

## **MAKING – Creating a piece of art work inspired by Sally Morgan**

### **Learning opportunity (Brief outline)**

After reading and Discussing 'My Country' (2011) Illustrated by Sally Morgan children would be asked to have a go at creating their own piece of work inspired by Morgan. Illustrations would be use as stimuli or prompts. The aim would be for children to create a unique piece of artwork in a similar style, incorporating techniques employed my Morgan. It would allow for expression and exploration of the concept of identity and contemporary indigenous art. Children would be encouraged to consider cultural contexts, the environment, place, belonging and other factors that may assist in the development and construction of their final piece.

Outcomes may include;

- "Supporting children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate" (EYLFA, 2009, p. 22).
- "Motivate and encourage children to succeed when they are faced with challenges" (EYLFA, 2009, p. 22).
- "Ensure children experience pride and confidence in their achievements" (EYLFA, 2009, p. 23).

Children should be able to participate in this activity without fear of failure, there is no right or wrong. Emphasis should be placed mainly on 'process' rather than final 'product'.

### **Participants**

Year 1 students (6-7 year olds) – Primary school setting

### **Resources**

- Paper
- Glue
- Oil pastels
- Paints (water based)
- Paint brushes (variety of sizes)
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Felt tip markers
- Fine liners
  
- 'My Country' Written by Ezekiel Kwaymullina and illustrated by Sally Morgan (2011)
- Meerreeng-an Here is my country: The story of Aboriginal Victoria told through art (Edited by Chris Keeler and Vicki Couzens, 2010)
  - Provides many examples of indigenous artwork (traditional and contemporary – taking many forms). Includes stories of 'The Dreaming' (connection to country, place and belonging) and explanations.
  - Great way to expose children to many different types of indigenous art.

The following websites provide examples of how symbols are used in indigenous art and their importance.

Indigenous symbols and meanings

- [http://www.ourladyofdolours.qld.edu.au/Indigenous/symbols\\_01.htm](http://www.ourladyofdolours.qld.edu.au/Indigenous/symbols_01.htm)

Aboriginal art and use of symbols

- <http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/culture/symbols.php>

Examples of how the symbols have been used in art and the importance of meaning:

- <http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/aboriginal-symbols-and-their-m.php>

### **Activity -**

After analysing and discussing My Country (2011) children would be tasked with attempting to create their own art work. Morgan's illustrations would be a source of inspiration and similar media, materials and methods would be used. Before children get started however – some background knowledge may be useful in helping them to understanding how techniques have changed over time.

Traditional designs were based on line, in geometric patterns or more free-form flowing curves.

Materials at hand included wood and bark, animal teeth and sinew, feathers, echidna quills, seeds, grasses and reeds, shells and ochres, charcoal and string made of vegetable fibre, fur or hair. Tools were made from stone, bone, wood, shells and teeth.

(Keeler & Couzens, 2010, p.5)

Children should be encouraged to depict a story through the use of Indigenous symbols (a handout with examples would be provided by the teacher). In this instance children would be responding to ideas suggested by others and would hopefully be open to new challenges. They should feel empowered to direct the activity and to make decisions about their art. Incorporating symbols displays the interrelationship between traditional and contemporary ideas and themes. They may represent the land, animals or community – all vital aspects related to identity and belonging for Aboriginals. Morgan's illustrations are bright, exciting and visually stimulating. Children will be encouraged to consider the significance indigenous art and its role in depicting stories of the Dreamtime.

This activity would be ideal in a cross-curriculum situation where the unit focus included 'Indigenous history'.

### **Assessment / Evaluation**

Questions such as; Are the children engaging in the topic, are they interested in making new discoveries and asking questions or are they being challenged would enable teachers to determine how effective the task has been in achieving the purpose.

In this case, informal assessment would occur through discussions and conversations with children whilst they're completing the task. Asking such questions as;

- Why have you used those colours?
- How have you managed to achieve that effect?
- What stories are telling through your artwork?
- Do you think this is an easy task, why or why not? Ensuring that they are able to justify their response.
- Why do you think it's important that we understand indigenous art and respect it?
- What aspects (family, friends, community, culture, and environment) do you think might help you form and or develop your identity?
- Why do you think art is a significant part of their Aboriginal culture? What are the paintings often depicting to the audience?

Pair discussion would also be a great way of getting the children to think about what is important in their artwork.

- Spending 10 minutes at the end of the class allowing children the time to talk to the person next to them about what they have been working on. Points for discussion may include;
  - The story they've told and the symbols that have been incorporated
  - Was the task engaging, its relevance and significance?

Observe discussions; are children using correct terminology and vocabulary? If not, how could this be improved or encouraged?