons cross-curricular and linked to topic work in future.

Pupils’ interest and curiosity in looking at and talking about paintings were consistently high throughout the research. Their concentration levels had increased by the end. I thought about the inclusivity of learning to interpret paintings and the finding that every pupil was able to express their interpretations and, without exception, wanted to share them. I reflected on the occasions when pupils’ parents approached teachers, TAs or me to report their children’s excitement about a painting. I thought about pupils’ self motivated searches for art pictures at home, on the computer and in books they brought into school. I reflected that these lessons had laid the foundations for their future engagement with artworks.
A by-product of informed interpretation was the pupils’ growing awareness of artists. The headteacher described this as ‘sophisticated for such young children’ (HT email 22/3/07). Because of this, I reviewed examples of pupils referring to artists and was surprised to find more than expected. From these references I concluded that pupils were interested in the artists, had some understanding that they created the artworks and that they could communicate to viewers through their artworks.

I reflected on whether the ISEE had changed its focus or shape when pupils used it. In particular I was curious about how it supported or contributed to pupils’ interpretations. I re-examined lesson transcripts with this in mind and thought about pupils’ verbal and affective responses to the paintings and the effect they had on interpretations. The TAs and teachers record forms gave evidence that questions such as Does this look familiar? and Do you recognise this? or How would you feel in this situation? helped pupils make strong associative connections with settings, characters and subject matter. Their responses showed evidence of cognition as they sorted information through memories, personal experience and knowledge about similar circumstances or events. I reflected on the example when a pupil explained about the children in Brueghel’s Children’s Games (fig. 6.13) who ‘took off their hats when they were running’. She told the class that otherwise they would have lost them as they played. Her interpretation demonstrated a tacit understanding of the circumstances, likely gained from similar experiences she associated with it. I compared this to another example when a boy in Year One talked about a friend’s real life accident in a pool as he viewed, The Fall of Icarus (fig. 5.9). His remark that he felt ‘fear’ when he looked at Icarus drowning made me realise that emotion and affective responses played a significant part in the way pupils interpreted the paintings. These responses led me to reconsider my theoretical underpinnings about how interpretations are constructed and so I identified pupils’ affective response to paintings as another theme for further examination.

I reflected on the teachers’ instruction that there are no right or wrong answers when you interpret a painting and understood this offered the pupils permission to think differently in these lessons from other subjects. I thought about the many examples when pupils used imagination to suggest fictional or imagined scenarios or subject matter when they described or interpreted paintings and reflected on the teachers’ mixed reactions. I looked
again at examples such as the one when a boy, talking about Rousseau’s *The Tropical Storm: Surprised!* told his class:

> There’s like a red cloak and someone’s being really evil and trying to run and get the tiger. And she might have a dagger in her hand to kill him (Tape: 12.40). He’s afraid, he’s doing that with his teeth (pupil bares his teeth at everyone) (Tape: 13.01). He’s looking like…well, he’s worried and maybe he’s trying to get the red cloak so she can’t get him (Tape: 13.10). (Yr1 pupil)

I recognised elements of fiction (the red cloak and dagger) and *supposed* happenings that were not visible in the painting. I reviewed other examples where pupils created ‘maybe’ scenarios and discussed fictional figures or circumstances in the paintings. None of the ISEE questions specifically asked pupils to create these scenarios, although by posing the question *What do you think this is about?* the pupils may have understood they were being asked to make up an explanation. Imaginative thinking was not targeted by ISEE questions and therefore pupils’ responses were unexpected. These reflections led me to search literature about the role of imagination in interpretation and art education and to identify it as the final theme for further consideration.

### 6.7 Sorting and Coding Data for Analysis

Because reflexivity was a continuous process carried out throughout the research, it underpinned all aspects of the analysis from the team and my own reflections, to reflection on coded patterns and categories that led to the identification of themes for a thematic analysis to analyse three research questions in further detail. Reflection on the patterns coded in Phase I necessitated a re-examination of the underlying data to ensure they were representative. Some patterns, such as ‘Pupils distracted by weather’ which I deemed unimportant for this research, I set aside to concentrate on ones that related more to the research aims and questions. I also reviewed and reflected on the triangulated data associated with the coded patterns to ensure I did not overlook anything significant. From this reflection, I grouped similar or related patterns together to form meaningful categories to make sense of them (Phase II). I used these categories to determine overarching concepts for the research that helped me to identify themes (Phase III) to analyse.

Having established the overarching concepts (see Appendix 18), I took time to reflect on them more closely, bearing in mind how they might inform my answers to the research questions. During this time, I also reviewed findings from the literature reviews and
reconsidered my underpinning theories to see how they might contribute to a thematic analysis of these concepts. In the end, I determined three themes I thought would help me to better understand and analyse the findings. As part of the final analysis in Cycle Three, I re-ordered the colour coded data, triangulation and findings by research questions to sort out what contributed or related to each theme. Table 32 shows a breakdown of the collected data organised by research question, collected data, instruments used and cycles of collection, findings from team and lead researcher reflections and evaluations and the modes selected to analyse them. The column for ‘Related findings’ shows those findings from the summary (see Appendix 35) used to address each research question.

Table 32 Sorting data for analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data collected</th>
<th>Data collection instrument</th>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Related findings (Appendix 35)</th>
<th>Mode (in bold) and what drew on for analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What happens when generalist classroom teachers introduce art history through a strategy for interpreting artworks, in an infant primary school? | Staff background profile; preference for art; experience with and practice of teaching art Teaching and learning: Dialogue from research lessons, team R & E meetings, research lesson observations, transcripts: verbatim dialogue Teachers’ written and oral reflections and evaluations of actions Anecdotal comments My observations and reflections | SQ, PIS, TRPI, FN, OBS, TRL, TRTM, TRCPD, TRF, TRIA, TRTM, TRRL, Transcripts FN, Obs RJ SE TRTM transcripts TRF RJ FN | C1, C1, C1, C2, 3, C2, 3, C1, 2, 3, C1, C2, 1, 2, 3, C1, 2, 3, C1, 2, 3, C1, 2, 3, C1, 2, 3 | F2, F3, F7, F8, F9, F10, F11, F12, F13, F14, F15, F16, F17, F19, F20, F21, F23, F24, F38, F40, F42, F43 | Reflective and thematic analysis:  
  - Findings from staff profile and experience with art  
  - Teachers’ levels of confidence engaging reflectively with art through actions and dialogue  
  - Personal and professional motivation  
  - Findings about teaching art information  
  - Findings from research lessons/team meetings  
  - Changing attitudes  
  - Changing practice  
  - Triangulation  
  - Summative evaluation  
  - Literature review |
| 2. Does this ISEE strategy help teachers to interpret paintings using information about art and artists in the classroom and if so, how? | Teacher profile; preference for art; practice engaging reflectively with art Baseline assessment of pupils’ ability to talk about/engage with art/engaging | SQ, PIS, TRCPD, TRTM, PI, PIS | C1, C1, C1, C1, C1, C1, 2, 3, C1 | F5, F6, F8, F9, F10, F11, F12, F13, F14, F15, F16, F17, F20 | Reflective analysis  
  - Age/ratio M/F  
  - Pupils’ motivation for learning process  
  - Ability and skills for interpreting, expressing ideas verbally  
  - Pre-post interviews  
  - Observations of |
| 3. Which key variable impacted on the ISEE strategy and the way pupils interpret paintings? | TAs’ observational comments on setting, pace, resources, atmosphere | PI, PIS, TRPI, TRTM | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | F2, F3, F4, F5, F7, F9, F14, F22, F25, F31 | Thematic analysis |
| | Transcripts from research lessons | GPI, GPIS, TRL, TRTM | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |
| | Transcripts from R & E discussion in team meetings | FN, Obs, RJ, OBS, CPS | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |
| | My observations | TRF, ORF | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |
| | Coding chart of colour and number coded data | R&E, PW and worksheets, Photographs | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |

| 4. How do pupils engage with paintings and does the ISEE strategy support them? | Pupil Interviews baseline assessment (PI) | PI, PIS, TRPI, TRF, GPI, GPIS | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | F4, F11, F22, F23, F24, F30, F31, F32, F34 | Thematic analysis |
| | Diagnostic lesson (1) Group interview evaluation of art project (GPI) | GPI, GPIS, TRL, TRTM | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |
| | Group interview assessment task | OBS, FP, ORF | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |
| | Data evidence from research lessons, transcripts of verbatim dialogue | TRF, ORF, R&E | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |
| | Pupils’ work | PW and worksheets, Photographs | C1,2,3, C3, C1,2,3, C2,3 | | |

| reflectively | Pupils’ evaluation of art project | GPI, GPIS | C3 | Triangulation T19, T20, T21, T22, T23, T24, T27, T28 | |
| | Assessment task to gauge pupils’ use of ISEE and art information | TRL, TRTM, TRF | C2,3, C1,2,3, C2 | | |
| | Teachers’ evaluations R & E discussions: transcripts of research lessons, team meetings, verbatim dialogue | N, RF, TRIA | C1,2,3, C1,2,3, C2 | | |
| | My observations and reflections | | | | |
| | Triangulation | | | | |

- Thematic analysis
  - Findings from R & E meetings
  - Findings from research lessons
  - Triangulation
  - Fieldnote observations
  - My perceptions and reflections of actions
  - Coded patterns and determined categories

- pupils’ use of ISEE
  - Discussion with pupils
  - Existing strategies for interpreting art
  - Pupils’ evaluation of art project
  - Teachers’ assessment of ability to interpret art using information about art and artists
  - Teachers’ reflective comments and evaluations about working with art information and its results
  - Findings from research lessons, team meetings
  - My journal reflections
  - Triangulation

- Coded Pattern Sheet
- Triangulation T7
- Baseline pupil interview
- Group interview pupils’ evaluation
- Group interview task
- Team R & E discussions after research lessons
- My observations
- Teachers’ evaluations of lessons on record forms
- Findings from C1, C2, C3 R & E
- Research journal
- Anecdotal comments recorded by teachers, parents, me
Three themes were identified to answer specific research questions. Having determined from the coded patterns and categories that the teachers had the most significant impact on the ISEE and interpreting art, I decided to use the grouped categories to examine the teacher variable in further detail to answer Research Question Three. The pupils’ affective response to paintings was chosen as a theme to answer Research Question Four which questioned how pupils engaged with paintings using the ISEE strategy. Finally, the role of imagination in pupils’ interpreting art was unexpected but I considered it important to examine as it contributed to various aspects of the research and questions, for example

5. What are the implications for teaching and learning when pupils interpret paintings using the ISEE strategy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence from pupils’ work/photographs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts from research lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ evaluations (TRF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R &amp; E team discussion summate</td>
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<tr>
<td>evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRL</td>
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<tr>
<td>TTM</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBS</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRF</td>
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<tr>
<td>R&amp;E</td>
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<tr>
<td>RJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2,3</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2,3</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2,3</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3</td>
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<tr>
<td>F1,F2,F5,F6</td>
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<tr>
<td>F7,F12,F13,F14,F24,F25,F26,F27,F29,F30,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F31,F32,F33,F34,F35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2,T6,T7,T9,T10,T28,T31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What are the strengths and limitations of action research as a methodology for changing teachers’ art education practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective and thematic analyses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from teachers, action team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections on Q6 in each cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My reflective thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ written notes for SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions with social science and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art education researchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>TTM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dedicated team discussion on Q6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>RJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>C1,2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1,2,3</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F24,F44,F45,F46,F47,F48</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Glossary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPS - Coded Pattern Sheet</th>
<th>PWorksheets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FN - My fieldnotes</td>
<td>R &amp; E – Reflection and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPI - Group pupil interviews</td>
<td>RJ- My reflective journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPIS - Group Pupil Interviews Schedule SE - Summative evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBS - Observations</td>
<td>TRCPD- Tape recorded training/practice sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORF - Observer record form</td>
<td>TRF – Teacher record forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGI - Pupils’ group interviews</td>
<td>TRIA-Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI - Pupil interviews</td>
<td>TRPI- Tape recorded pupil interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIS - Pupil interview schedule</td>
<td>TRRL- Tape recorded research lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW - Pupils’ work</td>
<td>TRTM- Tape recorded action team meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
implications for teaching and learning (Research Question Five); how pupils engage with paintings (Research Question Four), how pupils’ synthesised art information using the ISEE strategy (Research Question Two) and what happened when the teachers interpreted art using art information (Research Question One). As such, these three themes were analysed alongside relevant theory, research and literature in Chapter Seven.