



LJMU Research Online

McLeod, NJ, Stockell, K, Astbury, E and McCann, J

Nurturing young children's self-identity and respect for difference through artwork as a provocation using philosophical enquiry: a pilot study

<http://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/id/eprint/13724/>

Article

Citation (please note it is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from this work)

McLeod, NJ, Stockell, K, Astbury, E and McCann, J (2020) Nurturing young children's self-identity and respect for difference through artwork as a provocation using philosophical enquiry: a pilot study. Early Years: an international research journal Special Issue. ISSN 0957-5146

LJMU has developed **LJMU Research Online** for users to access the research output of the University more effectively. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LJMU Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain.

The version presented here may differ from the published version or from the version of the record. Please see the repository URL above for details on accessing the published version and note that access may require a subscription.

For more information please contact researchonline@ljmu.ac.uk

<http://researchonline.ljmu.ac.uk/>

Title: Nurturing young children's self-identity and respect for difference through artwork as a provocation using philosophical enquiry: A Pilot Study

Abstract

This pilot project explores how young children's self-identity with a focus on respecting difference might be nurtured through Community of Enquiry (CoE), in the tradition of Philosophy for Children (P4C) using artwork in a gallery space. In valuing diversity, respecting difference is key. A group of four- and five-year-old children who expressed an interest in participating was involved along with researchers who appreciated the underpinning philosophy of P4C and the open nature of artwork. We used an interpretivist analysis within a framework of signs associated with developing a self-identity, which emerged from the literature alongside our ongoing observations and collaborative analysis. Vignettes are used to present the findings and prompt discussion. This pilot study will be useful for future research into supporting children by creating a space and the conditions where self-identity can be nurtured and difference can be respected.

Key words: self-identity, respecting difference, democracy, philosophy for children, artwork, early years,

Introduction and background

This was a collaborative pilot research project comprising one class of four- and five-year olds from a local school, three university tutors, two students, a Philosophical Enquiry (SAPERE) consultant and the Early Years and Family curator at Tate Liverpool. Each had a mutual respect for young children, experience with Philosophy with Children (P4C) and arts-based learning. We recognise a positive self-identity as important in situating oneself as part of the world alongside an emphasis on respecting difference; at a community level, people need to be able to respect and relate to each another (Moss 2017), particularly in the current climate of valuing diversity. Artwork is valued because of its openness to interpretation and differences of opinion. P4C is valued because it encourages children to be ready to reason and be reasoned with, to challenge assumptions respectfully and to find ways to resolve conflict peacefully and respectfully (Stanley and Lyle 2017). The participatory and democratic nature of P4C is therefore relevant as a process for identifying opinions and respecting different possible views by way of a Community of Enquiry (CoE) (discussed in more detail later). Our interest in P4C alerted us to the idea that artworks could be used to develop young children's self-identity with a focus on respecting difference (SAPERE 2015) (Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education). This paper focuses on how a group of ten four- and five-year olds' self-identity with a focus on difference was nurtured through artwork as a provocation, using CoE over a six-month period. In the 'Findings and Discussion', two vignettes are selected to demonstrate this.

Next, we present some key ideas and synthesise the relationship between children's self-identity, respecting difference, democratic practice and P4C that informed the methodology.

Self-identity and respecting difference

Self-identity is to do with understanding 'Who am I?', 'What is my place in this world?' and 'What are my values?' (Jelic 2014). Contemporary early childhood literature defines self-identity as the need to belong and be unique (Uprichard 2008). Identity is closely connected with wider processes

of social inclusion or exclusion and the opportunity to consolidate a secure sense of personal identity at the same time as enabling awareness of differences from others. The extent to which this process has positive outcomes depends very much on how children's social contexts, such as families, preschools or wider society, respect diversity (Brooker and Woodhead, 2008).

A positive self-identity is crucial to being happy, feeling good and creating a general sense of well-being and belonging, which enables decision-making and situating oneself as part of the world (Kingdon, Gourd, and Gasper 2017; Brooker and Woodhead, 2008; Jelic 2014; Benninger and Savahl 2017) while a negative view of the self has been linked to mental health issues such as anxiety, stress, low self-esteem and depression and suicide (McLean, Breen, and Fournier 2010). A positive self-identity then, as Willis (2013) notes, is about children recognising their uniqueness, their personal interests, feeling positive about themselves and in doing so respecting difference, which in turn can promote being more open to different ideas.

According to Warin (2010) the self develops through social experiences, and at the heart of this intricate process are two core human motives working simultaneously: the need to belong and the need to be unique (Uprichard 2008). This dynamic involves 'personal' versus 'social' identity (me and us). Personal sense of identity refers to children's feelings about their distinctiveness from others and their sense of individuality. On the other hand, social identity refers to the ways in which they feel they are (or would like to be) the same as others (assurance). While children's identities are created through the personal choices they make as part of the groups they belong to, identity is also the result of how others understand and show respect (or not). In these ways, children's social experiences influence whether they feel able to be themselves and hold their own views (Warin 2010) and so belonging and self-identity are connected. Belonging is associated with feeling valued, needed and self-assured (Stratigos, Bradley, and Sumsion 2014) and more generally is understood as feeling comfortable. When children have a sense of belonging and feel self-assured they are better positioned to explore their identity and difference with others (Sharp 2004). In the context of our study, we recognise the connections between identity, belonging, feeling comfortable and self-assured as underpinning respect for difference. The role of the adult is important here in providing democratic opportunities so children can develop their own views (Benninger and Savahl 2017).

Democratic and participatory learning

In England, current top-down government pressures of baseline assessment and accountability in relation to early childhood education can encourage standardisation of learning and a technical approach to teaching based on a transmission and reproduction of knowledge (Moss 2018; Urban 2017). As a result, there is often the tendency for teachers to 'play it safe' and follow rules. To nurture a positive self-identity, children need to be valued as unique and their voices respected, in line with Article 12 of the UNCRC, 1989, which recognises children as having the right to express their views and be heard about matters that are important to them. For this to happen, children need to be perceived as rich in potential and capable of voicing their opinions, capable of thinking for themselves, making informed decisions and participating in meaningful ways. In response, Moss (2018) and McLeod and Giardiello (2019) advocate an authentic democratic approach to learning in early childhood education. This requires a listening approach, an understanding by adults about how to share power and respond respectfully to children's voice so their perspectives are taken seriously (Shier 2001). Being willing to empower children as agents of change, that is, authors of their own actions, is important so children can make connections as they talk through their ideas and make

sense of their learning (Hilppö et al. 2016). Such approaches are central to an ethical, socially just approach to learning and well-being. Without effective participation with children, adults cannot access their viewpoints, anxieties or experiences. Our conceptualisation of a positive self-identity and respecting difference is therefore inextricably linked to democratic participatory learning, which, as discussed next, is at the heart of P4C.

The potential of CoE supporting young children's self-identity and a respect for difference

The following provides a brief overview of Community of Enquiry (CoE), and the relationship with children's self-identity and democratic, respectful practice, which was the approach we adopted for this pilot study.

The democratic nature of P4C

According to Stanley and Lyle (2017), P4C is best understood as an educational praxis (an action that is consciously committed to human well-being and behaving ethically). The endeavour of P4C in practice is achieved through the creation of a Community of Enquiry (CoE), which is participatory and democratic in nature, and focuses on providing reasons, thinking time, agreeing, disagreeing respectfully and making connections.

Lipman (2003) explains how a CoE involves children sitting comfortably in a circle. Rules of engagement are decided on by the group so that respectful expectations are established. This might include listening to each other, making sure no one is left out, looking at whoever is speaking. A stimulus such as a carefully selected story, picture, poem, object or artwork is then shared with the group and children are given thinking time to draw out philosophical questions from it. In pairs or groups, children then decide upon their favourite focus or question and vote to decide what they would most like to enquire into. The CoE does not aim to find an ultimate truth but to develop a number of possibilities with the participation of all involved. In this way, a CoE supports younger children in developing their own views and ideas by thinking critically, creatively and collaboratively in a caring environment, as summarised below (Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERRE), 2015) and in doing so can enhance children's developing identity whilst respecting difference (Clark 2017).

Caring

Caring involves concentrating and appreciating by showing interest and responding sensitively.

Collaborative

Collaborative involves communicating and supporting by building on each other's ideas to shape common understandings.

Critical

Critical involves questioning from different perspectives (reasoning and evaluating) by seeking meaning, providing reasons and distinctions.

Creative

Creative involves making connections and suggesting by providing comparisons, examples and alternative explanations.

The teacher's role in a CoE is to listen, respond respectfully to children's contributions and facilitate open-ended enquiries (Haynes and Murriss 2013). Hayes (2017) and Biesta (2011) warn against using CoE as an add on or a measurement as part of pre-determined outcomes. Lipman (2003) suggests that CoE should begin when a child starts school as a pedagogical approach for promoting participatory and democratic practice and should continue throughout their education by embedding reasoning as part of promoting respectful learning. While Wilson (2000) is cautious about whether younger children are capable of philosophical thought, higher-order thinking skills and abstract thinking, Haynes and Murriss (2013) value CoE as an ideal starting point for nurturing young children's natural sense of wonder, curiosity, questioning and discussing abstract concepts. Overall, we valued the holistic approach of P4C incorporating thinking critically, creatively and collaboratively in a caring manner by way of CoE as a pedagogical approach for promoting participatory and ethical practice appropriate for supporting young children's self and identity. The structure of CoE with Reception children is explored further as part of Methodology in this paper.

Using artwork as a provocation to support young children's self-identity

Liptai (2005) suggests the use of visual arts and real objects as starting points for aesthetic enquiries with young children, for example, a hat or a piece of jewellery. Personal connections can be made which can lead to comparisons, reasoning and the prompting of bigger questions and ideas. Having tangible objects and choice is important as a way of supporting young children's different learning needs and identifying a personal connection (Liptai 2005, 549). However, sharing personal views relies on establishing a trusting, familiar, democratic environment so children feel safe and do not simply copy or follow others (*ibid*).

While engagement through artwork as a provocation can be communicated in a variety of physically expressive ways (McLeod et al. 2017), CoEs include verbalized language for expressing thoughts (Liptai 2005). As Leitch (2006) recognises, 'many emotional, sensory and embodied dimensions of experience lie below the threshold of consciousness and are impossible to articulate in words'. As a result, D'Olimpio and Teschers (2017) identify the value of using gestures to support verbal dialogue and the embodied manner of experiences. Liptai emphasises the personal 'embodied meanings' (p. 545) that a work of art has, and how each child's interpretation can reveal different connections and insights depending on individual interests, experiences and understandings. If we rely on language as part of collaborative dialogue, this may not be sufficient in offering a complete picture of an experience (Leitch 2006). Here Liptai's (2005) use of arts-based approaches to access and explore the unconscious embodied knowing, as well as the conscious knowing, is useful so a more complete picture of children's experiences can be captured.

The focus of this research is the play between the aesthetic, the social and the personal; how artwork as a rich provocation using CoE can enhance children's awareness of self-identity and the relationship with respecting difference. We used the signs in Table 1 as indicators for nurturing self-identity through a respect of difference which emerged from our literature review and our ongoing observations as part of the research (as discussed next).

Table 1. Signs for nurturing a self-identity and respecting difference.

Laevers	Signs for nurturing self-identity and respecting difference
Creating an appropriate learning environment: cosy/able to initiate/freedom/flexible organisation/open facilitation by adults	<p data-bbox="491 286 600 313">Belonging:</p> <ul data-bbox="491 315 1382 342" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="491 315 1382 342">● Choosing when to be part of the group (i.e. to be quiet; verbalise; non-verbal gestures) <p data-bbox="491 344 600 371">Reasoning:</p> <ul data-bbox="491 374 1382 689" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="491 374 1382 427">● Willing to share own views when they choose (e.g. – likes/dislikes/needs/wants/interests/opinions)<li data-bbox="491 430 770 456">● Initiating personal views<li data-bbox="491 459 1382 512">● Giving reasons for their viewpoint (including making connections/drawing distinctions/identifying same and different)<li data-bbox="491 515 1382 568">● Listening and responding to what they hear by expressing themselves sensitively (awareness of the feelings of others)<li data-bbox="491 571 708 598">● Open-mindedness<li data-bbox="491 600 699 627">● Building on ideas<li data-bbox="491 629 775 656">● Dis/agreeing respectfully<li data-bbox="491 658 916 685">● Giving reasons and improving thinking <p data-bbox="491 687 783 714">Resilience and self-assurance:</p> <ul data-bbox="491 716 1382 837" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="491 716 1382 770">● Courage to keep trying and take risks when sharing own views without fear of failure or feeling disheartened<li data-bbox="491 772 1262 799">● Seek challenge respectfully without fear of failure or feeling disheartened<li data-bbox="491 801 943 828">● Have self-belief/confidence (in difference)

Methodology, research design and ongoing analysis

The methodology for this pilot project reinforced our perception of children as rich in potential; they were consulted and respected at every stage and gave their consent verbally (Lahman 2008; Clark 2017). This collaboration addressed unequal power relationships (Clough and Nutbrown 2012) and supported new ways of seeing (Mason 2002). Research methods included filmed observations of children, interviews with children and tablet computers for child-conferencing, developed by Clark (2017) in the ‘Mosaic Approach’. Our ongoing interpretive analysis of the data was concerned with both the process and the end product (McIntosh 2010) and was driven by the filmed observations to look for signs associated with developing a self-identity and respecting difference (Table 1) and democratic learning conditions (Table 2).

Table 2. Creating democratic learning conditions, adapted from Ferre Laevers' self-evaluation instrument (2005).

Creating appropriate conditions
(1) The environment
(2) Room for initiative
(3) Organisation
(4) Type of guidance offered by adults
1. The environment
• Positive interaction
• Cosy
• Natural
• Sense of belonging/feeling secure
2. Room for initiative
• Freedom/space/time
• Opportunities offered so children have a voice
• Consultation/participation
• Children have responsibility
3. Organisation
• Take all needs of children into consideration
• Time organised to take account of children's different needs
4. Type of guidance offered by adults
• Stimulating
• Sensitive/warmth
• Offer autonomy
• Give space so children can follow own interests to explore and participate/engage

There were two phases to the research process which took place with a Reception class involving children aged four and five over a six-month period. Phase one involved CoEs at the children's school situated in a socially deprived area in the North of England and phase two was at Tate Liverpool. During both phases, we filmed observations of the children, looking for signs associated with developing self-identity and respecting difference, and how this was encouraged. Our observations were informed by the literature review and our shared ongoing analysis which culminated in the features included in Table 1. We also drew on Laevers (2005) (see Table 2) in recognition of the relationship between belonging and creating a comfortable, participatory learning environment.

As our awareness of these features became heightened, we included a summary of them down the left-hand side of Table 1.

Phase 1 CoEs at the children's school

These took place over a period of four months, based around the children's interests. We worked with small groups of 5 or 6 children who chose to take part, for a maximum of 20 minutes. Shared rules of engagement were decided collectively by the children. Each CoE focused on developing underpinning practices associated with P4C, and included quiet thinking time, paired sharing and listening respectfully. For example, friendship as a stimulus was explored through reading a story together, so the children could think about their friends. They were encouraged to contribute by saying; *My friend is ... because ..., /I agree friends are ... /I disagree friends are ...* . Another example involved being presented with three scenarios: all the ice cream in the world, a fire-breathing dragon or a pond full of talking fish. Using 'thinking time' and time for 'paired sharing' they were encouraged to think about which one they would like the most and why. As the children began to

evidence reasoning, we incorporated artwork as a provocation; for example, a picture of the 'Quint Tandem' from Tate Liverpool (Five-Man Pedersen). The children considered whether they would rather have a quint tandem, a monocycle or a bicycle and where they could travel to. Our ongoing evaluations informed the methodology and indicated the children's interest and the value in relation to a developing self-identity and valuing difference. While one researcher facilitated the CoE with the children, the other researchers, with a heightened sensitivity to notice things that might otherwise be missed, observed one or two children (Mason 2002).

We were particularly mindful of ethics due to the age of the children participating. Although written consent to participate was gained from the parents and staff, the rights of the children and valuing their views were also carefully considered. Only children that expressed an interest were involved. The lengthy familiarisation six-month period alongside careful consideration of an appropriate environment enabled us to nurture trusting relationships at the children's pace. Children were free to join or leave enquires as they wished; we responded to any questions they had, and repeatedly emphasised that their views were important. Careful observation of body language, verbal language and features in Tables 1 and 2 as they emerged offered insights into how the children were feeling. Over a period of the project, data collected revealed and confirmed the concepts and signs captured in Tables 1 and 2).

At times the collaboration felt messy and fuzzy. For example, whilst at the Tate, we had to remember the focus of this project was on P4C using artwork as a provocation, not on children's creativity which was a familiar and valued approach. This meant that trusting, open relationships as a collaborative group were important so we could be honest in our thoughts, feelings and views and remain focused on analysing truthfully (Lahman 2008). Acting as critical friends throughout the research process both in the design, analysis and writing up helped to ensure there was a shared understanding and convergence of meaning (van Manen, 1995). Examining the observation records several times for common themes and interlinking themes was a lengthy and complex process involving the research team but was worthwhile; highlighting underlying patterns enabled us to get to the heart of what was going on. This confirmed the importance of establishing a comfortable learning environment so children felt they could share their views openly and in doing so signs associated with self-identity and respecting difference were identified as the following narrative, from the final Phase 1 CoE, shows.

Archie: *We all have different brains and we have different ideas.*

Martin: *You can disagree with your friend.*

Facilitator: *Is it ok to disagree?*

Martin: *Yes.*

Zac: *Thinking time helps you to think of more words.*

Martin: *It helps you to relax ... it makes me feel calm.*

Archie: *Philosophy is good for me 'cos we talk about different things everyday.*

Stanley: *I like it, it's fun.*

According to the children, the CoE environment helped them to relax, feel calm and disagree. The above narrative also indicates a sense of belonging and supported by adults in sharing their views.

fascinated with the artwork boundaries and takes photographs of the signs saying, 'Do not touch'. Martin takes photographs of himself and a sculpture of clothes piled high. He says

'it looks pretty and has lots of colours'. Finally, the children are invited to take photographs of artwork that interests them most. These were used as provocations for planning the second CoE at Tate.

Phase 2: CoE two at Tate Liverpool

We started by showing the children a slide show of photographs they had taken during their first visit which included at least five photographs taken by each child. Looking at the pictures together, they identified the following artworks as most popular.

Pierre Huyghe 'Annlee'

Space Displace Koan

The Little Peasant

Together they selected the 'Pierre Huyghe 'Annlee' and the 'Space Displace Koan'.

Sat around the 'Space Displace Koan' they were given time to think about the artwork before responding. As a group, they decided it was a space rocket, suggesting different places they could travel to with accompanying reasons. In deciding whether they would rather travel to the moon with their family or their friend(s), several children took risks by following through with their own ideas (Lahman 2008; Willis 2013). Some also demonstrated a change of opinion without worrying (Haynes and Murriss 2013). While we recognise that the CoE was not a full philosophical enquiry, it provided us with an insight into the features of a CoE that were evident (as in Tables 1 and 2). Next, in the findings and discussion, we provide some examples of how signs for nurturing self-identity and respecting difference were evident in this pilot study.

Findings and discussion

Vignettes are descriptions of 'live' learning situations that bring content and pedagogy together to capture the essence of learning and teaching (Veal 2002). Here they are used to demonstrate research findings, namely how children's self-identity with a focus on difference can be nurtured through artwork as a provocation using CoE. Two vignettes have been selected because they demonstrate strong evidence of the features associated with self-identity and respecting difference as in Table 1 and the democratic learning conditions in Table 2. Each vignette includes background information specific to each child and draws on each of the CoEs at Tate Liverpool. The following themes underpin the discussion of findings which emerged from the ongoing analysis:

- The relationship between self-identity and respecting difference
- The importance of the democratic structure of CoE in supporting self-identity and respecting difference
- Children as capable
- Confidence of facilitators

- The uniqueness of artwork as a provocation
- Boys engagement

These are embedded in each vignette and include links to literature to support the discussion. The paper ends with an overall summary of the findings in relation to the research focus and how this pilot study can support further research.

Vignette 1: Martin

Martin is a naturally polite and caring child, demonstrated in his attitude towards the other children in the group. While this aspect of his identity is maintained during the enquiries at Tate, what is significant in terms of respecting difference (Sharp 2004) is the evidence he displays that it is ok to disagree (as in the evaluation of Phase 1) and how P4C helps him 'relax ... and feel calm'. There is evidence of an opening of himself (Stanley and Lyle 2017) in his increased instinctive actions at Tate, taking photographs of himself and the preferences he expresses which are recognised and respected by the group. He becomes consistently resilient and self-assured in sharing his preferences and in his actions. This is initially noticeable during the first visit to Tate (CoE 1) when he selects the rose from the suitcase of objects, holds it very close and chooses to wear it in his hair. This combined with the pictures he takes of himself and the 'pretty' pile of clothes (as he describes them), could suggest a personal, deeper layer of meaning (Liptai 2005, 545) associated with being comfortable in himself (Willis 2013). The flexibility and organisation of the CoE environment are open and respectful so he is free and comfortable expressing himself without fear. Given his polite nature, this suggests a new-found confidence in doing something different, other than that suggested by the facilitator. He appears self-assured and confident in expressing the difference. A sense of belonging and acceptance by the group creates an opportunity to reason and share his personal views so he demonstrates a confidence in himself not noticed before.

During the second CoE at Tate Liverpool, involving the Pierre Huyghe 'Annlee' and the 'Space Displace Koan' artworks as provocations, Martin builds on suggestions of others, whilst also developing his own views confidently and respectfully; for example, 'It spins round like a glowing ice cream'. As the group moves to sit around the hologram artwork, Stanley suggests 'We've come to the moon'. Zac builds on this: 'It's outer space'. Again Martin listens carefully and respectfully as Andrew adds, 'I think the voice is America ... he's in space and he's American'. Next, Archie contributes saying 'It looks like space in dragon land but the dragons are American and might be alien dragons'. Finally, Martin builds on this using the CoE processes: 'I agree with Zac and Archie 'cos they look like craters and they're attached to the ground of space'. He identifies two contributions he agrees with and provides clear reasoning. At the same time, Martin is comfortable suggesting Africa as a different place to travel to 'cos it's dead hot'. He appears confident in expressing his opinion.

Rather than younger children being viewed as struggling with the format of a CoE, it can be an ideal starting point for nurturing young children's natural sense of wonder, curiosity, questioning and discussing abstract concepts, as Haynes and Murriss (2013) concur. In doing so, children develop the underpinning skills at their own pace. Contrary to Wilson's (2000) belief that young children are not capable of philosophical thought and abstract thinking, our experience showed that the children were capable in their reasoning and consideration of new abstract possibilities. In doing so difference was respected, which ultimately enhanced self-identity (Kingdon, Gourd, and Gasper 2017).

As the CoE progresses Martin demonstrates a developing resilience and renewed self-assurance, as he makes sense of and builds on his place within the group. At the end of the enquiry, when prompted to think about whether they have changed their minds, Martin listens carefully to the views of the other children, but is comfortable with his decision: 'I haven't changed my mind, I'd still go to Africa'. He respects the different views of others and is comfortable in expressing his personal difference (Willis 2013). He seeks challenge respectfully without fear of failure or feeling disheartened. His enjoyment of the CoE using artwork as a provocation at Tate Liverpool is evident throughout. Through open democratic facilitation by the adult and environment (as in Table 2), he demonstrates evidence of a renewed self-assured confidence and self-belief in celebrating his uniqueness (Benninger and Savahl 2017). In doing so the rest of the group respect his different views. We are mindful that in many cases early education (in England) is increasingly dominated by developmental outcomes with a focus on a narrow curriculum and a tendency to 'play it safe' (Moss 2018). This raises questions around teacher confidence in facilitating CoEs as a democratic approach to learning as part of a future project.

Vignette 2: Stanley

Stanley's self-identity in terms of belonging as part of the group was not evident at the start of the project (Benninger and Savahl 2017). He was not given the choice of learning with other children and instead worked mostly with adults. He was excluded and his views were not valued (Goepel, Childerhouse, and Sharpe 2014). Initially, his contributions as part of Phase 1 of the project had been random and he displayed typical behaviours such as flapping, moving around and making noises (Goepel, Childerhouse, and Sharpe 2014).

In the evaluation of Phase 1, Stanley says 'I like it, it's fun', demonstrating he feels included as part of the group. As he shares his view, the other children listen respectfully, in line with the collective CoE rules agreed by the children.

Stanley was keen to be involved in Phase 2 at Tate and was verbal in his requests with us to do so (Uprichard 2008). It was important to respect this request (Clark 2017) during which we focused very much on ensuring he felt comfortable with the environment, particularly in relation to the features included in Table 2. We recognised his need to physically express himself whilst respecting the artwork on display could not be touched. Involving tangible objects (Liptai 2005) and opportunities for movement were essential (Murriss 2008).

In CoE 1 as part of Phase 2, Stanley and Martin happily pair up and select an object they would like to take into the gallery. Once in the gallery while Stanley and Martin explore different interests, but remain together. There is a sense of them being comfortable with each other. As part of CoE 2, the group moves to sit around the hologram artwork, Stanley suggests 'We've come to the moon'. Zac builds on this: 'It's outer space'. Stanley demonstrates his self-identity whilst also being part of the group.

What became significant as part of our findings was the intricate relationship between belonging and self-identity, working simultaneously which, as Brooker and Woodhead (2008) note, involves a connection that runs both ways. To nurture children's feelings about their distinctiveness from others and their sense of individuality and difference, our observations indicated how important it was for the participating children to feel part of the group and be respected, so they could be themselves in their behaviours as well as their personal views (Warin 2010). When Stanley felt safe and self-assured he was better positioned to develop his unique self-identity and difference. In this

way, belonging provided a secure base for developing a unique self-identity involving confidence in his own views and character. The democratic structure of CoE, in its emphasis on respecting difference, as part of a caring, creative, collaborative environment (Sharp 2004) enabled and promoted an acceptance of Stanley and his differences by the other children in the group and a feeling of belonging for Stanley (Tables 1 and 2). Throughout he was spontaneously physical in his engagement as described by D'Olimpio and Teschers (2017) in his preference to stand when sharing his thoughts and ideas and use his arms and hands as gestures.

We were aware that the presence of young children in the gallery environment moving around artworks 'could serve to reinforce some traditional constraints and debates about the inclusion of very young children in contemporary art galleries' (McLeod et al. 2017, 931). 'The "please do not touch" rule can appear to dominate' and is a place often perceived as 'being totally hands-off and laden with rules which are seemingly dedicated to the sole act of viewing, contemplating and conserving valuable works of art' (McLeod et al. 2017, 931). Stanley's behaviours 'created a heightened sense of tension and amplified the perception of risk' (p. 931). Involving tangible objects (Liptai 2005), opportunities for movement (Murriss 2008) and appropriate conditions such as freedom, space and time and an opening to have his say (as in Table 2) were important, but at the same time were risky for the facilitators given the traditional expectations associated with being in the gallery. Consequently, Stanley enjoyed making connections as part of the suitcase activity and was particularly interested in exploring the gallery space as part of enquiry one. His interest was in the demarcation lines around the artwork and sculptures that said 'Do not touch' or 'Do not cross the line'. He used the tablet computer provided to take photographs of the lines as well as himself (Liptai 2005). The facilitator respected his natural sense of wonder as his starting point (Murriss 2008) and his insistence on his partner taking photographs of him. In this way, his self-identity and belonging within the context of the group were nurtured (Benninger and Savahl 2017) which acted as a secure base for being himself and the group respecting difference. His contributions became more focused and meaningful, as he articulated what he agreed or disagreed with. For example, he made connections between responses by others and identified this before making his own point. He says to Archie 'You agree with Doris but I would go to Spain to see the animals'. He is more considerate which in turn results in others listening to him (Sharp 2004; Stanley and Lyle 2017). For example, Stanley builds on Archie's suggestion: 'Yes, because her head is like that' (showing how her head is bowed). Here the relationship between belonging and self-identity working simultaneously or as Brooker and Woodhead (2008) say, running both ways, is visible. He stands and goes over to point to the hologram picture. The unique environment as part of the gallery enabled the use of an open and democratic approach as part of CoE by the adult, such as providing a relaxed, flexible environment, encouraging the children to make decisions, share power, collaborate and respond to their interests (McLeod et al. 2017 and Table 1). Overall as part of each CoE, the four Cs of P4C are displayed in the way the facilitator models open respectful communication and allow time and space for Stanley to think, build on and challenge ideas respectfully. His own evaluation of part 1 of the project was 'I like it, it's fun'. The CoE environment helped him to relax, feel calm and disagree

While collaboration was initially a barrier to learning for Stanley, in this context with democratic conditions operating as part of the CoE, their collaborative nature offers him a sense of belonging and an opportunity to be himself (Kingdon, Gourd, and Gasper 2017). When asked who he would rather take to the moon, Stanley says 'My family and cousins because it would be the best thing and we could run around'. He takes a risk in sharing his view (Haynes and Murriss 2013) but perhaps more significantly, his uniqueness is valued by the group. For example, as part of enquiry 2 looking at the 'hologram artwork, several children agree with Stanley at different points. A sense of belonging promotes a change in his behaviour to become more open and caring (Sharp 2004). He listens and

responds to what he hears sensitively and displays a caring awareness of the feelings of others, actions he had not had the opportunity to use before the project. For example, he reinforces to the other children in the group that it is ok for Archie to change his mind.

Endpoints

In terms of what this pilot study indicates, the vignettes provide some evidence of each child's developing self-identity using CoE and artwork chosen by the children as a provocation. This initial pilot provides insight into the relationship between belonging and self-identity and respecting difference alongside creating appropriate conditions for learning involving room for initiative, flexible organisation and respectful, sensitive listening by facilitators. Our research indicates the need for a commitment by all involved in terms of valuing the democratic nature of CoE.

Children becoming confident in the fundamental processes of CoE in the tradition of P4C before introducing artwork as a provocation was also key. At such an early stage, the CoE was very much based on children becoming aware of and describing their own views; this was nurtured and developed through incorporating aspects of the four Cs by listening to each other, building on one another's views and asking questions. Contrary to Wilson's (2000) views, our experience demonstrates the value of CoE as an ideal starting point for nurturing young children's natural sense of wonder, curiosity, questioning and discussing abstract concepts (Haynes and Murriss 2013) and in doing so children's self-identity was enhanced and difference was respected (Kingdon, Gourd, and Gasper 2017).

What is unique to this pilot study is the art space at Tate Liverpool. Experiencing the artwork first-hand in all its glory, often as very large pieces that were rich in colour, shape and texture in very spacious but respectfully quiet surroundings, encouraged the children to express themselves freely and naturally. Having developed secure relationships with the facilitators, the children felt comfortable in the Tate space and were open to making their own creative connections and interpretations. The variety of artwork allowed for personal preferences, interpretations and choice which supported the development of self-identity. Being open to new ways of using P4C (such as using artwork) is significant within the context of an art gallery (Liptai 2005). The intricate relationship between belonging, self-identity and respecting difference incorporated in the play between the aesthetic, the social and the personal makes the artwork rich as a provocation for developing early CoEs which suggests a positive impact on the children's self-identity.

Finally, both vignettes provide insight into how P4C using artwork as a provocation can support boys' contribution and engagement as part of the CoE, where sometimes a lack of ability in communication might act as a barrier (Leitch 2006). The process of P4C through the medium of CoE provided familiarity and structure in terms of expectations and feeling secure for a child with autism and his acceptance as part of the group (Stanley and Lyle 2017).

Limitations

As a pilot study, we recognise the limitations of this project; most critically, it involves only ten four- and five-year olds. While we have provided detail about how self-identity and respect for difference were nurtured through artwork as a provocation, using CoE over a six-month period, we make no generalisations but rather recommend further research with regards to these areas.

Implications

Using artwork as a provocation for CoEs with young children in this pilot offers the potential for a more complete picture of children's developing self-identity particularly in terms of respecting difference (Sharp 2004). Enquiries using artwork, particularly with young children, remain an underused pedagogy and further research is necessary into ways of promoting visits to galleries to supporting children's self-identity as a means of respecting difference.

References

- Benninger, E. and Savahl, S. 2017. "A Systematic Review of Children's Construction of the Self: Implications for Children's Subjective Well-being." *Child Indicators Research Journal* 10 (2): 545-569.
- Biesta, G. 2011. "Philosophy, Exposure, and Children: How to Resist the Instrumentalisation of Philosophy in Education." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 45 (2): 305-319
- Brooker, L. and Woodhead, M. 2008. "Developing Positive Identities, Diversity and Young Children." *Early Childhood in Focus* 3. Milton Keynes: The Open University.
- Clark, A. 2017. *Listening to Young Children, Expanded: A Guide to Understanding and Using the Mosaic Approach* (Third Edition) London: Kingsley Publishers.
- Clough, P. and Nutbrown, C. 2012. *A Student's Guide to Methodology*. London, England: Sage.
- D'Olimpio, L. and Teschers, C. 2017. "Playing with philosophy: Gestures, life-performance, P4C and an art of living." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 49(13): 1257-1266.
- Goepel, J, Childerhouse, H. and Sharpe, S. 2014. *Inclusive Primary Teaching. A critical approach to equality and special educational needs and disability*. St Albans: Critical Publishing.
- Haynes, J. and Murris, K. 2013. "The Realm of meaning: imagination, narrative and playfulness in philosophical exploration with young children." *Early Child Development and Care* 183(8):1084-1100.
- Hayes, D. 2017. *It's Teaching NOT Therapy!* London: CRE.
- Hilppö, J., Lipponen, L., Kumpulainen, K., and Rainio, A. 2016. "Children's sense of agency in preschool: a sociocultural investigation." *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 24(2): 157-171.
- Jelic, M. 2014. "Developing a sense of identity in pre schoolers." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 22(5): 225 – 234.
- Kingdon, Z., Gourd, J., and Gasper, M. 2017. *Flourishing in the Early Years – Contexts, practices and futures*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Lahman, M. K. E. 2008, "Always othered: ethical research with children." *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 6(3): 281-300.
- Laevers, F. 2005. "Deep-Level Learning and the Experiential Approach in Early Childhood and Primary Education." Research Centre for Early Childhood and Primary Education Research. *Journal for Early*

Childhood and Primary Education 1–11. Available at https://vorming.cego.be/images/downloads/BO_DP_Deep-levelLearning.pdf

Leitch, R. 2006. "Limitations of language: Developing arts-based creative narrative in stories of teachers' identities." *Teachers and Teaching* 12(5): 549-569.

Lipman, M. 2003. *Thinking in education* (2nd edn) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Liptai, S. 2005. "What Is The Meaning Of This Cup And That Dead Shark? Philosophical Inquiry With Objects And Works Of Art And Craft." *Childhood and Philosophy* rio de janeiro 1(2): 537-554.

Mason, J. 2002. *Researching your own practice: The discipline of noticing*. London: Routledge Falmer.

McIntosh, P. 2010. *Action Research and Reflective Practice. Creative and Visual Methods to Facilitate Reflection and Learning*. Oxon: Routledge.

McLean, K. C., Breen, A. V. and Fournier, M. A. 2010. "Constructing the self in early, middle, and late adolescent boys: narrative identity, individuation, and well-being." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 20 (1): 166–187.

McLeod, N., Wright, D., McCall, K. and Fuji, M. 2017. Visual rhythms: facilitating young children's creative engagement at Tate Liverpool. *European Early Childhood Educational Research Journal*. Vol 26. 6. 930-944.

Moss, P. 2018. *Alternative Narratives in Early Childhood: An Introduction for Students and Practitioners*. London: Routledge

Moss, P. 2017. Power and resistance in early childhood education: From dominant discourse to democratic experimentalism. *Journal of Pedagogy* 8(1): 11 – 32.

Morris, K. 2008. "Philosophy with children, the stingray and the educative value of disequilibrium." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 42(3–4): 667–685.

Morris, K. 2013. "The epistemic challenge of hearing a child's voice." *Studies in the Philosophy of Education* 32(3): 245-259.

SAPERE 2015. Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) *Handbook to accompany Level 1 P4C Foundation Course*.

Sharp, A. M. 2004. "The other dimension of caring thinking." *The Journal of Philosophy in Schools* 1(1): 15-21.

Shier, H. 2001. "Pathways to participation: Openings, opportunities and obligations." *Children and Society* 15 (2), 107-117.

Stanley, S. and Lyle, S. 2017. Part II chapter 7 *Philosophical play in the early years*. In: Gregory M R, Haynes, J. and Morris, K. 2017. *The Routledge International Handbook on Philosophy for Children*. Routledge: London.

Stratigos, T., Bradley, B. and Sumsion, J. 2014. "Infants, family day care and the politics of belonging." *International Journal of Early Childhood* 46, 171–186.

United Nations 1989. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UN General Assembly Document A/RES/44/2. New York: United Nations.

Uprichard, E. 2008. "Children as 'being and becomings': Children, childhood and temporality." *Children and Society* 22(4): 303-313.

Urban, M. 2017. "We need meaningful, systematic evaluation, not a preschool PISA." *Global Education Review* 4 (2). 18-24

Veal, W. R. 2002. "Content Specific Vignettes as Tools for Research and Teaching," *Electronic Journal of Science Education* 6(4): 1-37.

Warin, J. 2010. *Stories of self: tracking children's identity and well-being through the school years*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Willis, B. 2013. *How identity develops: using attachment, differentiation, mood, communication, and personal narrative, to predict identity status among emerging adult*. Faculty of Graduate School at the University of North Carolina: Greensboro.

http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Willis_uncg_0154D_11156.pdf

Wilson, V. 2000. *Can thinking skills be taught? Education forum on teaching thinking skills*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Scottish Executive Education Department.