Disciplinary Literacies In The Arts: Semiotic Explorations of Teachers' Use of Multimodal and Aesthetic Metalanguage

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Abstract

Effective arts learning requires the development of important literacies. While investigation of discipline-specific literacies has filtered the literature, it is unclear if these literacies are acknowledged, understood, and/or taught. In this paper, we share the classroom discourse of two arts teachers in early and middle years across visual art and music—to determine how discipline-specific literacies are used and taught.

Findings show that these teachers intuitively and consistently share age-appropriate arts-literacies and use semiotic metalanguage with their students to express and make meaning through arts practices. With contemporary research in the field of literacy consistently acknowledging the diverse ways we communicate and the importance of creative thinking and aesthetic-artistic reasoning, it is critical that classroom data, such as shared in this paper, is considered for future curriculum development. We conclude by recommending strategies and considerations for arts teachers when planning and implementing arts literacies to improve students' applied understanding.

Introduction

Discipline-specific literacies are considered important for the development of students' knowledge and understanding in classroom contexts (Barton, 2019; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008), and the need to explicitly recognise and participate in discipline-specific literacies, including those developed through the arts, is increasingly significant for children in an increasingly multi-literate world (Huber et al., 2015). Many scholars have written about how language develops across content areas and school years (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010) and that the literacies associated with specific disciplines are necessary for building knowledge in these fields (Freebody et al., 2014).

We assert it is important to recognise specific arts literacies so that arts educators and potentially generalist educators, can more intentionally and comprehensively develop a full range of literacies for their learners. Artistic literacy can be understood as the ability to participate authentically in the creation and understanding of various art forms using the various languages of those art forms. The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (n.d.) states, "Fluency in the language(s) of the arts is the ability to create, perform/produce/present, respond and connect through symbolic and metaphoric forms that are unique to the arts" (p. 17). What is evident in the literature and curriculum is that, while there may be potential frameworks available for analysis of artworks, there is limited information about how students develop specific arts-literacies. This may be due to educators not having an appropriate tool or framework to identify the important arts-literacies currently evident in classroom practice, something this paper aims to do.

In this paper, we present classroom episodes of teacher and student interactions from two arts teachers, an early years visual arts teacher, and a middle years music teacher, to illustrate the arts-literacies they share with their students in their classrooms, and the significance of those literacies to the work done in those classrooms. We explore these by asking the question: what types of multimodal literacies do arts teachers develop in their students across arts subject areas and school years? Our analysis highlights a range of literacies including knowledge

about whole texts/artworks, knowledge about the specific multimodal elements involved in such artworks, discipline-specific vocabulary, distinct design principles needed for quality art making, and interpersonal and emotive aspects of learning about and responding to art. We show how these literacies develop and become more sophisticated over the school years.

Theorising the Relationship between the Arts and Literacy

Contention exists regarding the value of the arts in education, with some viewing it as frivolous learning that diverts focus from skills-based education focused on literacy and numeracy (see Morgan, 2018). However, in alignment with organisations such as the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] (2006), we contend that arts learning is essential for a holistic education that can benefit traditional skills-based learning. As a curricular area, the arts often include craft, creative writing, dance, drama, literature and poetry, media arts, music and visual art. These often involve design and creative thinking, imaginative thought and technical skill (Barton, 2019). Internationally, quality arts education has been reported to have benefits for students' learning and community development. The arts have been noted to be culturally inclusive (Paris & Alim, 2017), to develop personal, social and cultural capabilities such as compassion and empathy (Barton & Garvis, 2019), intercultural understanding (Cabedo-Mas et al., 2017), and improved school engagement and academic outcomes (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012).

Further, the arts provide students the opportunity to advance knowledge of aesthetic-artistic aspects in texts and other created works (Marcuse & Harlap, 2006). Without these proficiencies students' performance on achievement tests may be diminished (Ruppert, 2006) and their overall education limited (Winner & Hetland, 2000). Repeatedly, researchers have demonstrated that arts are vital inclusions in and educational curricular as they encourage a love of learning (Abedini Baltork & Rezaei, 2021).

Throughout 20th century schooling, the notion of being literate meant communicating effectively through language mode only or being fluent in what is expressed verbally (Bull & Anstey, 2018). More recently, literacy education researchers have come to understand literacy as much more, recognising that knowledge is both acquired and managed by teachers and learners through multiple modes, including gesture, space and sound (Thompson, 2008). Multimodal-meaning making, therefore, includes what we can 'see, hear and feel' (Barton, 2019) as communication is not just through words. As such, the arts offer significant possibilities for expanding traditional notions of literacy and for building children's capacities for multimodal meaning making. Wright (2012) refers to the language of the arts as *supraverbal*, going beyond traditional verbal-linguistic communication to involve largely non-verbal, expressive and symbolic modes of thinking and communicating "through which we [can] discover, express and exchange meanings that are otherwise unavailable" (p. 8). Making

and responding to art have been shown to be important activities in developing an awareness and understanding of, and an ability to, meaningfully use such diverse forms of communication (Barton & Ewing, 2017; Holloway, 2012). These skills are considered increasingly important in the multimodal landscape of the 21st century (Stankiewicz, 2004).

The notion of content area literacies has been featured in scholarly literature for some time (Goldman et al., 2016; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008) and is often an important component of curriculum (ACARA, n.d.; Common Core Standards, 2021; Moje, 2015). The Common Core State Standards policy in the USA, for example, has addressed disciplinary literacy teaching to support important learning for young people (Moje, 2015). Similarly, the Australian curriculum embeds a general capability of literacy across the curriculum as well as specific literacies in the arts subjects for teachers to consider in their classroom practice. As a specific instance, the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2019) states that arts-literacies involve "the knowledge, understanding and skills that serve as a foundation for arts making. Well-developed arts literacy enables interpretation, appreciation, evaluation and aesthetic engagement with artworks. These literacies are realised through arts processes" (p. 11). Capabilities such as arts communication and processes (Jensen & Draper, 2015), principles of art design, and aesthetic appreciation (Lerner, 2018) are acknowledged as being important arts-literacies. Incorporated into these literacies is the development of discipline-specific vocabulary (Barton, 2019).

A traditional view of literacy that is limited to reading and writing in language will come to limit what is possible and what is unique in other discipline areas. An important part of becoming arts-literate, for example, is the process of becoming an artist (Barton, 2014), and this involves some form of aesthetic-artistic knowledge and appreciation (Leder et al., 2004). Once almost overlooked in Western education, but increasingly considered crucial for its role in developing literacy (O'Toole, 2017), the development of children's aesthetic sensibilities assists in developing their sense of wonder, and of discernment regarding their developing appreciation of the sensory world, especially through the lens of the arts (Dinham, 2020). According to Leder et al. (2004) the process of aesthetic experience includes several phases such as perceptual analyses, implicit memory integration, explicit classification, cognitive mastering and evaluation, and affective and emotional processing. Arts students move through these phases across the school years (Barton, 2019) as they engage in art making processes as well as interpretation activities. Understanding how students attain this knowledge in arts classrooms is thus important so that educators know the distinct phases in becoming an 'artist.'

Methodology and Methods

As a mini ethnography, this study was qualitative in nature and investigated a specific area of

inquiry, that is, the types of literacies present in arts teachers' classrooms (Fusch et al. 2017). The data presented in this paper sit within a broader, large-scale study that explored the classroom practice and perspectives of ten arts teachers across creative writing, dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts. For this paper, case study design (Stake, 2010) was implemented through the purposive sampling of two learning and teaching episodes from two arts teachers' classroom practice.

The two teachers' work shared in this paper was selected to showcase how each supported the learning and development of arts literacies for their students. They further represented two different arts subjects—visual arts and music, as well as year levels—early, and middle years of schooling. The teachers were also chosen as they clearly demonstrated, through illustrative instances, different types of arts-literacies that might be experienced in everyday classrooms.

In the early years context, Tina, a visual arts teacher, was teaching young children (aged approximately 5 and 6 years) about how to work with various art media and how to use patterns in art. Oil-based crayons and black ink were used by the students to create etched artworks. The second example was Cate, who was teaching her junior secondary students (aged approximately 12-13 years) about different music genres including Reggae. The change in art forms and year levels helps show how different arts teachers can use and develop the specific arts-literacies with their students in the classroom. Pseudonyms are used for both teachers.

Analytical Tools for Identifying Arts-Literacies in the Classroom

In order to draw useful insights into the types of arts literacies the two participants shared with their students in this study we developed an analytical tool that identified and helped to make explicit these literacies. This tool drew on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) work in the field of Systemic Functional Semiosis (SFS) and used their three meta-semiotic meanings: representational, interpersonal, and compositional meanings. Representational meaning refers to what is being represented in an image and/or performance: who are the characters? what is the subject matter? where is the information set? Interpersonal meaning relates to how the image and/or performer interacts with a viewer/audience. This meta-semiotic meaning entails emotive responses, and how texts make viewers feel. Compositional meaning is conveyed through the ways in which the artist has composed their text, including where objects are placed, what colours or sizes are used and how these elements relate to each other through the use of cohesion (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005).

Two frameworks were employed to analyse the classroom data. The first was to identify the meta-semiotic meanings present in each teaching episode (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and the second was to document the modes of communication being used to convey these

meanings, namely aural, gestural (kinesthetic), linguistic (verbal/written), spatial and/or visual (material/operational) (Nichols et al., 2008).

Classroom data were video-recorded, with all appropriate ethical procedures in place as approved by the relevant university's ethics body. The video footage was then reviewed with the two analytical frameworks in mind. As such, a table was devised to indicate the following aspects of the learning and teaching: Time code; teacher/student talk; meta-semiotic meaning; and modes of communication being used. An example is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Time code	Teacher/student talk	Meta-semiotic meaning	Modes of communication
0:04:27-0:04:32	T: Ok that's better. Alright – why do you think I have put a little container in a larger one?	Representational and compositional – the teacher is talking about how to use the medium appropriately when preparing it and applying it on paper	Linguistic-verbal, visual, gestural, spatial
0:04:32-0:04:38	S1: So the ink doesn't go everywhere// S2: So it doesn't tip over// S3: So it doesn't drop on your clothes and stain	Compositional - it is about the medium being used	Linguistic-verbal

Following the coding of the classroom data according to the two frameworks, the classroom talk was analysed to identify the aspects outlined above:

- knowledge related to whole texts/artworks;
- knowledge about the specific multimodal elements involved in such artworks;
- discipline-specific vocabulary;
- distinct design principles needed for quality art making, and
- interpersonal and emotive aspects of learning about and responding to art.

Collectively, this analytical framework and process assisted in revealing the ways that arts educators were making use of and developing their students' arts literacies.

The Classroom Practices: Documenting Arts-Literacies in Action

Case study 1: An Early Years' Visual Arts Classroom

Learning Episode 1

The students in this example were learning about how to use various media such as oil pastels and ink. In their previous art lesson, the students created an abstract pattern on an A4-size piece of paper by colouring it with oil pastels and leaving some parts uncovered—what the teacher called a 'runway' on the page. In this learning episode, Tina demonstrated to the students the next step in the art process. Students needed to cover the entire page (i.e., the white runway as well as the coloured oil pastel areas) with a matte black ink using a brush. The teacher explained how to work with the ink media so that a consistent amount was brushed onto the page. She showed how it was important for the black ink to be shaken such that it created the desired effect. She described how, without shaking the bottle, the ink was sheer on the paper rather than darker or opaque. She then explained that once the black ink dried the children would be etching patterns with a sharp implement onto the areas where the oil pastels had been used underneath. She also asked the students why they thought they could not etch the 'runway' sections.

Table 2

Classroom Transcript 1 for Episode 1

Time code	Teacher/student talk	Meta-semiotic meaning	Modes of communication	Still shots from lesson
0:04:27-0:04:32	T: Ok that's better. Alright – why do you think I have put a little container in a larger one?	Compositional – the teacher is talking about how to use the medium appropriately when preparing it and applying it on paper	Linguistic-verbal, visual, gestural, spatial	
0:04:32-0:04:38 0:04:38-0:04:41 0:04:44	S1: So the ink doesn't go everywhere// S2: So it doesn't tip over// S3: So it doesn't drop on your clothes and stain T: Yes but why do you think I put the little one inside the big one? Yep. S4: Because it might spill	Compositional - it is about the medium being used	Linguistic-verbal, gestural and visual	
0:04:45-0:05:29	T: That's right – it spills in there and also what can it hold? It can hold a …? Ss: The brush! T: So we don't have to put it on the table so it becomes a bit tidier and neater ok. Now I might have to go and get some more ink, I might have to even shake it a bit as it hasn't been used for a while…this is what the ink comes out of, so I will just pour a little bit more as it has to be a lot more blacker than that. Let's try it now – oh	Compositional meaning – how to use a medium effectively in art.	Linguistic-verbal, gestural (shaking the bottle and painting), visual	

	much better – can you see that? How important was shaking the bottle? Hey?		
0:05:30-0:05:51	T: Alright, now what I want you to do is, I want you to paint it S: Over the runway? T: Yes over the runway but I want you to also paint it over your crayon work. So you paint the whole thing, and in particular I would like you to focus on the runway.	Representational and compositional meaning. The teacher is now focusing students on the image "subject matter" and how it is composed.	Linguistic-verbal, gestural (as teacher demonstrates painting), visual
0:05:52-0:05:54	S: Do you have to paint everything?	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal, spatial (the children are gathered around one set of desks watching the teacher demonstrate)
0:05:54-0:05:55	T: Yes you have to paint everything all with black. Make sure you use the brush in the same direction so that the covering is nice and smooth.	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal
0:05:56-0:05:58	S: And then we scratch over it.	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal
0:05:59-0:06:10	T: Well we have to wait until it dries and then next week we scratch over it. Of course, we are not going to scratch over the runway. Why do you think we can't scratch or etch over the runway?	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal, gestural, visual

	[throughout the discussion the teacher is painting an example black]			
0:06:11	S: Because it is black	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal	
0:06:12-0:06:	T: Or apart from than what else did we not do to the white area? What didn't we do? You know how we left the white area? So what did we not do to it?	Representational and compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal, gestural (points to the artwork)	
0:06:24	S: Colour it!	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal and gestural (the student enthusiastically puts hand up)	
0:06:27	Exactly colour it in. so which part is going to be affected…when we start to scratch it?	Representational and compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal, gestural (painting the page), visual	
0:06:30	The colour	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal	
0:06:33-0:07:41	Yes it will be the area where the…colour is. You need to cover the entire page and use the brush softly. Am I putting a lot of pressure on it? Ss: No T: No and I am using it like a pencil. And I am just doing strokes – you don't need to push hard at all. The brush is very soft. So that is what you will be doing today if you have finished colouring your page.	Representational and compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal, gestural (painting the page), visual	

NB: Throughout this teaching episode spatial mode is important as the children have been asked to stand around one table in the classroom so that they can see what the teacher is doing with the media and artwork.

Analysis of Learning Episode 1

In this teaching episode Tina shared her technical knowledge as an artist when working with black ink and oil pastels. Although the children were only aged 5-6 years old, Tina demonstrated several artistic techniques needed to create the desired effects or aesthetics in the final artworks, thus supporting her students in their developing discernment of their sensory world and aesthetic vocabulary (Dinham, 2020).

In this episode, Tina clearly explained the stages in the art production process including the colouring of the entire page (aside from some 'runway' white areas on the page) with oil pastels (in the previous art lesson), painting matte blank ink evenly over the entire surface of the page, letting the paint dry, and etching patterns into the areas where the oil pastels were drawn to create a 'stain glass window' effect.

As such, Tina was teaching a range of arts-literacies to the children including:

1. Representational meaning: the abstract sections with oil-based colour and white 'runway' on paper;
2. Compositional meaning: How to work with specific arts media and the stages in visual arts processes to create a desired aesthetic effect;
3. Shuttling back and forth between discipline-specific and everyday language such as etch/scratch relative to the class age group; and
4. Artistic techniques including having to shake the black ink to make sure it spread evenly on the page, how to use to art containers to make sure the brush did not tip over and make a mess, and how to brush the ink softly over the page in even strokes.

Tina did not discuss interpersonal meaning directly but addressed an issue related to aesthetics in artworks. This occurred when she asked the children what would happen if they etched on the sections that were not covered by oil pastels: If this occurred, the paper might tear which would then create an unwanted result on the artwork for a viewer.

These young children were being shown that these arts-literacies are important when learning about how to create art. Dinham (2020) notes how purposeful discussions and asking relevant questions whilst participating in arts processes combine to enrich the quality of children's arts learning and promote more considered artistic creations. Collectively, the lesson served to develop arts knowledge and skills, and further, promoted artistic reasoning in the young learners, a form of thinking *with* and *through* literacy that Eisner (2002) claims is relevant beyond art making: assisting in making and expressing judgements, integrating thinking and feeling, and working within creative constraints.
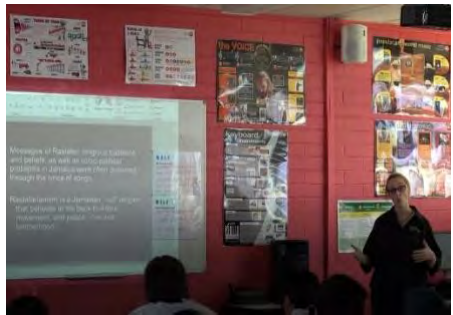
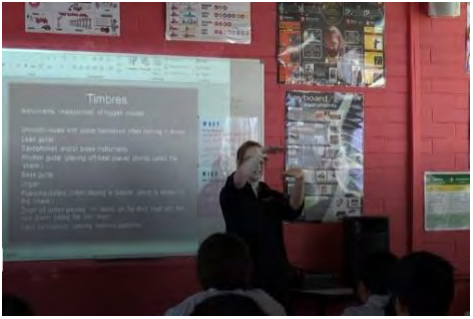### Case study 2: A middle year's music classroom

Learning Episode 2

Cate, the music teacher in this example, was working with middle years' students to learn about different genres of music. In this learning episode the students were learning about Reggae music, and Cate talked about different musical elements that are commonly featured in this style. She covered aspects such as melody, rhythm, instrumentation and performance techniques, and timbre or tone colour. Cate used a PowerPoint presentation with different slides outlining each of these features. She also demonstrated performance techniques as she covered the information in the slides. She expected the students to write notes about these in their music books. After this episode the students engaged in a listening experience to some Reggae music, then moved to the electronic-music keyboards to experiment with playing a Reggae melody.

Table 3

Classroom Transcript 2

Time code	Teacher/student talk	Meta-semiotic meaning	Modes of communication	Still shots from lesson
0:05:14	T: It's got a very different sound and it's very distinct. I think you might hear an organ in one of the songs that we listen to today. Piano or keyboards are often used and the piano or keyboard plays an interesting off-beat pattern which in Reggae music is referred to as the *Bubble*. That was interesting word for you to know about too and it's similar to the *skank* where it's emphasising the *offbeat* as well. In Reggae music they do use a drumkit, so you were right. And they had a particular style of drumming with the drum where on the snare drum…	Representational and compositional meaning through discussing the various instruments, their functions and how they are uniquely used in Reggae.	Linguistic-verbal, aural (listening to music), visual (ppt), gestural (teacher)	

00:07:32	T: you get two different pitches also – someone making the main melody and someone doing the harmony (*Cate indicates these two different pitches with her hands*) Normally you play a snare drum, you play on the *skin,* but, in Reggae they play on the *rim*. They play on the metal part on the edge *(Cate holds the snare drum up and hits rim of drum with a pencil to demonstrate)*	Compositional meaning	Linguistic-verbal, gestural (indicating two different pitches and playing the drum), visual, aural	
00:08:12	T: Do you hear that? And when you use a drum stick it actually sounds quite loud; and you'll hear it in the recordings and stuff that we listen to, okay? ((hits drum)) so a *rim shot* is when they're hitting the metal edge of the snare drum. In Reggae music, it's often in *4/4 time*, which is something we've looked at a lot this term. But they often emphasise a particular beat - beat three of the bar where the rim shot and the bass drum, the kick drum, you know the one that you hit with your foot? They played that together.	Interpersonal meaning, compositional meaning and representational meaning (when explaining the type of drum)	Linguistic-verbal, aural, gestural	

| 00:09:03 | T: And in Reggae, they call that the *One Drop*. I know it's funny language; isn't it? They also use Latin percussion; cause you said a variety of drumming didn't you? So they used percussion instruments, you said bongos before and they sometimes used timbales; maybe even bongo drums and things like that; so you were right. They often played *ostinato* patterns - a repeated rhythm over and over and over again to align with the beat and dancing. Could you please; write that down? | Interpersonal meaning – emphasis in the music to evoke the feeling of wanting to dance Compositional meaning – how the music is created with off beats and repeated rhythms | Linguistic-verbal, aural, gestural | |

Analysis of Learning Episode 2

Cate's main aim in this lesson was to help the students recognise the common features of Reggae music as a musical style, thus developing their musical literacy with unique features of different musical genres. When referring specifically to musical elements (melody, rhythm, instrumentation and timbre), Cate was using what Dinham (2020) refers to as "arts languages" (p. 95), expressions that help students understand how elements are organised to create artworks; in this case, to explain how Reggae composers and musicians write their music and make it a distinct listening genre. She explained that the rhythmic features were particularly important to make Reggae music what it is, including performance techniques known as *one drop*, *bubble*, *skank*, and *off-beat.* Throughout this lesson Cate shared several arts-literacies related to music and specifically the genre of Reggae music. These included:

1. Interpersonal meaning, by discussing how different features in Reggae music make the listener want to dance;
2. Compositional meaning, the specific elements of Reggae music that Cate taught, including music composition structure and performance techniques;
3. Discipline-specific vocabulary, including rim shot, 4/4 time, one drop, bubble, skank, off-beat; and
4. Demonstration of practice, to further explain and show some of these performance techniques on a snare drum as well as on an electronic keyboard.

Cate's practical demonstrations resulted in students not only listening to oral language and descriptions of what these techniques involve, but also 'hearing' what these sound like. This type of sonic literacy (Whitney, 2008) is critical for learning in music.

Discussion: Exploring a Model of Arts-Literacies for Classroom Practice

The classroom data shared in this paper show examples of how two arts teachers introduced and developed unique arts-literacies that are critical for inquiry, meaning-making, learning, and contemporary communication (Eisner, 2002; O'Toole, 2017; Wright, 2012).

These examples of classroom practice demonstrate how the arts teachers referred to three meta-semiotic meanings: representational, interpersonal and compositional. Some of these elements were weighted more heavily than others. For instance, in the early years' visual arts classroom, compositional meaning was the main focus, as the students were learning about how to use different art media effectively, and about their associated artistic techniques. A minor reference to interpersonal meaning, or aesthetic effect (Pahuta, 2020), for a viewer was made, but Tina did not elaborate on this, and related it back to compositional meaning via an explanation that effective technique would impact on the overall aesthetics of the work.

In the middle years' music classroom, Cate also focused largely on representational and compositional meaning as she worked through her presentation on different elements or aspects of Reggae music. A subtle reference to interpersonal meaning occurred, where further in the lesson, Cate said that such compositional meanings may encourage people to dance to Reggae music.

Both teachers developed specific arts-literacies related to the intended purpose of 'whole texts' or the final artistic products; in this case a visual artwork (early years), and a piece of Reggae music. In each example, the teachers explicitly used "arts languages" (Dinham, 2020), by discussing distinct elements of each respective art form and using discipline-specific language in an age-appropriate manner. Such language use builds the knowledge of students relevant to each art form. Freebody (2013) states that curriculum-specific language development in the classroom enables new kinds of knowledge construction that are purposely built through "conventionalized systems of exchange" (p. 64). Finally, the importance of aesthetic features in each type of text was shared so that students could develop their understanding and knowledge of how to effectively make meaning through art.

Discussion about artworks through the use of multimodal and aesthetic meta-language, as well as art making, are core components of learning and teaching as arts teachers set out to support students through quality and meaningful arts experiences that move them from novice viewers to master interpreters (Leder et al., 2004). Meaning-making in the arts involves understanding and knowledge about artistic elements as well as aesthetic features in artworks and performances (NCCAS, n.d.). The three meta-semiotic meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) of representational (what is being represented in the image or performance), interpersonal (how the image interacts with a viewer/audience), and compositional meaning (the ways in which the artist has composed their text through the use of cohesion), can assist students in developing their prowess as beginning artists. They can also help students in developing their own ability to master the various "language of the arts" to manipulate and communicate through the various art forms.

In the *Australian Curriculum General Capability of Literacy,* knowledge and understanding of text structures, grammar and cohesion, and how these relate to all of the modes, are explicit expectations (ACARA, n.d.). For the arts, texts can include artworks such as paintings, sculptures, performance art, dramatic performances, choreographed dances, music compositions and performances and other forms of creative work (Barton, 2019). Arts teachers share their expertise as artists when supporting their students to create effective artworks that make an impact on the viewer, listener, and audience. Further, discipline-specific vocabulary such as the metalanguage use by arts teachers is important to learning in the arts as students move from novice to mastery through the school years. The development

of arts-literacies will ultimately enable fluency in appropriate modes of meaning through both the interpretation and creation of art. Helpfully, this arts/literacy connection can be effectively made explicit and communicated using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model.

The associated language or vocabulary with describing art is also important as illustrated in our learning episodes. In addition, critical analyses of others' and their own texts is also important for students in the arts as this encourages them to consider new ways of thinking and creating, ultimately on the journey to "being an artist" (Barton, 2014). This process involves an understanding of discipline knowledge and their associated literacies such as appropriate meta-language about aesthetics and modes and this language increases in sophistication across the school years. With further curriculum knowledge of these, teachers can work together to explore different disciplinary perspectives (Shulman & Sherin, 2004) and also understand the important literacies in their expertise areas.

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