ArtiCULan
Common assessment tool

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Introduction

This tool was developed as part of the ArtiCULan project, an Erasmus + project involving a team with researchers from Belgium, Canarias, Portugal and Turkey. ArtiCULan's overall goal was to develop international and interdisciplinary artistic workshops in multilingual classrooms.

To that end, the current tool was developed to support professionals and staff in the design of the workshops, observation and reflection upon the most relevant features underlying creative, expressive and meaningful experiences. This tool offers a set of indicators that can be observed through the ongoing creative process during the artistic workshops.

Artistic workshops

Arts-related activities are widely acknowledged as providing a rich and unique platform for children's growth and development, through the engagement of representational and expressive experiences (Phillips, Gorton, Pinciotti, & Sachdev, 2010). Arts-related activities stimulate child expression, thought, and communication. As arts embrace understanding, empathy and a thirst for knowledge, through the participation in artistic workshops, children have opportunities to create and express themselves through multiple literacies. Stimulating the learning potential of each child via focus on multiple literacies and different learning preferences strengthens their personal development and enhances high-quality cognitive, social and aesthetic skills.

The inspiration for the observation tool drew on existing research and theoretical models from several disciplines. The tool brings together theories from developmental psychology, arts education and aesthetics.

In the tool, the processes, including the interactions and relationships among teachers and children, are highly considered, highlighting the power of expression, thought, and communication. Even though the processes are the main focus, the tool also considers the connections between the workshops and the broader context that frames it, including the curriculum and the school and community where it occurs.

For the processes, risk taking and openness in a safe and warm environment are highly valued. Key process indicators include components of teacher-child interactions such as emotionally-close, sensitive, and warm interactions that support learners' confidence to explore, try out, and interact with others (Bowlby, 1969; Hamre et al., 2007). In addition, when teachers build on children's feelings of competence, emphasize positive relations to others, and encourage children's autonomy, children will feel most motivated to learn and to take risks (Connell & Wellborn, 1991).

The tool is also guided by the recognition that visuals arts, drama, dance and music are universal languages and powerful drivers for personal growth and common identity, where words do not represent any kind of boundary. Providing opportunities for multi-sensorial, multi- faceted, multi-layered, symbolic and/or functional exploration and expression is therefore emphasized.

Artistic workshops will aid to develop a powerful learning environment, along with cognitively stimulating activities to foster foundational learning skills. Sociocultural perspectives stress the power of social interactions, reciprocity, and provision of appropriate challenges that stimulate children co-construction of meaning and knowledge (Vigotsky, 1978). The way children's interests and inputs are interconnected with provocation, expansion and new inputs are considered, including the ways through which the adults expand their ideas, challenge existing knowledge, and support their thinking. The flow of the activity and the space are also considered, particularly regarding the ways they support and respect the flow of the learning process, helping children to feel, notice, play, integrate and communicate.

Reinforcing learning processes by means of active learning, artistic-creative open processes and the involvement of multiple literacies will be beneficiary to all students.

Multilingual classrooms

Participating classrooms in ArtiCULan included multilingual classrooms and CLIL-classes, comprising refugee students and children from immigrant parents. Thus, ArtiCULan also aimed, through the conduction of the artistic workshops, to develop awareness of different languages and multicultural identity and reinforce an open mind, dialogue and cooperation from all the ones involved.

The artistic workshops, through a constant experimental, exploring and creative mode that draws heavily on multiple and interconnected literacies, support children to learn to understand words and phrases in a safe and meaningful context. In addition, the use of the universal languages of visual arts, music, dance and drama will enable multilingual children to interact more spontaneously with their peers because it lacks the conventional restrictions of a spoken and written language (Meyer, Coyle, Halbach, Schuck & Ting, 2015).

In the tool, a special emphasis on communication and language facilitation techniques is given, with several examples of strategies that can better support children's understanding and expression. Strategies are drawn on several theoretical models, including insights from the 'Embodied cognition' in education (Sullivan, 2018), which emphasize the importance of movement, gestures along with words; pluriliteracies development in multilingual classrooms (Meyer, Coyle, Halbach, Schuck & Ting, 2015), which highlight the importance of providing opportunities for learners to demonstrate their understanding and to apply their knowledge across languages in different styles, various modes and for different purposes; and intersubjective cooperation, which stress the importance of open-ended questions, build on and expand existing discourse, enrich the discourse with new thoughts, ideas, arguments (Nightingale & Safont, 2019).

The integration of multiple literacies and language facilitation strategies can stimulate language acquisition and involvement in the learning process (Reekmans, Roden & Nauwelaerts, 2017), support children's engagement and help them to share what they know (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2012).

An overview of the indicators and the principles underlying them can be seen in the Figure on the next page.
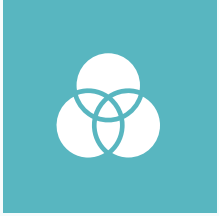
SUPPORT & CONNECTIONS		**The starting point**
		The artistic workshop is connected with other curriculum areas and children's prior experiences, and arts-related activities are supported by the school and community
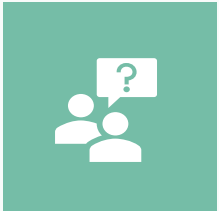
ENCOURAGEMENT & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Emotional climate
Teachers and children enjoy the activity, show pleasure. The environment is safe and encourages risk taking

MULTIMODAL MEANING MAKING

Multimodal activity
Multi-sensorial, multi- faceted, multi-layered, symbolic and/or functional exploration and expression are supported and promoted

DIVERGENT PROCESS & APPROPRIATE CHALLENGES

Divergent process of creating possibilities
Multiple opportunities are provided to build on children's interests and/or concerns in ways which expand their ideas, challenge existing knowledge, and support their thinking (e.g., through responsive, sustained, reciprocal interactions)

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

Communication and collaboration
Children and adults are encouraged to communicate their ideas through multiple modes to other children and adults.

SPACE & TIME

Space, rhythm and pace
Help children to feel, notice, play and communicate

Documentation and children's ideas are crucial for revisit the experience, for reflection and learning from the process.

How to use this tool?

This is an open access tool that can be used for a variety of purposes. It can be used as an observational tool to observe the processes involved in the artistic workshops. And also to design artistic workshops and as a starting point for reflection. It can also be used as an input for a team meeting or pedagogical counseling regarding the pedagogical vision of the school, both involving pedagogical advisors and teachers in primary schools who did or did not use this tool for observations in their classrooms. Each domain includes a description and some examples of what can be observed. During the process, observers can take notes using the observations column.

What we have learned so far?

The tool has been used for observation of the ArtiCULan workshops. In addition, a series of focus groups involving professionals from multiple fields, including education, psychology and arts, have been conducted to discuss the relevance and appropriateness of the tool. The workshops have been quite different in terms of goals, role of the adult, materials used, specific strategies that were put into place, but common patterns across all workshops were also found, leading to the following reflections:

- The emotional tone tended to be very positive through which children were actively engaged and encouraged through multiple ways;
- The adults were genuinely interested in children and available for them;
- The processes allowed multiple avenues for children: the provocation, the materials and adults were open to new experiences and to children's input;
- Multiple opportunities for collaboration and communication were given: the workshops stimulated children to interact and communicate with others;
- Time seemed to be extremely important for children's increased comfort and for allowing them to take risks; it also contributed for alternative thinking and for feeling the flow of the moment. In general, children took more risks and felt more comfortable as the workshop progressed;
- Careful planning allowed the adults to be more available and attentive towards children

The starting point

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Provocation & Open-ended input	The starting point provokes children. The artwork/problems invite children to explore, interact with them and with others in a process-oriented way. The teacher acts as facilitator and uses an open lesson plan.	Open-ended materials (functional freedom) Simple Aesthetic Versatile Art works	
Materials	The materials have high levels of functional freedom; expressive materials may be also used	Clay, Ceramics Paint, brushes, glue Recycled material (plastic, glass, wood, metal, paper) Fibers, wool, wood non-substantial 'materials' (body-expression, voice, sound, movement, print, photography, (digital)collage and recordings)	
Real-life experiences	The workshop is connected to several experiences that children and teachers bring into the school (informal, cultural)	Project-based (workshop is part of a broader project) The workshop is related to children's experiences, or their cultural references	
Arts-integration	The workshop articulates different areas of the curriculum (formal). The workshop uses at least two tracks of arts education simultaneously (image, drama, music) and alternates the tracks to stimulate creative expression	Art-infused model: Arts is used as a strategy for teaching curriculum content · Concept-based art integration: A cross-cutting concept is used	
Community and educational spaces	Several spaces are used that invite children to explore and interact in varying ways	Atelier Classroom Playground Outdoor (e.g., forest) Museums, Art Galleries.	
School community support	The school community believes in art	The school mission incorporates the work with and through arts School partnerships with cultural institutions and others are established	
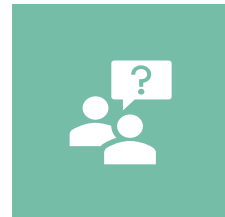
Emotional climate

Teachers and children enjoy the activity, show pleasure. The environment is safe and encourages risk taking

	DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
TEACHERS	**Positive expression and praise**	The tone of voice, posture, non-verbal and verbal behavior show pleasure towards child's learning experiences, efforts, and progress	Pleasing voice Smiling, laughing Warm and nurturing response	
	Active involvement	Teachers are actively involved, invest energy and display genuine excitement and enthusiasm	Plays with children Expresses energy to meet children's needs	
	Awareness	Teachers are aware of all children and ongoing tasks. This may include not interrupting children and allowing periods of silence that support concentration	Is attentive to children Notices difficulties Continually looks at children and follows their activity	
CHILDREN	**Positive expression and interactions**	Children show positive interactions with their peers and teachers	Smiles, laughs Genuine affect	
	Active involvement	Children are actively involved, invest energy, express joy and are full participants of the activity	Expressing, playing, creating, experimenting Presenting, arguing, ritualizing, showing, telling Performing, producing	
	Persistence	Children continue to be involved in the face of difficulty, and appear to be comfortable in making mistakes and encouraged to take risks	Seek support Make new attempts Freely approach children and teachers	

Multimodal activity

Multi-sensorial, multi- faceted, multi-layered, symbolic and/or functional exploration and expression are supported and promoted

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Multi-sensorial	Multi- faceted, multi-layered presence of symbolic and/or functional exploration and expression are supported and promoted	Visual feeling Tactile feeling Olfactory feeling Kinesthetic feeling Gustatory feeling Emotional feeling Auditory feeling (the subjective sensation of hearing)	
Multimodal meaning making processes	An emphasis on the process is made; Several opportunities are provided for children to reinterpret/transform the materials and the situation The activity (materials, provocation) invite children to try new solutions, to think of new ideas, and to interpret the familiar material in new ways	Multiple angles of approach Multiple ways to interpret	

Divergent process of creating possibilities

Multiple opportunities are provided to build on children's interests and/or concerns in ways which expand their ideas, challenge existing knowledge, and support their thinking (e.g., through responsive, sustained, reciprocal interactions)

DOMAIN		DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
TEACHER	**Modeling**	The teacher models the different steps, not by showing them, but by asking questions and reflecting upon different choices and possibilities	Step-by-step guidance Clear sequence of actions Provides enough time	
	Scaffolding	Notices when children are facing challenges and provides guidance, scaffolds, assists	Clarifies Provides hints and prompts	
	Elaborating	Provide information or make comments that provide new insights/deeper understandin	Provides new information related to ongoing process · Presents alternative viewpoints · Provide children with choices · Ask open-ended questions (e.g., how, why…) · Problematizes and provokes · - Describes what children are doing	
	Metacognition	Encourages thinking skills; prompts children to express their thinking and rationale for their options and behaviors; facilitates children's thinking skills through questioning, problem-solving, and prediction	Ask children to express (e.g., through gestures, home language) their ideas	
	Differentiation	Use varying strategies, as needed, to differentially support each child's learning and behavior need		
	Responsiveness	Gives room for children to express their ideas and follow their interests Intercultural dialogue: The teacher provides space for cultural and individual diversity and allows different interpretations to exist side by side.	Listen carefully to children's ideas · Accept children's ideas and opinions	

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Exploration	Children make several exploratory attempts	Wonder Try out	
Metacognition	Children explain/express their ideas to teacher and/or peers	Present Argue, explains Performs	
Inquiry	Children ask questions to teachers and peers	Making requests	
Reinterpretation	Children reinterpret/transform the materials and the situation Children make use of multiple opportunities to try, and to achieve what they want Children try new solutions	multiple angles of approach Create, experimenting Performs, realizes Interpret meaning and intent Perceive and analyze	
Responsiveness	Children respond to teachers and follows their suggestions	Responds/Listen · Adapts	
Produces	Refine and complete artistic work		

CHILDREN

Communication and collaboration

Children and adults are encouraged to communicate their ideas through multiple modes to other children and adults.

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Non-verbal communication	The teacher uses several strategies so that all children understand him/her, including non-verbal communication (e.g., materials and sounds), embodied cognition (gestures), slow pace (e.g., speaks slowly and articulates well), makes a selected use of non-familiar words to children (e.g., repeats new words, connects them to materials, presents them to children).	A. Visualize instructions with multimodal input: authentic materials, (artistic) illustrations, sounds of the workshop. Connect new words to materials and sounds, presents them to children to clarify the message. → LS: Focus on Memory Strategies applying images and sounds by associating word-meaning, by placing new words into a context. B. Embodied cognition: model a variety of choices to make. → LS: Focus on Memory Strategies employing action: gestures, body language, facial expression, actions created by teacher can be re-used by student to perform motor actions. C. Slow pace: speak sufficiently slowly and articulate well. Intonation and expression help to understand the messages. → LS: metacognitive strategies: centering your learning by paying attention. D. Makes a selected use of non-familiar words to children, key words children will use for interaction. Limit vocabulary in order not to interrupt the pace of the creative process.	
Idea exchange	Teacher actively facilitates idea exchange and interaction.	A. Focus on both verbal and non-verbal communication during reflection and exchange of ideas. → LS: Focus on cognitive strategies: analyzing expressions, reasoning deductively, getting the idea quickly using resources, translating, transferring. B. Focus on intersubjective cooperation recycle ideas children, paraphrase and request for new information. → LS: Focus on cognitive and compensation strategies by recycling key vocabulary, simplifying questions by giving possible examples based on the non-verbal reaction of the multilingual child. Limit vocabulary in the dialogues and repeat in a naturalistic way, using linguistic or other clues.	

(LS = language strategies for children in a refugee class or a CLIL class in order to promote social inclusion: diversity, multiculturality, cultural identity)

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Collaborative problem-solving	Teacher actively facilitates collaborative problem-solving between children and their peers.	A. Adult joins children and helps children work together to generate hypotheses, solve problems and make decisions. → LS: Focus on social strategies: asking questions for clarification or verification, cooperating with proficient users of the new language. B. Conversational style using open-ended questions in which interlocutors complement each other in order to arrive at a mutual goal. Opportunities for learners to demonstrate their understanding and apply their knowledge. → LS: Focus on cognitive and compensation strategies: recycling key vocabulary, using linguistic or other clues. Simplifying questions by giving possible examples based on the non-verbal reaction of the multilingual child.	
Peer perspective taking	Teachers assist children in peer perspective taking. Focus on intercultural dialogue, respecting ideas linked to habits or types of expression the children still need to explore.	A. Teachers assist children in peer perspective taking, help children noticing, listening to others. → LS: Focus on metacognitive strategies for language learning: paraphrasing, linking. B. Focus on intercultural dialogue. → LS: Focus on social strategies: asking for clarification or verification, becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings, developing cultural understanding.	
Collaboration between adults	The adults are well connected, do not interrupt one another		
Social grouping	Social grouping allows children to collaborate and cooperate	Small group Variation in grouping throughout the activity	

Space

Opportunities for children "doing" space are given (i.e., to use, change and transform the space according to their embodied activity).

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
"Doing" space	Children have freedom to use the space	Children are allowed to move around Children have freedom to choose the spot Embodied mode features are put into place	

Rhythm and pace

The activity is run at a pace that gives enough time to children and respect the flow of the learning process - feel, notice, play and communicate

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Pace	Children are given time to notice, feel, and communicate		

Throughout and at the end of the workshop

DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Child expression	Children are invited to share how they felt and what they have learned throughout the workshop	Careful listening to children's ideas: open questions and follow up to encourage children to elaborate on their thoughts Genuine interest in what children have to say What have did you feel? How was it for you? What do you think you have learned? What do you take from this experience?	
Documentation	Teachers register/record children's ideas and work, giving value to children's work	Teachers take pictures Teachers use large sheets for children to draw and/or write their experience	

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