

TO SCREEN OR NOT TO SCREEN?



To Screen or Not to Screen?

Exploring Primary School Children's Perspectives on the use of Green Screen Technology
when Looking at and Responding to Visual Arts.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly. This work has not been submitted previously at this or any other educational institution. The work was done under the guidance of my supervisor, Dr Susan Kennedy-Killian, at the Marino Institute of Education, Dublin. I agree that the Library may lend or copy this dissertation upon request.

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Abstract

The 1999 visual arts primary school curriculum was evaluated by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in 2005 as part of a phase one curriculum review which also included maths and English. This review reported that there was an unequal balance between the making art and looking at and responding to art strand units, recommending that teachers need greater support in teaching the latter strand unit effectively (NCCA, 2005). Since then, the NCCA has published a draft framework for a new primary school curriculum underpinned by the development of seven key competencies (NCCA, 2020a). Two of these critical competencies are “being a digital learner” and “being creative” (NCCA, 2020a). The 1999 curriculum promotes the use of information and communication technologies within visual arts. Considering this, and the vision of creating digital learners within the newly devised curriculum, the research which follows explores the specific use of ICT, in the form of green screen, as a tool for teaching the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit in response to the need highlighted in the 2005 curriculum review (NCCA).

Relevant to the aim of this research is conveying the perspectives of Irish school children who will act as participants in this study. The perceptions of children on the use of green screen to look at and respond to visual arts will be explored and presented. Although no finite answers will be gained from this exploratory, qualitative study, it will provide significant perspectives from children about the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit and using ICT as a teaching methodology. These perspectives may have implications for future studies and curriculum development.

Keywords: visual arts, looking and responding, LAR, technology, ICT, green screen, children, perspectives.

List of Abbreviations

FG	Focus Group
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
LAR	Looking at and responding to art
NAEA	National Art Education Association
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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Chapter One: Introduction

The current visual arts curriculum has been in use in Irish primary schools since 1999, with a review carried out by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in 2005. The NCCA then published a draft framework for a curriculum overhaul in 2020. The visual arts curriculum comprises six strands: drawing, paint and colour, print, clay, construction and fabric and fibre. Each of these strands encompasses two strand units: making and creating, and looking and responding (Government of Ireland, 1999a). The curriculum places equal emphasis on both of these strand units (Government of Ireland, 1999b). However, the NCCA (2005) review found that educators concentrated on making art, often neglecting the looking and responding (LAR) strand unit. The review also highlighted the lack of effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) amongst educators (NCCA, 2005), despite its inclusion as a potential methodology for learning within both strand units of the visual arts curriculum (Flannery, 2010; Government of Ireland, 1999a).

Research Rationale

ICT has had a significant impact within today's society and has, therefore, become prominent within educational sectors, serving as a tool to develop creative competencies within children (Hilcenko, Filipovic, & Ilic, n.d.). The rapid nature with which digital technologies have become entrenched in the lives of children (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2017) and the growing availability of ICT has inspired many educators to integrate digital technologies into their teaching (Hilcenko et al., n.d.). The implementation of primary school curriculums can become more interactive with the introduction of ICT based learning activities (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2005). Such an implementation is envisioned by the NCCA in their recent publishing of draft guidelines for a

new curriculum, “being a digital learner,” serving as one of the seven key competencies underpinning the proposal (NCCA, 2020a).

In the NCCA review (2005) educators reported that they found making art more useful as a strand unit and therefore prioritised it more than LAR within their implementation of the curriculum. Many educators felt that with the LAR strand unit, children do not think they are participating in an art lesson as “they are just looking at something and talking about it” (NCCA, 2005, p. 156). However, the literature suggests that LAR allows pupils to perceive, interpret, and judge visual imagery and content through the process of critical response (Burton, 2009; Sandell, 2009), and should play an essential role in the visual arts curriculum. Incorporating ICT as a methodology into the teaching of the LAR strand unit may potentially provide educators with a dynamic way to excite and engage children. As an educator passionate about both visual arts education and ICT integration, I was interested in investigating ICTs potential within the LAR strand unit of the visual arts curriculum.

Aim of Research

Exploring ways to support educators in teaching the LAR strand unit specifically, as warranted by the NCCA (2005), in a manner which is in line with the new draft curricular framework (NCCA, 2020a) is, therefore, fundamental to this research. Furthermore using ICT, which has been embedded in the lives of children growing up in the twenty-first century (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2017) as a methodology is of pivotal importance. However, the principal aim of this research is to ascertain children’s perceptions on the use of ICT to teach the LAR strand unit of the visual arts curriculum.

Often educational research concentrating on the teaching of visual arts centres around portraying the views of educators, the voice of the child is rarely conveyed (Roberts, 2017).

Listening to children, especially on issues which directly affect them, is paramount in acknowledging their worth within education (Roberts, 2017). The NCCA (2020b) supportive of views highlighted in the literature, have consulted with children in the development of the new curriculum in attempts to gather their views and experiences of teaching and learning. Similarly, this research focuses on exploring and presenting the children's perspectives on whether the use of green screen technology as a teaching methodology, is beneficial to their learning within the LAR strand unit, rather than presenting the views of an educator.

Research Questions

Considering the research rationale and aim discussed above, the following research questions underpinned this study:

1. What are the opinions of primary school children on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit?
2. What are the opinions of primary school children on the use of green screen technology as a methodology when teaching looking at and responding to visual arts?

Research Approach

As this research aimed to determine the perspectives of its participants and did so through participatory engagement, it was underpinned by social constructivist theory by which individuals themselves construct meaning through their interactions (Robson, 2011).

Although the social constructivist approach does not prescribe any specific method of data collection, it most commonly uses qualitative data collection tools (Robson, 2011).

Qualitative research focuses on investigating participants attitudes to gain understanding (Churches & Dommatt, 2016; Robson, 2011; Stake, 2010), but as this research concentrated on an area where there was a lack of specific literature, it was also exploratory (Dudovskiy,

2018). Participant observation checklists and focus groups were used to gather data in the exploration of the research questions.

Layout of Study

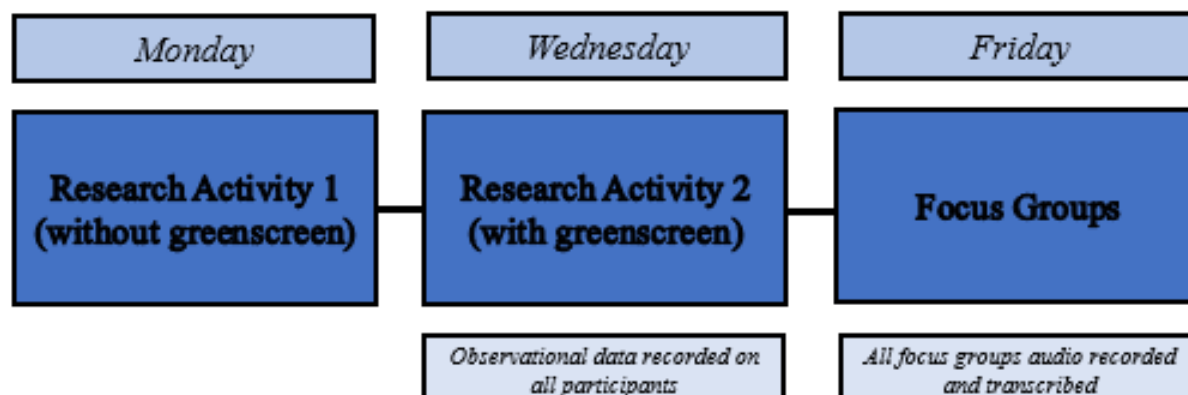


Figure 1. The layout of the study indicating the timeframe for activities and data collection tools. Critical to the research design was the time between activities and subsequent focus groups in attempts to alleviate possible transfer of knowledge between pedagogies (Churches & Dommett, 2016).

As illustrated in figure one, the participants took part in two research activities where I recorded observational data through the use of checklists and field notes. After they had completed both activities, they participated in small focus groups. They had the opportunity to share their perceptions on the activities they took part in, which generated the majority of the data to be analysed thematically.

Summary

The current visual arts curriculum promotes the teaching of both making art and looking at and responding to art strand units in equal measures (Government of Ireland, 1999a). Upon review, however, educators have found it challenging to do this in a meaningful

manner (NCCA, 2005). Integrating ICT with the LAR strand unit through the use of greenscreen may potentially provide a stimulating experience in which pupils can engage directly with artworks. Children's perceptions on such an experience, informed by qualitative, exploratory research design, were explored through the use of observational checklists, and focus groups. Data was then analysed to ascertain whether the use of green screen technology to teach the LAR strand unit was valuable. The next chapter provides context for the study by discussing the visual arts curriculum and the NCCA review (2005) in more depth, as well as a review of relevant literature.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

ICT has been noted as having the potential to broaden and enhance children's understandings and experiences of the visual arts curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a). However, relevant literature shows an apparent concern amongst teachers on the integration of ICT into visual arts lessons. Before concentrating on pertinent literature surrounding this use of ICT within visual arts education, the review which follows begins by discussing the Irish primary school visual arts curriculum, the importance of visual arts education and the importance of the voice of the child within research, to provide a framework for this study.

The chapter then focuses on the literature surrounding the value of looking at and responding to art as a strand unit of the curriculum, children's perspectives on LAR, and best practices for teaching LAR as part of the visual arts curriculum. It will be necessary to be cognisant of this literature when analysing the data collected relating to the opinions of primary school children on the LAR strand unit later in the study. ICT and its role within the visual arts curriculum as a teaching methodology will then be discussed, before highlighting current approaches taken by educators to integrate ICT and visual arts, providing some examples of such integration, and potential problems associated with it. Children's perspectives on ICT and visual arts integration will then be reviewed, before finally examining the literature on specific ICT use in the form of green screen technology, the digital tool utilised in this study. The participant's perspectives on the use of green screen technology as a methodology within the LAR strand unit, when analysed, will be compared with this literature.

The Irish Primary Visual Arts Curriculum

Before examining relevant literature on ICT and visual arts integration, it is essential to have a basic understanding of the current curriculum in place across Irish educational settings

to provide a backdrop for this research. The existing curriculum in use is the 1999 Irish primary school curriculum. The visual arts subject is comprised of six strands: drawing, paint and colour, print, clay, construction, and fabric and fibre. Within each of these strands, there are two strand units; making and creating, and looking and responding (Government of Ireland, 1999a). Significant to the purpose of this research, the 1999 curriculum also suggests the use of ICT as a teaching methodology within visual arts (Government of Ireland, 1999a).

In 2005 the NCCA carried out a curriculum review. The recommendations stated that “there should be a renewed focus on developing the child’s ability to look at and respond to art in implementing the visual arts curriculum,” as well as highlighting the need for support for teachers when teaching this specific strand unit (2005, p. 21). The visual arts curriculum places an equal emphasis on both making, and responding to art (Government of Ireland, 1999b), but this does not seem to be reflected in the current teachings across the country (NCCA, 2005).

The NCCA is currently drafting a new curriculum framework, the completion of which they envisage for 2024. This new curriculum will focus on developing seven key competencies through five subject areas: language, mathematics, science and technology education, wellbeing, arts education, and social and environmental education. The subject of arts education strives to encompass a broad range of arts experiences, including visual arts, music, drama, dance, film and a further focus on digital media and technology (NCCA, 2020a). Although the draft document does not explicitly mention a renewed focus on the LAR strand unit, as the 2005 review suggested, it does seek to provide captivating experiences which enthuse children’s creative and expressive potential within visual arts. As a result, children are supported in the development of two of the new curriculum’s key competencies: being creative and being a digital learner (NCCA, 2020a). Considering the NCCA (2005) also

highlighted a lack of ICT use in the teaching of visual arts, it is no surprise that within their new draft framework being creative and being a digital learner are intrinsically linked (NCCA, 2020a). Encouragingly, the principles and competencies which underpin this curriculum proposal (NCCA, 2020a) correlate with relevant literature on the importance of visual arts education discussed below.

The Importance of Visual Arts Education

The fundamental essence of art is creative expression (Polster, 2010). However, it is broadly believed that art also serves as a necessary form of communication, representing a profound reflection of our engagement with, and experiences of the world around us (National Art Education Association, 2016; Polster, 2010). Therefore, visual arts education is important not only for the transfer of artistic knowledge, concepts, and skills, but also for aesthetic experiences which help develop creative and flexible forms of thinking, allowing us to interact with the world in a meaningful manner (Donahue & Stuart, 2010; NAEA, 2016) and “to participate fully in [our]community and society as a whole” (NCCA, 2020a, p. 15).

In addition to the development of such intellectual capacities, visual arts education has the potential to ignite imagination by providing an opportunity to view the world through alternate lenses (Greene, 2007; Hunter, 2012), in turn, developing an essential appreciation of disparate viewpoints, perspectives and cultures that reside within our global society (NAEA, 2016). What is believed to be best practice for the teaching of visual arts in educational settings, however, often varies based upon educators’ personal preferences, goals, and ideals (Donahue & Stuart, 2010). Characteristics of productive learning environments for the development of visual arts, both as a creative form of expression and as a transformative mode of communication, are beginning to be identified by a variety of researchers (NAEA, 2016). The integration of ICT into the teaching of visual arts, as is embodied in the new curriculum

framework (NCCA, 2020a), is said to create one such effective learning environment (Wilks, Cutcher, & Wilks, 2012). Unfortunately, pupils' voices appear to be overlooked within many of these studies as research which investigates pupils' experiences are rare (Mulcahey, 2002).

The Importance of the Voice of the Child within Research

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the NCCA (2020b) plan to consult with children on the draft curriculum framework, stating that “an important part of the consultation will be engaging with children to gather their views, in appropriate ways, on their experiences of learning and teaching through which the curriculum is enacted.” However, from the literature reviewed for this study, it is apparent that research on the varying characteristics of best teaching practices for visual arts is controlled by adults and educators. The voice of the child, if present at all, is often adapted to fit their research agendas (Mulcahey, 2002; Roberts, 2017). Despite this, the value of listening to the attitudes and perspectives of children has been highlighted (Einarsdottir, Dockett, & Perry, 2009; Mulcahey, 2002; Roberts, 2017), with Roberts (2017) aptly suggesting that “listening to children is central to recognising and representing their worth as human beings” (p. 147).

If visual arts education, as suggested in the literature, holds the capacity to see the world through different viewpoints (Greene, 2007; Hunter, 2012), research on visual arts should also be presented from different viewpoints. Dated views of children as objects of research have been shifted towards children being active participants within research (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Kellett, 2005). Literature shows this change in focus from research on children to research with children, conveying the importance of seeking their perspectives and attitudes on educational issues (Christensen & James, 2000; Einarsdottir et al., 2009; Erickson & Schultz, 1992; Gibson, 2008; James et al., 1998; Kellett, 2005; Mulcahey, 2002). The study which follows, underpinned by the importance of conveying the voice of the child within

educational research as suggested in the literature, aims to ascertain children's perceptions on the use of green screen technology as a teaching methodology within the LAR strand unit of the visual arts curriculum, in response to the NCCAs 2005 curriculum review.

The Value of Looking at and Responding to Visual Arts

When investigating children's attitudes towards the use of green screen in the teaching of the LAR strand unit, it is important to first consider the inherent value of LAR as a strand unit of the curriculum. The present visual arts curriculum offers a variety of activities in "perceiving, exploring, responding to and, appreciating the visual world" (Government of Ireland, 1999a, p. 2). Activities which are correlated between the strand units of both making art, and looking at and responding to art. In the development of the current curriculum, it was highlighted that there should be a balanced approach between creative expression, artistic creation, and making personal responses derived from looking at visual elements with awareness and understanding (Government of Ireland, 1999a). In the NCCA review (2005), educators reported that they prioritised making art more than LAR within their implementation of the curriculum, and found "greater levels of usefulness for the strand unit, making art, than for the strand unit, looking at and responding to art" (p. 106). However, literature states that looking at and responding to visual arts is useful, and of crucial importance, holding a valuable place within our curriculum as it allows pupils to perceive, interpret and judge visual imagery and content through the educational process of critical response (Burton, 2009; Sandell, 2009).

Children should be allowed to reflect on their initial aesthetic judgement of a piece, taking time to consider the mediums used and skills employed by the artist, before making a final decision as to its value and worth (Government of Ireland, 1999b). By providing children with these opportunities to look at artworks with openness and appreciation, their

critical faculties are subsequently developed as they are encouraged to become more discriminating and critically aware (Government of Ireland, 1999b; Goodwin, Demetrius, & Uhrmacher, 2019). The LAR strand unit has the power to nurture the development of interdisciplinary skills such as engagement, persistence, envisioning, expression, observation, reflecting, exploring, and understanding (Winner, Hetland, Veenema, Sheridan, & Palmer, 2006). Literature notes that by developing these dispositions, children will build on necessary life skills to help them navigate twenty-first century living. These transferrable skills learned through visual arts (Sandell, 2009; Winner, Goldstein, & Lancrin, 2013; Winner et al., 2006) are an essential aspect to the cross-disciplinary nature of the new draft curricular framework (NCCA, 2020a) and seem to be of intrinsic value within the LAR strand unit. Again, the majority of this literature is written from researchers' perspectives. The data collected and analysed from the children taking part in this study, will be presented in contrast to the literature discussed.

Children's Perspectives on Looking at and Responding to Visual Arts

Gaining an understanding of pupils' perceptions of visual arts education, and attitudes towards art in general, is of great importance for art educators (Pavlou & Kambouri, 2007). It enables them to plan and organise art lessons more skilfully in a manner which challenges and expands their pupils' learning (Pavlou & Kambouri, 2007). In this way, pupils' opinions affect both learning and teaching practices (Gibson, 2008; Pavlou & Kambouri, 2007). We see from the NCCAs curriculum review (2005) that children perceived art as one of their favourite subjects and they "spoke with excitement about the opportunities to make stuff in visual arts" (p. 111). Regarding children's opinions on the value of LAR, in particular, there seems to be a gap within research literature that warrants further investigation. As previously mentioned,

many studies about children are framed by adult perspectives on education, and they seldom allow for the perspectives of children to be revealed (Mulcahey, 2002).

Studies that do involve children discussing works of art focus on specific questions which assess the artistic knowledge of children or their abilities to engage in aesthetic thinking (Mulcahey, 2002). These investigations often centre around the pupils' shortcomings from the adults' perspective (Mulcahey, 2002) rather than highlighting the children's perceptions and beliefs. Naturally, an acute awareness of pupils' abilities is essential for a teacher's effective teaching of visual art, however, pupil's attitudes and perspectives towards art are not reflected as part of this knowledge, unlike factors such as their knowledge of artistic skills and techniques (Pavlou & Kambouri, 2007). Gibson (2008) highlights that children's attitudes towards visual arts education are only indirectly referred to in textbooks about art education or curricular documents, as referenced in this literature review. This particular study will help bridge this literary gap by presenting children's views on the LAR strand unit of the visual arts curriculum.

Best Practices for Teaching Looking at and Responding to Visual Arts

Evident from the supporting literature, the majority of educators in schools associate art education with the development of children's artistic skills, accumulating in the production of expressive works of art, with many teachers failing to teach children how to view art critically (Hallam, Gupta, & Lee, 2008; Pavlou, 2015). With this overwhelming focus of visual arts teaching concentrating on art formation, there is less of an opportunity given to children to view and reflect upon art critically, resulting in the subsequent neglect of the emotional and cognitive developmental capacities that reside within looking at and responding to visual arts (Eckhoff, 2008). Many art educators have further noted that looking at and

responding to visual arts can support literacy skills, foster imagination and creative thinking as well as encourage inquiry (Eisner, 1972; Greene, 1995; Housen, 2007; Pavlou, 2015).

It has been highlighted in the literature that the prospective benefits gained by LAR lessons can only be achieved in an environment conducive to the development of emotional and cognitive capacities and where a framework for the teaching of LAR lessons has been developed by the teacher (Oreck, 2004; Pavlou, 2015). It is also reported that LAR lessons should be structured in a manner which encourages children to inspect their visual surroundings through a lens of sensitive inquiry, making connections between their work and the work of others based on their observations (Government of Ireland, 1999b). These observations allow children to interpret what they see, ultimately serving as the basis for future creative expression and design. Meaningful opportunities for such engagement should be the basis for the teaching of LAR visual arts lessons (Government of Ireland, 1999b).

Effective art lessons focusing on LAR also need to develop appropriate knowledge related to the pedagogical process of understanding art (Pavlou & Kambouri, 2007). According to Pavlou (2015), the language used when discussing aesthetic experiences and the technical terms associated with various media and artists need to be taught and modelled to allow children to participate meaningfully in such lessons. It has also been highlighted that prolonged perceptive observation helps build concentration capacities and should be a feature of every art lesson (Government of Ireland, 1999b). LAR lessons should centre around the pupil as a respondent to a work of art, whether it is their work or the work of another, subsequently developing individual capacities for higher-order thinking as they engage in such experiences of self-expression (Wilson & Clark, 2000). Wilson and Clark (2000) report that to ensure best practice in the teaching of LAR lessons, teachers must plan discussion activities purposefully, listen to their pupils' perceptions and views on and about art, and facilitate a

conversation that results in increased confidence and aesthetic awareness. Activities like these are highlighted as being essential in the teaching of LAR as pupils can build on these scaffolded discussions to engage independently in meaningful conversations with their peers that emphasis the aesthetic features, art criticism, and creative processes of their artwork and the work of others (Wilson & Clark, 2000).

Again, although not explicitly mentioned in the proposed curricular framework for 2024, we can see the underlying values of LAR referred to indirectly in the document within the attributes of its being creative competency: participating in and enjoying creative and cultural experiences; being curious; being imaginative; being innovative; using creative processes; and exploring alternative ways of communicating (NCCA, 2020a, p. 10). In order to improve the implementation of the visual arts curriculum, the teaching of the LAR strand unit needs to be revised to include more meaningful experiences. Activities which enhance artistic knowledge, concepts and skills of pupils as well as develop creative thinking and a sensitive understanding of the world (Donahue & Stuart, 2010; NAEA, 2016) are needed.

Information Communication Technology in the Visual Arts Primary Curriculum.

The NCCA (2005) reported some use of ICT within the teaching of visual arts, which primarily focused on looking at and responding to works of art on the internet. However, there did not appear to be any meaningful engagement or interaction with digital technologies beyond this. The most common use of digital technology was the use of the internet to look up information about various artists, their lives, and their works, with only some teachers using ICT as a means to display said works of art (NCCA, 2005). The use of ICT was encouraged in the 1999 curriculum but takes a more central role in the 2020 draft documentation as “being a digital learner” (NCCA, 2020a) is one of the seven key competencies which infiltrates all subject areas.

The impact ICT has had on today's society and the possibilities it brings as regards attitudinal change towards many existential issues has been immense (Hilcenko et al., n.d.). These changes have been reported in the literature as manifesting within educational sectors, ICT serving as a tool to develop creative competencies within children that are currently sought after in our ever-growing technological world (Hilcenko et al., n.d.). The accessibility and interchangeability of digital media have inspired modern educators to integrate traditional instructional methods with the more contemporary techniques it provides, grasping the unique opportunity to support and extend learning that ICT affords (Hilcenko et al., n.d.).

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the primary school curriculum has the potential to become more interactive and dynamic with the introduction of ICT based learning activities (UNESCO, 2005). ICT can be used to broaden and enhance the child's understanding and experience of art (Government of Ireland, 1999a). Using specialised computer programs and software that teach the principles of visual art, CD-ROMs supported by galleries and museums for an interactive exploration of artwork, and the development of school blogs to display artwork digitally are all examples of possible ICT integration (Government of Ireland, 1999a). This research investigates whether the use of green screen will prove one such a dynamic and interactive way to teach LAR more effectively.

Integrating ICT and Visual Arts

Digital technologies can have a considerable impact on our creation of and understanding of art, playing an integral role in shaping and representing our perceptions of the world around us (Hilcenko et al., n.d.). Integrating ICT into visual arts curriculums, therefore, is said to have a positive impact on teaching and learning in the visual arts (Wilks et al., 2012). Moreover, it is often believed that excellent visual arts teaching should combine technology with the development of artistic concepts (Hackles, 2012; Hilcenko et al., n.d.). In

doing this, pupils are equipped with the skills required to derive sense from the surplus of images and ideas presented in the media of the visual society children find themselves growing up in (Sandell, 2009). However, it is reported that many teachers find it challenging to incorporate ICT into their art lessons in a meaningful and engaging manner (Carpenter & Tavin, 2010; Choi & Piro, 2009; NCCA, 2005; Wilks et al., 2012). Digital technologies have a vast potential within visual arts teaching and new approaches as to how to integrate it in a purposeful, pertinent manner are needed (Wilks et al., 2012).

Robyler and Doering (2010) suggest some ways in which educators can integrate digital technologies into a visual arts curriculum, such as: producing and manipulating digitised images; supporting graphic design, 3-D modelling and desktop publishing; virtual field trips to art museums; creating movies as an art form; using computerised kilns, and sharing students' creative and research works digitally (p. 377). Isgreen (2009) also highlights the availability of online databases containing full catalogues of the works of various artists, as well as the opportunity to visit virtual representations of famous art galleries and museums. ICT, when integrated into the teaching of art, is reported as having the power to improve the capability of pupils to delve into ideas by providing a new medium through which to explore art and expand upon artistic technique (Hackles, 2012). The prospect of creating online portfolios and domains, using videography and animation software, generating creative collages of edited photographs, and working collaboratively online on a group project all become available to the educator and pupils when ICT is used as a methodology (Hackles, 2012). According to Hackles (2012) “there can be no doubt that learning art and design can be improved through the use of ICT in teaching” (p. 13), and it has been generally accepted that integrating ICT with visual arts increases knowledge and understanding (Hackles, 2012).

Literature suggests that educators should be conscious of technology's dominant role in children's lives, as excellent visual arts teaching should encourage and develop the creativity of children by providing aesthetic experiences beyond traditional methods to include digital domains (Hilcenko et al., n.d.). The use of green screen in this research to look at and respond to art may provide the capacity to excite all of the senses, resulting in the development of a deep sense of compassion and appreciation of the world, which Sandell (2009) maintains is the goal of excellent visual arts teaching.

Examples of ICT and Visual Arts Integration

Within the last decade, there have been several studies carried out internationally to assess the impact of ICT integration within visual arts (Balanskat, Blamire, & Kefala, 2006; Condie & Munro, 2007; European Commission, 2006, 2013; Pelgrum, 2001; Richardso, 2000). The conclusions from these studies maintain that although digital technologies have been accepted and embraced for its potential as suggested in the literature above, there has not been a significant change from traditional teaching methodologies and ICT is not yet integrated to its full extent within schools (Area-Moreira, Hernández-Rivero, & Sosa-Alonso, 2016; Balanskat et al., 2006; European Commission, 2006, 2013).

Croatia's Zvezdana Prohaska (2011, 2012) has conducted studies in the field of incorporating ICT into the visual arts curriculum. In 2011 research was undertaken to determine the main prerequisites necessary for the introduction of ICT into the visual arts curriculum in Croatian primary schools. From an anonymous survey of 31 visual arts primary school teachers, it was found that although most teachers had not utilised ICT in their visual arts teaching, they were aware of its benefits and were positive towards its future implementation (Prohaska, 2011).

As mentioned previously, art is fundamentally a form of creative expression, art-making: the culmination of inquiry, engagement research, experimentation, reflection, looking and responding, is the process of such expression (Polster, 2010). Art serves as an essential mode of communication and is often used in conjunction with prevalent online imagery to convey ideas and experiences (Dinham et al., 2007). Visual arts is, therefore, the ideal subject for the integration of ICT (Dinham et al., 2007), and it is promising to see positive responses towards its integration internationally. However, despite the literature illustrating the benefits of using ICT as a tool for teaching and learning within visual arts (Terreni, 2010), there is little research which investigates the use of specific digital technologies. Activities such as digitising personal art or images; virtual field trips to art museums; claymation and movie making; online art portfolios; looking at and responding to art using online catalogues of artists' work (Hackles, 2012; Isgreen, 2009; Robyler & Doering, 2010) are rarely explored within the context of the Irish primary school. This study will investigate the worth and potential of ICT as a methodology, adding to the literature within an Irish context.

Potential Problems with ICT and Visual Arts Integration

In order to integrate ICT into the teaching and learning processes of visual arts, educators must be provided with the opportunity to upskill and develop their understanding of how digital technologies can improve pedagogical methods and enhance pupil participation and performance (UNESCO, 2005). ICT has the potential to not only enhance and enrich a child's learning in primary school, but it can also transcend traditional methodologies when used effectively, providing pupils with the opportunity to learn collaboratively and to construct knowledge and meaning for themselves (Irish National Teachers Organisation, 2015).

The demand placed upon educators to integrate ICT into school curricula is, therefore, ever-growing. Educators' integrating ICT into primary education need to assure it attends to

the “pedagogical principles of the curriculum” (INTO, 2015, p. 3). Active learning, guided discovery, integrated environmental-based learning, and the development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills to name but a few (INTO, 2015). If all pupils are to benefit from ICT integration, it must, therefore, become an integral part of teaching and learning within all areas of the curriculum (INTO, 2015). The challenge lies with educators to create high quality, relevant, exciting and demanding learning experiences which have the potential to be used in meaningful, relevant ways to enhance and extend learning (Wilks et al., 2012). Wilks et al. (2012) highlight some challenges which face teachers in their attempts to do just this. The relevance of ICT use, its benefits, the time it takes to use it successfully in an over-crowded curriculum, inadequate resources and lack of professional and technical support available to teachers, and finally, restricted internet access and limitations (Wilks et al., 2012) are all challenges.

The predominant problem when it comes to integrating ICT and visual arts teaching that has been identified by teachers in the Irish context is the lack of available digital resources (NCCA, 2005). Teachers were also unfamiliar with resources available to them in terms of educational websites, software, and applications. Additionally, they did not have the knowledge or confidence to utilise what was available to them within their teaching (NCCA, 2005). The dependence on a reliable internet connection also featured heavily as a constraint when attempting to use ICT in visual arts lessons (NCCA, 2005). The use of green screen as a digital tool to look at and respond to art may prove a beneficial integration of ICT within the visual arts curriculum, potentially providing educators with a resource to enhance teaching, which literature suggests, is needed.

Children's Perspectives on ICT and Visual Arts Integration

Unlike children's attitudes towards visual arts education, the discrepancy between the controlled use of ICT within the educational context and children's extensive engagement with digital technologies outside of the classroom, has been well documented in educational literature (Buckingham, 2007; Cuban, 2001; Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2005; Selwyn, Boraschi, & Özkula, 2009). As discussed, the popular opinion amongst teachers as regards visual arts and ICT integration is that it is very beneficial for pupils (Prohaska, 2011). However, the studies which specifically investigate this are few. Similarly, there is a lack of literature surrounding pupils' perspectives relating to integrating ICT with visual art. A further study by Prohaska (2012) focused on the attitudes and opinions of the pupils concerning visual arts integration. It was noted that the introduction of ICT to visual arts education was of benefit to the pupils, so it was essential to obtain their opinions, motivations, and expectations (Prohaska, 2012). Using an anonymous questionnaire, Prohaska (2012), ascertained that pupils were interested in the introduction of digital technologies within visual art, and also that their knowledge of ICT was good considering their age and profile. From a study carried out by Selwyn, Boraschi, and Özkula (2009) where children's attitudes towards integrating ICT and visual arts were measured by analysing their drawings, we can see that children want to integrate ICT into their classrooms by playing game consoles. Little focus was placed on the educational purposes and integratory potentials of ICT by the children in these drawings (Selwyn et al., 2009).

Children's attitudes to visual arts education, in particular, the LAR strand unit of the curriculum, are relatively undocumented in educational literature, as are their perceptions regarding the value of integrating ICT with visual art. Due to this gap in the literature, and to coincide with the new draft framework for the Irish primary school curriculum discussed

previously, the following research aims to investigate and document children's perspectives on the use of technology when looking at and responding to visual art, specifically, the use of green screen technology.

The Use of Green Screen Technology when Looking at and Responding to Visual Arts

The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) has provided some links which incorporate ICT into the LAR strand unit of the visual arts curriculum (Professional Development Service for Teachers, n.d.). However, little guidance is given to teachers as to how to integrate meaningfully. However, the positive use of green screen technologies in the classroom has been illustrated in an educational video by Cormac Cahill of the PDST when he uses it as a methodology in integrated visual arts and literacy lesson (PDST, 2017). Cahill (2017) focuses on developing descriptive language in literacy by looking at and responding to works of art using green screen technology. Considering this along with the recommendations of the NCCA's curriculum review (2005), and the literature denoting the potential benefit of integrating ICT with visual arts, this research focuses specifically on the impact using green screen can have on pupils engagement with looking at and responding to visual arts.

When integrating green screen technology with the LAR strand unit, of the current 1999 curriculum, it is important to place equal emphasis on both the visual arts and the technological methodology (Burnaford, Brown, Doherty, & McLaughlin, 2007; May & Robinson, 2015). Within visual arts integration, the content of one subject should not dominate and surpass that of another (Irwin, Gouzouasis, Grauer, Leggo, & Springgay, 2006). Moreover, effective visual arts-integrated lessons utilise content from both subject areas in a practical, logistical manner (Burnaford, 1993) that highlight not only the disparities between subjects being taught but also the connections between them (Bohannon & McDowell, 2010).

Summary

There is an apparent gap in Irish educational research with a lack of specific studies investigating the use of digital technologies within the visual arts curriculum. Children are living in a technological age, absorbing digital media at an alarming rate, surrounded by screens disseminating transformative imagery and content, which shapes their perceptions of the world (NAEA, 2016). Looking at and responding to visual arts, as a strand unit, is of pivotal importance in today's modern society to equip children with the cognitive capacities and skills to decode and decipher this imagery presented to them in a critical, self-reflective manner (Burton, 2009). From the review of research and government publications, it appears that teachers are struggling to find meaningful ways to teach this strand unit, instead, focusing their attention solely on the strand unit of making art. Informed by the literature discussed in this chapter, this study explores children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology for looking at and responding to visual arts. The following chapter provides a detailed account of the exploratory, qualitative research undertaken to ascertain these perspectives.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this study which explores primary school children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology in looking at and responding to visual arts. As this study aims to ascertain the perceptions of school children, qualitative research is used, as it often yields rich interpretations by engaging participants in conversations occurring in natural environments (Creswell, 2009; Mason, 2002; Ponelis, 2015). This chapter not only discusses the applicability of qualitative research in the research approach taken, but also examines researcher positionality and the study's research questions and design, before going on to outline the sampling method taken to recruit participants and the research tools used. The pilot study is explained, and the data analysis approach is discussed. The chapter also considers issues regarding validity, reliability, and bias, before finally highlighting any potential limitations and ethical concerns associated with the study.

Research Approach

This study, which is qualitative in approach and exploratory in nature, is informed by a constructivist research paradigm. Although qualitative research does not strictly adhere to any specific paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), this research is based on the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed, which requires researchers to seek opinions of the people involved (Robson, 2011). The participants in this study took part in two activities, their perspectives on which were obtained and documented in line with social constructivism theories that state individuals play an active role in determining meaning from an activity (Lee, 2012). As the purpose of this study was to explore children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology when looking at and responding to visual arts, a qualitative approach informed by this constructivist paradigm was deemed most appropriate.

Qualitative research concentrates on investigating participant attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, and experiences in an attempt to gain comprehensive understandings on a variety of topics through methods such as interviews or focus groups (Churches & Dommett, 2016; Dawson, 2002). Stake (2010) suggests that qualitative research is applicable when the predominant objective of the research is to explain or explore a trend by analysing the perceptions of a person concerning their situational experiences. As qualitative research predominantly concerns itself with obtaining perceptions and opinions, using its data collection methods to help express the human feelings and emotions which quantitative data cannot, it is often exploratory (Dudovskiy, 2011). Again, considering the aim of this research, such an exploratory approach was applied.

Dudovskiy (2018) suggests that exploratory research anticipates the exploration of research questions, rather than the establishment of decisive, irrefutable solutions. It is research predominantly conducted to examine issues which have not been clearly defined or studied to date (Dudovskiy, 2018; Stebbins, 2001). Literature suggests that exploratory research usually serves as initial research which subsequently forms the basis of more definitive studies as it often tackles new problems on which little or no previous research has been done (Blumer, 1969; Brown, 2006; Dudovskiy, 2018; Singh, 2007). Due to the sparsity of literature relating to visual arts and ICT integration, especially regarding specific green screen technology and LAR, exploratory research is most suited to this study as it aids our understandings of this area which has not yet been examined (Blumer, 1969; Dudovskiy, 2018). However, as exploratory research often unearths new insights, I had to approach this study with an open mind and be willing to change focus as a result of such discoveries despite my positionality as a researcher (Blumer, 1969; Dudovskiy, 2018).

Researcher Positionality

Researcher positionality indicates the attitude of the researcher concerning certain contextual elements of the study. The position adopted, therefore, having a significant effect on every phase of the research process (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). As mentioned in the introductory chapter, I am an educator passionate about visual arts education and the potential benefits successful ICT integration may yield in the teaching of visual arts. In acknowledging my interest and positionality, every effort was made to reduce any resulting researcher bias throughout the study. Assuming the role of the observant researcher rather than educator within the activities, eliminated any potential influence I had on the children's interactions with the technology, allowing for more accurate observations and an uninfluenced experience for the children.

Research Questions

As previously stated, this study sought to explore primary school children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology when looking at and responding to visual art. The approach to this exploratory investigation was informed by the literature reviewed in chapter two, and the lack of literature relating to ICT and visual arts integration from a child's perspective. The study is, in a way, a response to the NCCAs primary curriculum review in which the teachers interviewed felt that the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit was not as useful as the making art strand unit (NCCA, 2005). A recommendation of the NCCA (2005) review, as discussed in the previous chapter, was to improve the teaching of the LAR strand unit when implementing the visual arts curriculum (NCCA, 2005). Considering this, this research aims to explore the views of children regarding this particular strand unit by asking:

1. What are the opinions of primary school children on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit?

The NCCA (2005) review also suggests a more efficient use and integration of ICT. Considering that “being a digital learner,” is one of the critical competencies underpinning the proposed curricular framework for Irish primary schools (NCCA, 2020a) along with the literature suggestive of the successful infusion of technology into the classroom (Wilks et al., 2012), the second question which guides this research is:

2. What are the opinions of primary school children on the use of green screen technology as a methodology when teaching looking at and responding to visual arts?

Research Design

Due to the flexibility required for exploratory inquiry, Blumer (1969) advises that “its guiding maxim is to use any ethically allowable procedure” (p. 41) that is suitable in obtaining a clearer understanding of the specific area of study. In order to explore the children’s perspectives and views on the use of green screen technology in looking at and responding to visual art, the study involved elements of experimental research design. Experimental research generally refers to a type of inquiry which uses both the manipulation of variables and controlled testing to gain a deeper understanding of a variety of events (Churches & Dommett, 2016). The exploratory investigation undertaken to learn about the children’s perceptions, in this case, involved the participants partaking in two activities which featured variable manipulation. However, due to its short duration and limited number of participants, there was no controlled pre or post testing to determine investigatory outcomes. The children’s engagement and perceptions were instead documented through observation and focus groups.

A total of 30 fifth and sixth class pupils were recruited as participants for this exploratory study, which involved three phases. Phase one involved the participants looking at and responding to visual arts without the use of green screen technology. Phase two introduced a change in the methodology used to look at and respond to visual arts by introducing green screen technology. During these two phases, observational notes were taken on children's participation and engagement. Finally, the children took part in a focus group where they shared their views, opinions, and perspectives on both activities, comparing both the traditional methodology used in phase one and the technical methodology used in phase two. The focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed.

As illustrated in figures two and three below, the three research phases for each set of participants were carried out within a week, with a day between each activity and the subsequent focus group. Literature states that a "washout period" as such is vital in reducing the impact of pedagogical effects from one methodology carrying over into the next condition (Churches & Dommett, 2016). For similar measures, this study not only changed the methodology used in both research activities, but the artistic content examined by participants differed in both activities, to avoid transferral of knowledge and skills from one to the other. However, a child's personal preference towards an artwork could equally enhance their engagement regardless of methodology, meaning the change of artwork could be a potential limitation. There were questions concerning this within the focus groups which provided counterbalance. Further details of the research activities can be found in Appendices A and B.

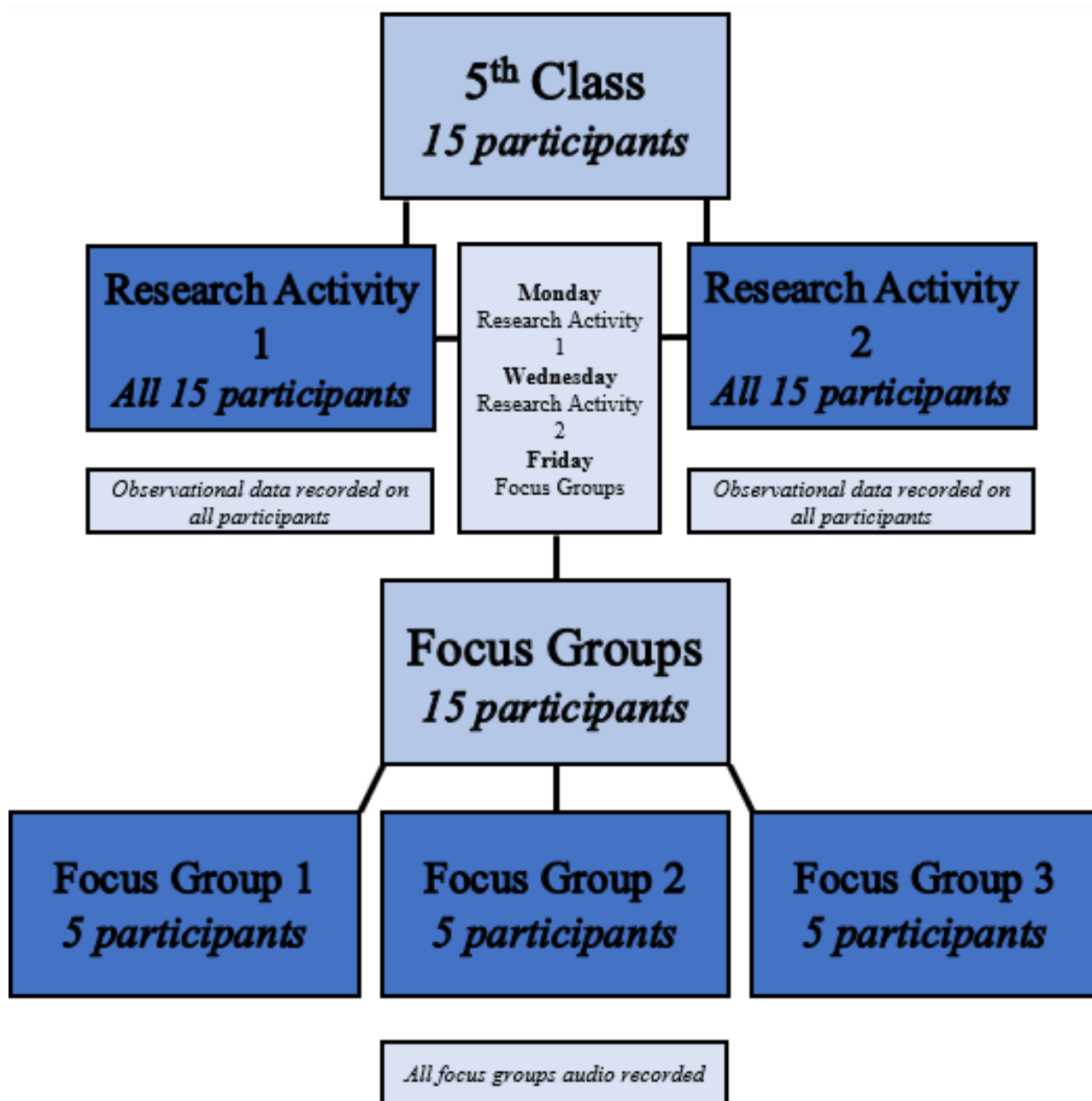


Figure 2. Participant organisation and research design. Fifteen participants from fifth class took part in the study. The whole group participated in both activities at the same time but were divided into groups of five for the following focus groups.

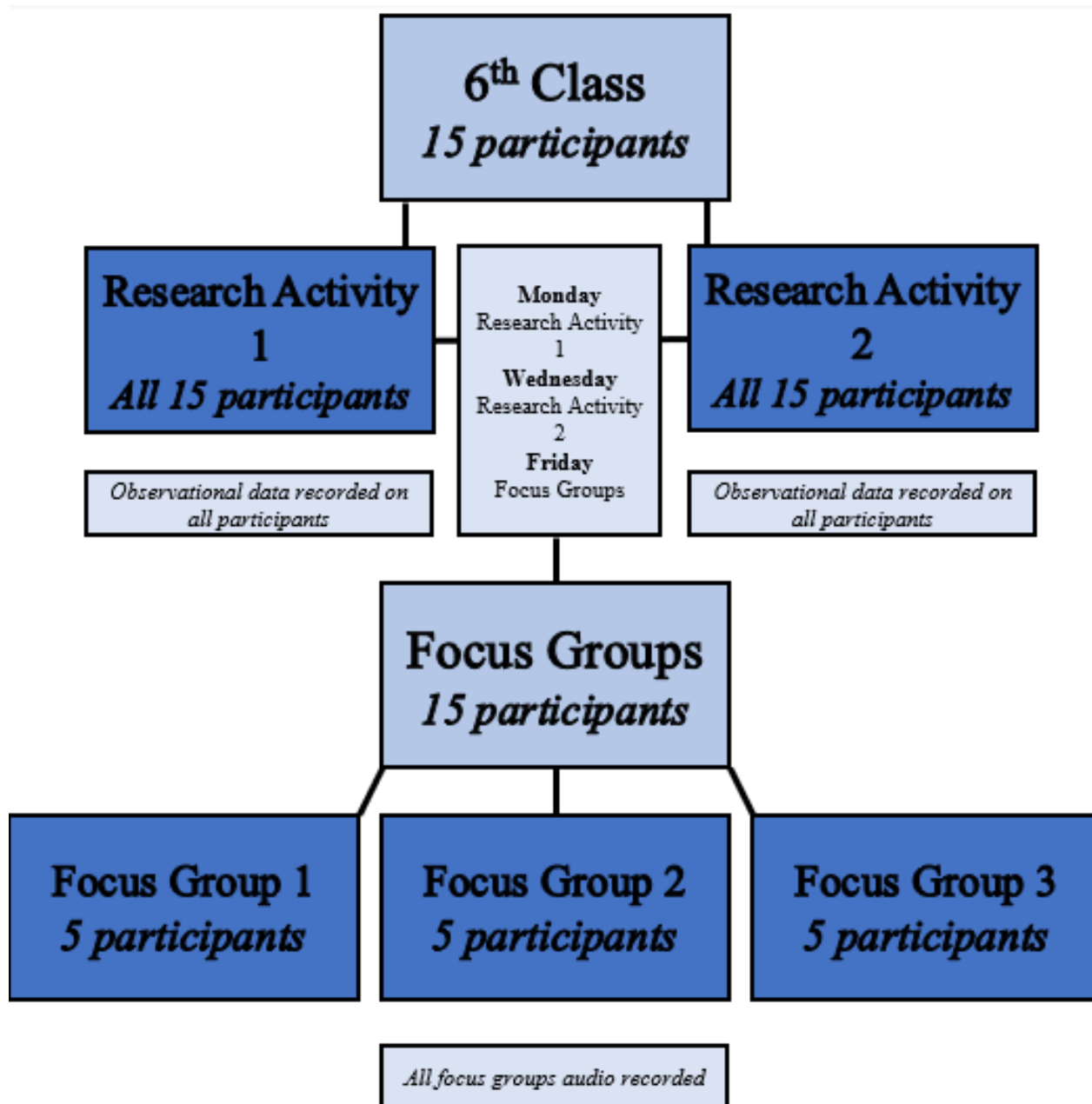


Figure 3. Participant organisation and research design. Fifteen participants from sixth class took part in the study. The whole group participated in both activities at the same time but were divided into groups of five for the following focus groups.

Sampling Approach

Due to the short timeframe for this project, its purpose being that of submission as part of a Masters programme, and the fact that I was working full time whilst carrying out this research, I found it necessary to use convenience sampling. Convenience sampling “involves choosing the nearest and most convenient persons to act as respondents,” (Robson, 2011, p. 275) and despite its limitations, it can be helpful when the researcher has reduced resources and time (Etikan, Abubakar, & Sunusi, 2016). Many of the limitations that derive from convenience sampling are due to its subjective nature and therefore possible bias (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Etikan et al., 2016; Robson, 2011). As the researcher, I was therefore aware “that the parameters of generalizability in this type of sample [were] negligible” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 114), and that the findings from this research would only serve as a representation of this specific group of participants.

Pupils from fourth, fifth, and sixth class in a school where I had a previously established relationship with the principal, were chosen for participant recruitment. A total number of 10 fourth class pupils were recruited for the pilot study, with 30 fifth and sixth class pupils assenting to participate in the main study. Fifth and sixth class children were chosen as participants because they would have had greater exposure to the LAR strand unit and ICT integration throughout their years of schooling. They would also be able to articulate their opinions and perspectives clearer than younger pupils.

Data Collection Method and Research Tools

The data collection tools used in this study included participant observation, collected in the form of checklists and field notes, followed by focus groups.

Participant observation. Participant observation refers to a research approach in which the researcher spends a prolonged period collecting data on research subjects, whilst actively participating with them in their everyday lives (Bogdan, 1973; Jorgensen, 2015). Literature states that, through participation, it is possible to observe and experience situations more meaningfully, resulting in the collation of a richer data set (Bogdan, 1973; Jorgensen, 2015; Robson, 2011). Due to the limited timeframe of this research, engagement in accurate participant observation was unfeasible. Additionally, to reduce the effect of participant and researcher bias, the observer-as-participant approach was taken (Robson, 2011). I took a passive approach and did not engage directly with the activity to support the children accepting my status as a researcher, rather than an active educator within the school context (Jorgensen, 2015; Robson, 2011). Adopting this stance also reduced any potential influence my positionality could incur if I were to engage with the children during the research activities. There is an element of flexibility within this use of participant observation in that it can explore research questions that arise from the investigation as well as preconceived theories (Jorgensen, 2015) which benefited the exploratory nature of this research.

Participant observation has excellent potential for listening to the voices of children (Warming, 2005), which was central to this research. Literature also suggests that participant observation may be employed to enhance the validity of studies, as observations often help the researcher develop a better understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Kawulich, 2005). Using additional data collection tools allows for triangulation of data which not only enhances validity but also provides more abundant data focusing on multiple perspectives. Observing the participants allowed me to analyse the nonverbal expression of feelings, such as gestures and facial expressions, and interpret physical interactions and communication between participants, their behaviours and intentions

(DeMunck & Sobo, 1998; Schmuck, 1997). The following tools were used within my participant observation.

Checklists. There has been an increase seen in the number of qualitative studies which include participant observation as a tool for data collection in the educational field within recent years (Kawulich, 2005). Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study” (p. 79). In the case of this research, I used an observation checklist for each child’s engagement with both research activities. The study of observations is said to “be superior to experiments and surveys when data are being collected on non-verbal behaviours” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 260). The use of checklists helped track each child’s initial engagements, reactions and non-verbal behaviours with the activities and the other participants. A copy of the checklist used can be found in Appendix C.

Field notes. To further support the observational checklists, I took field notes. According to Bogdan (1973) taking field notes throughout observations is an excellent way to concentrate on the activity and helps commit specific details to memory regarding what is seen and heard, such as gestures and expressions used by the participants. My field notes concerned the role, influence and relationship between each participant and myself as a researcher. However, they focused more on preliminary analysis and hypotheses formation, providing information that could be member checked with the participants during the subsequent focus groups (Dawson, 2002), and in enhancing the overall quality of data collection (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

Focus groups. Until recent years, the value of including children in qualitative studies using interviews or focus groups, and the rich understanding that may be provided by such

approaches, were relatively unrecognised (Gibson, 2012; Holmes, 1998; Kortessluoma, Hentinen, & Nikkonen, 2003). Children's engagement in interviews and focus groups allows researchers to gain an understanding of children's perspectives on matters which directly affect them (Gibson, 2012). Many researchers have realised that children's perceptions of events may vary from that of an adult, and consequently should be elicited from children themselves (Balen et al., 2006; Gibson, 2012). Considering children as capable citizens with their own opinions and ideas (Balen et al., 2006; Danby & Farrell, 2004), the main instrument of data collection for this research study were focus groups.

Organisation. Based on the relevant literature surrounding children's focus groups, the group of research participants were divided up into separate groups consisting of no more than six children per group, and no less than four in order to stimulate a lively, yet manageable discussion (Gibson, 2007; Hennessy & Heary, 2005; Kennedy, Kools, & Krueger, 2001; Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell, & Britten, 2002; Mulcahey, 2002). With 30 research participants, 15 from fifth class and 15 from sixth class, the participants were quickly divided into groups of five, equating to a total of six focus groups in this study. As the research participants were recruited from two separate classes, the focus groups reflected this and were organised according to age and class level. Age is reported as being a crucial factor in generating a positive group dynamic for fruitful discussion (Gibson, 2007; Kennedy et al., 2001) and so, the children were grouped with their class peers.

Environment. When conducting focus groups with the children, it was essential to consider specific factors in order for them to feel comfortable enough to express the views and opinions needed to reflect on the research activity. From a methodological standpoint, it was important to help the children understand the purpose and process of the focus group in order to reduce the disparity of power between the children and myself as a researcher, therefore,

increasing the probability of the children's commitment to the focus group and honesty when answering questions (Conroy & Harcourt, 2009; Gibson, 2012).

As new environments can provoke anxiety within children of this age (Gibson, 2007; Kennedy et al., 2001), the focus groups were held in a general-purpose room within the school where the research was being undertaken to provide a secure and comfortable setting for the children. Participatory guidelines for focus groups were outlined to the children before they began, to pre-empt the possibility of associated school behaviours such as raising their hands for permission to speak (Green & Hart, 1999), which may have occurred with such familiarity. This measure also helped further reduce power differentials between myself and the participants (Gibson, 2012).

As well as providing an environment that was familiar to the children, the research environment was conducive to discussion. As guided by the literature, the research environment was arranged to stimulate an open dialogue and informal conversation by the inclusion of small chairs and round tables where the children were grouped closely around me as I moderated the focus groups (Hoppe, Wells, Morrison, Gillmore, & Wilsdon, 1995). A relaxed environment was purposefully created for the children, as guided by the literature, and the children were given the opportunity to relate to one another naturally, expressing their views and opinions openly without feeling like they were participating in another lesson within a classroom setting (Hoppe et al., 1995).

Time. Gibson (2007) suggests that younger children can focus on an activity for about 45 minutes to one hour, whereas older children will maintain focus for about 90 minutes. The majority of research suggests, however, that one hour or less, depending on the attention span of participants should be the maximum length for children's focus groups (Hoppe et al., 1995). To further support this, Morgan et al., (2002) state that the quality of responses in sessions

lasting more than 45 minutes begins to deteriorate and advise including a refreshment break after 20 minutes to provide the optimum experience for children between the ages of 7 and 11. Considering the literature, and the age of participants, the focus groups for this research lasted no more than 45 minutes with a break for refreshments after 15 minutes, with most focus groups finishing after approximately 30 minutes.

Questions. Literature indicates that when conducting focus groups with children, it is beneficial to have a pre-determined list of questions that guide discussion but simultaneously allow participants to offer contributions that they feel are important to them (Gibson, 2007). Rather than sticking rigidly to the series of questions, I adapted my questions based on the responses given to me by the children, as supported by the literature (Gibson, 2007). How the questions were presented to the children was also considered. Phrases which opened the questions up to the whole groups such as “what does everyone else think?” “Does anyone think something different?” were used rather than directing each question at a specific child (Gibson, 2007; Kennedy et al., 2001). The pre-composed list of questions used to carry out the focus groups for this study can be found in Appendix D.

Pilot

A pilot study, which was conducted with a 4th class group within the same school, is a small scale version of the intended research which tests specific data collection tools, instruments and overall research design (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Pilot studies are critical in enhancing the possibility for success in the main study as they provide valuable insights on areas of possible failure within the research methods and instruments (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The pilot study for this research followed the same organisation and design as the actual study, which is illustrated in figure four below. No amendments were required to be made to the research design as they were found to be appropriate for the study.

Changes to the research activities and data collection tools were made, however, to make data collection more manageable. Tables one and two show a summary of changes made after carrying out the pilot study.

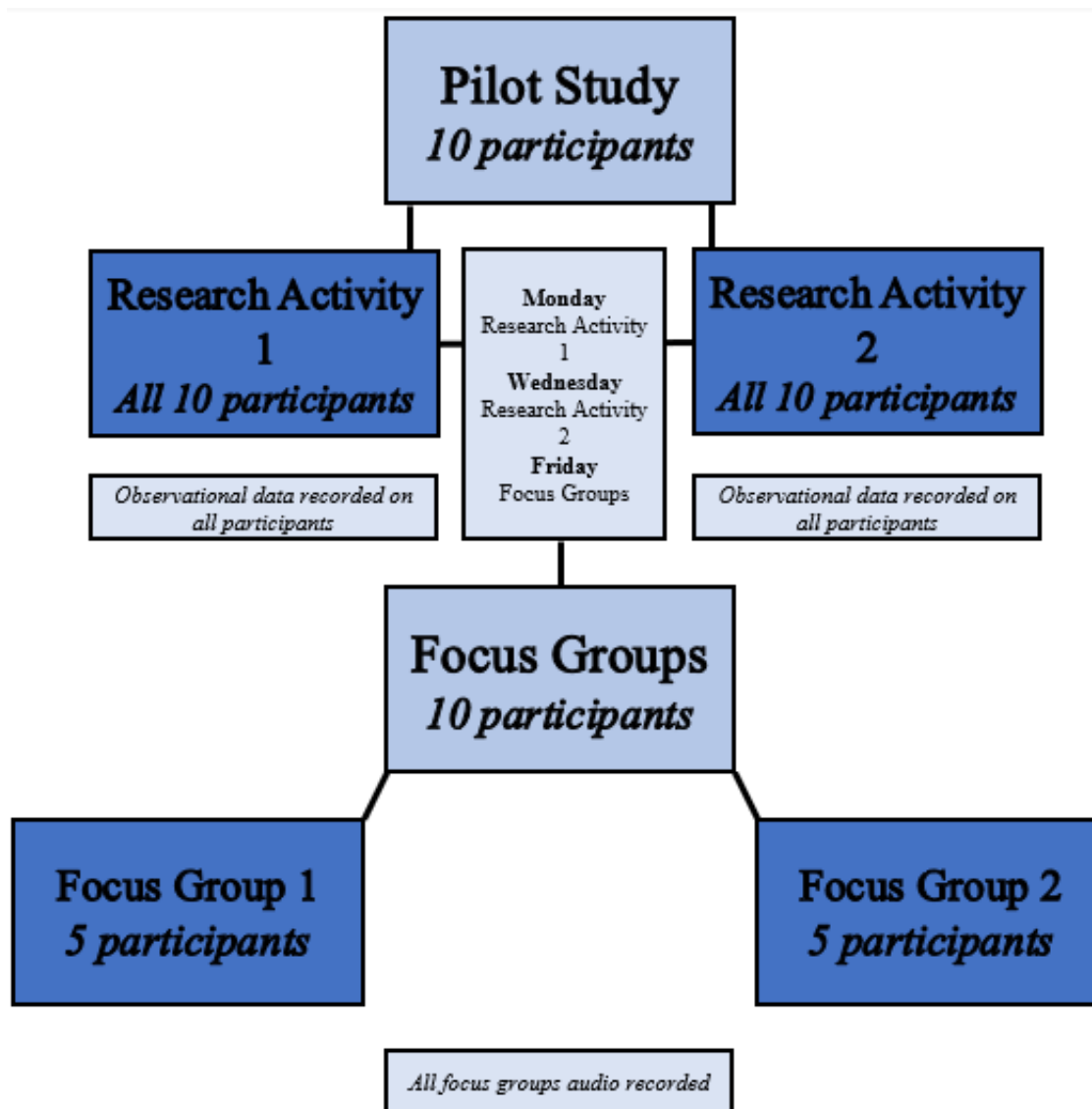


Figure 4. Pilot organisation and research design. The pilot study took place with a 4th class group of the same school, following the same research design and layout as the main study.

Table 1*Summary of changes regarding research activities*

Activity	Pilot study	Main study	Reasons for change
Research activity 1	Children discussed a famous artwork, which was printed out and laminated on A3 paper, in small groups of four or five, around a circular table. I interjected with a list of pre devised questions to prompt and aid their discussions.	Children discussed a famous artwork, which was printed out and laminated on A3 paper, in small groups of four or five, around a circular table. Children were given a laminated list of pre devised questions to prompt their discussions.	I wanted to reinforce my role as the researcher for the children, and not that of the teacher asking questions. More natural responses were generated from the children when they had ownership of the questions which guided their discussions.
Research activity 2	Children were divided into three groups to participate in this activity: 1. Directors – looked at the art through the iPad and directed the actors. 2. Actors – stood in front of the green screen, observed themselves engaging with the art on the projected screen. 3. Audience – looked at the art with the actors in front of it and answered a series of pre devised questions asked by the directors.	Children were divided into three groups to participate in this activity: 1. Directors – looked at the art through the iPad and directed the actors. 2. Actors – stood in front of the green screen, observed themselves engaging with the art on the projected screen. 3. Audience – looked at the art with the actors in front of it and answered a series of pre devised questions asked by the directors.	The activity stayed the same, but the venue was changed from the school gym to a classroom. The reason being, there was too much light coming in through the windows of the gym which made viewing the projected artwork difficult for the audience and the actors.

Table 2*Summary of changes regarding data collection tools*

Data collection tool	Pilot study	Main study	Reason for change
Participant observation	I followed a checklist for each child in relation to their engagement and participation in both research activities.	I followed a checklist for each child in relation to their engagement and participation in both research activities I also took field notes on the child's participation in both activities.	The checklist was at times difficult to follow and anecdotal field notes provided richer descriptions on the children's engagement and interaction.
Focus groups	Children answered a series of pre devised questions by the researcher.	I changed the order of pre devised questions and added in some new ones.	During the pilot study the sequencing of some questions was incoherent, and some gaps appeared in relation to what could have been asked to gain more insight.

Data Analysis

Literature suggests that regarding qualitative data analysis, the varying guidelines are not a set of specific rules to be followed, but instead can be applied in a flexible approach to fit the research questions being answered and data sets being analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis presents an adaptable and useful way to identify, analyse, and report themes within qualitative data, by organising and describing the data set in vivid detail. Thematic analysis is a universal approach not associated with any particular theoretical perspective (Robson, 2011). As it has no theoretical barriers, it is very flexible and an appropriate method to identify, analyse, and report themes found within this exploratory research study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It also proved a suitable data analysis technique for this study in the submittal as part of a Masters programme as “it is

a relatively easy and quick method to learn and use” and “is accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research” (Robson, 2011, p. 477).

Thematic analysis itself revolves around capturing important data concerning the research questions and analysing similar response patterns between data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). One feature of thematic coding analysis that is often considered a disadvantage is that it is often restricted to a description or exploration of data rather than a finite interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Robson, 2011). However, for this exploratory research, where the establishment of a final, irrefutable solution is not anticipated (Dudovskiy, 2018), this can be seen as a positive feature of the thematic analysis process. The data collected from the observation notes and focus groups in this study were analysed following Braun and Clarke’s six phases of thematic analysis (2006). The application of these phases to this study specifically, are illustrated in table three on the next page, followed by figure five which demonstrates a selection of codes within a thematic network generated in phase three of the process.

Table 3*Application of Braun and Clarke's six phases of thematic analysis (2006)*

Phase	Application
Phase 1: familiarising yourself with your data	I familiarised myself with my data set through the time-consuming process of self-transcription of audio recordings, note-taking during the repeated listening of recordings, and the repeated reading of scripts which followed.
Phase 2: generating initial codes	Codes are the most basic unit of meaning derived from raw data (Boyatzis, 1998; Robson, 2011). After transcribing the data, I analysed each sentence as a unit of meaning and applied codes manually by writing notes on the transcription to summarise my understanding of it.
Phase 3: searching for themes	I then organised these codes into meaningful categories, from which potential themes emerged. I considered how the different codes could combine to form an overarching theme and used visual representation, as suggested by Braun and Clarke, to sort the different codes into themes. A sample of a thematic network can be seen in the figure which follows.
Phase 4: reviewing themes	Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest reviewing these initial themes in phase four of the analysis process as it will become apparent that some themes may not have enough data to support them, other themes might combine to form one, and some may need to be broken down further into separate themes. Upon review of my initial themes, some were interrelated and subsequently collated to form one theme
Phase 5: defining and naming themes	When I generated satisfactory thematic maps, I refined my themes further and identified "the essence" of each theme and how it captured my data set.
Phase 6: producing the report	After the themes were named and defined in phase five of the thematic analysis, the report which follows was produced.

Note: Adapted from Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.

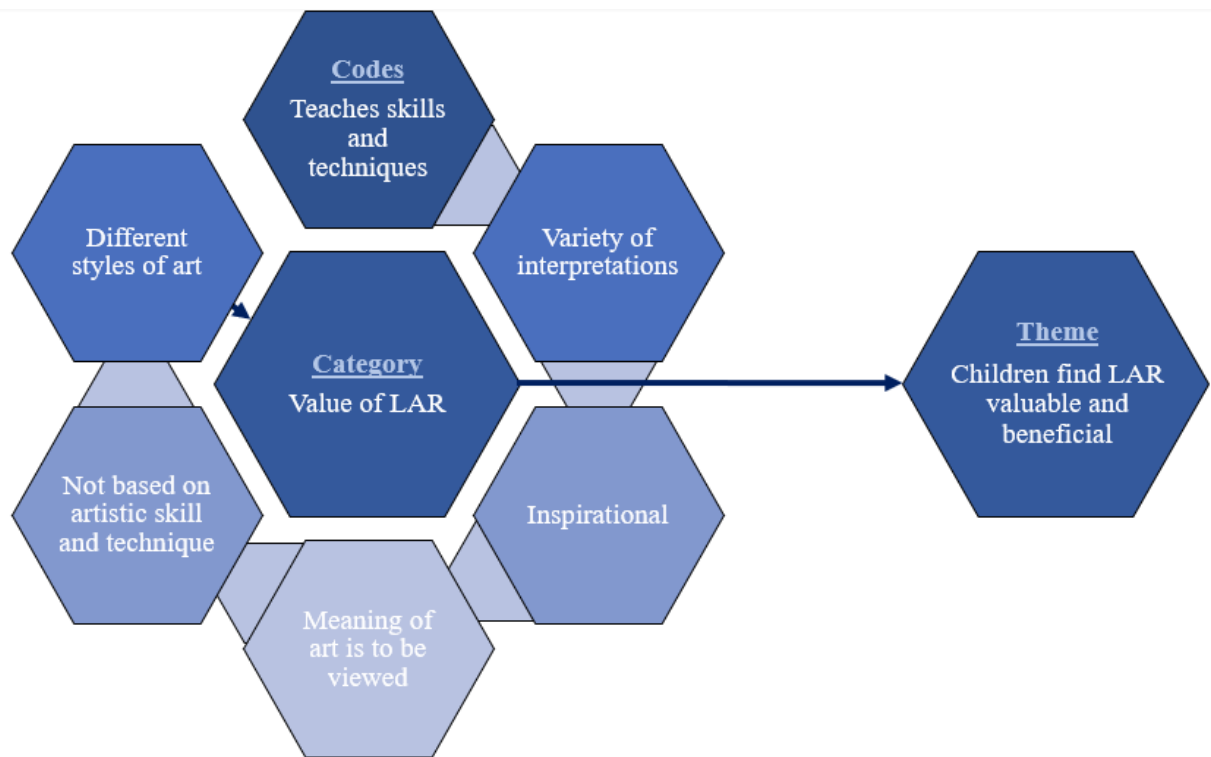


Figure 5. Section of a thematic map. The codes in the external hexagons were all assigned as units of meaning at sentence level on the focus group transcriptions. Similar codes were grouped, and a category was developed from which a subsequent theme emerged.

Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the accuracy of the data presented and whether the findings established are a true reflection of the study, or an effect of something else (Robson, 2011). Reliability implies the consistency with which we measure, collect, and analyse data (Cohen et al., 2007; Robson, 2011). As mentioned previously, my positionality as an educator passionate about visual arts and ICT integration could negatively impact upon the validity and reliability of the data presented in the next chapter, as analysis of qualitative data in general is dependent on the way researchers gather and interpret it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Being aware of this potential researcher bias and being open to all possible outcomes from this study was essential

in ensuring valid results. Furthermore, choosing an appropriate time scale, ensuring that there were adequate resources available, selecting an appropriate methodology, and triangulating my data collection methods to include participant observation and focus groups, all supported the validity of this study (Cohen et al., 2007; Dawson, 2002; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Kawulich, 2005). Triangulating my methods of data collection in this way helped counteract potential threats to validity (Robson, 2011). In my analysis of the data, which is presented in the next chapter, I avoided using selective data (Cohen et al., 2007) by presenting both the majority and minority opinions on the use of green screen within the LAR strand unit, to provide an accurate reflection of all participant's perspectives.

To enhance the reliability of this study, it was important the same research structure, as illustrated in figures two and three in this chapter, was used across both data collection groups. Both sets of participants from fifth and sixth class took part in the same research activities, over the same time frame, with data collected using the same instruments. Reliability was further enhanced by the inclusion of a one day "washout period" between activities to reduce the impact of pedagogical effects being transferred from one methodology onto the next (Churches & Dommett, 2016).

Researcher and Participant Bias

Issues of bias and rigour are present in many qualitative studies, often impacting on the validity and reliability of a piece of research (Robson, 2011). As previously highlighted, cognisant of the potential bias my positionality brought to this research, several strategies were used in the collection of data to deal with this threat, such as assuming the role of passive observer and triangulating my data collection tools as discussed previously. In some instances, I also member checked observations made on participatory engagement with some pupils to ensure my analysis was an accurate reflection of their involvement. Member

checking is noted in the literature as being an effective way to guard against researcher bias (Robson, 2011).

Participant bias can also be problematic to the validity of data captured in qualitative research, especially within an educational context (Robson, 2011) as it has the potential to undermine children's rights to decide about their participation independently (Skánfors, 2009). The possibility that the children would view this research as a compulsory art lesson, or that they were taking part simply to please their teachers (David, Edwards, & Alldred, 2001), was something I worked extremely hard on to counteract in recruiting the participants. Appendices E and F show both the PowerPoint presentation and information leaflet I designed to recruit the children as participants of this study. A strong emphasis was placed on informing the children of their participatory rights within research in a manner which was engaging and age appropriate. My role as researcher, their right to withdraw consent and the fact that they would be participating in research activities, not curricular lessons were also stressed. These documents were created to reduce potential participant bias created from natural pre-existing power dynamics between adults and children within educational contexts (Gibson, 2012). It was hoped that informing the children using these materials would enable them to decide upon their participation independently without bias.

Research Limitations

Despite the efforts made to reduce participant bias through the formation of engaging, age-appropriate information and assuming the role of researcher throughout to alleviate power dynamics, participant bias remains a limitation to this qualitative study. The possibility that some children's contributions were shaped and presented to impress their peers or me is important to note. Similarly, the quieter participants within the focus groups tended to agree

with more outspoken, confident children, which may be the reason for the overwhelming majority found within some of the themes presented in the next chapter.

As it stands, however, one of the significant limitations to this study was its necessary use of convenience sampling. The small scale of this study, which was bound by age group and class level has resulted in findings which cannot be generalized to incorporate a wider society (Cohen et al., 2007). Although necessary to use convenience sampling due to reasons discussed above, if this study had been conducted on a larger scale with more participants of different age groups, from different socio-economic backgrounds, selected using a randomised approach, and conducted over a more extended period, different responses might have been elicited. This would potentially provide different perspectives on the use of green screen technology when looking at and responding to visual arts. As this was an exploratory study, it is hoped that further studies, as recommended in the concluding chapter would work to offset these limitations.

As referenced in the literature, educators find it extremely challenging to create quality learning experiences using ICT within their classrooms (Wilks et al., 2012). Although technically proficient, it would be conceited to think that this activity might not have been arranged and explained more competently by another educator. Furthermore, as I engaged in passive observation (Robson, 2011), rather than engaging with them and teaching them throughout, the participants may not have benefitted fully from the activity as a learning experience. Although these measures were taken to reduce researcher bias derived from my positionality, if this were an adult-led lesson as opposed to a child-led research activity, the integration of the technology may have been more meaningful. This, in turn, may have affected the children's perspectives of learning through green screen.

Ethical Issues

The foundation for all research is the researcher's ethical responsibility and the assurance that the research is ethically acceptable regarding both the research process and the protection of the participants (Skánfors, 2009). This research sought to gain the perspectives of children. It was of pivotal importance that they were aware of their participatory rights within the research activities and focus groups, and the knowledge that they could withdraw their consent at any given time (Danby & Farrell, 2004; Gibson, 2012; Kortessluoma, Hentinen, & Nikkonen, 2003). All potential research participants were informed about the details of the research, their role as research participants, and their right to withdraw from the research. This information was conveyed using a carefully considered presentation, and an information leaflet on the research, discussed above and found in Appendices E and F. An information letter on the research was also sent to guardians of potential research participants. Consent forms for both children and their guardians were distributed. These documents are included as Appendices G and H.

In the context of educational research, there are some extra considerations regarding consent that are essential to clarify with the children who are participating in the research (David et al., 2001). It has been noted that children may deem school research to be educational schoolwork, a usually compulsory activity, and may feel obligated to take part (David et al., 2001; Morrow & Richards, 1996). As the researcher, I was cognisant of the impact the educational context might have on the participants of this study. I equivoiced this through the provision of the carefully considered research information which aimed to ensure that each child was aware of the difference between the research activity and an educational lesson.

Other ethical concerns which were taken into consideration were ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for the participants during observations and focus groups. I transcribed all focus groups myself, using pseudonyms in place of the children's name to ensure this. The audio recordings and transcripts were stored in an online password-protected drive, whereas the written notes were kept in a locked filing cabinet. Full ethical approval was granted on the 15th November 2019 by Marino Institute of Education ethics board. Board of management approval was given on the 18th of January 2020, which is included, along with my letter seeking Board of Management approval as Appendices I and J.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research methodology, which was used to explore primary school children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology in looking at and responding to visual arts. This chapter discussed the applicability of qualitative research in the research approach taken, examined researcher positionality, the study's research questions and design, before outlining the sampling method taken to recruit participants and the research tools used. The pilot study was explained, and the data analysis approach was discussed. The chapter also considered issues regarding validity, reliability, and bias, before finally highlighting potential limitations and ethical concerns associated with the study. The findings of this study will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Discussion and Analysis

Thematic analysis of the data gathered resulted in the findings that are presented and discussed below. Many themes emerged from the analysis of observation notes and focus groups. This chapter is broken up into three main sections to discuss these themes; the opening section presents the findings concerning the first key research question underpinning the study: What are the opinions of primary school children on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit? The following section outlines the findings concerning the second key research question: What are the opinions of primary school children on the use of green screen technology as a methodology when teaching looking at and responding to visual arts? The final section presents other relevant findings which were unearthed during data analysis.

Findings Relevant to Research Question One

As highlighted in chapter two, educational research from the perspectives of children, particularly within visual arts education, is relatively limited. The literature states that visual arts education has the potential to portray the world through a variety of discrepant viewpoints and perspectives (Greene, 2007; Hunter, 2012), the following findings, although triangulated with my observations, are from the perspectives of the research participants. Conducting research which listens to the attitudes and perspectives of children is integral to appreciating the importance of their views on areas which have a direct effect on them and their education (Einarsdottir et al., 2009; Mulcahey, 2002; Roberts, 2017), an integral component of this study.

Although the NCCA (2005) review suggested a renewed focus on looking at and responding to visual arts, as discussed in chapter two, there is little to no literature which concentrates on the strand unit in Irish primary schools (Flannery, 2010), especially from the perspective of the child. The following are the main themes identified in light of the first

research question which aims to ascertain children's perspectives on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit: What are the opinions of primary school children on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit?

- Most of the children were inexperienced when it came to looking at and responding to visual arts.
- All children enjoyed looking at and responding to visual arts and most found it beneficial
- All children reported that there should be a balanced approach in the curriculum to looking at and responding to art.
- The majority of children reported that the looking and responding to activities did not feel like art lessons.

The following figure presents a summary of findings concerning these themes, which are then discussed further in this chapter.

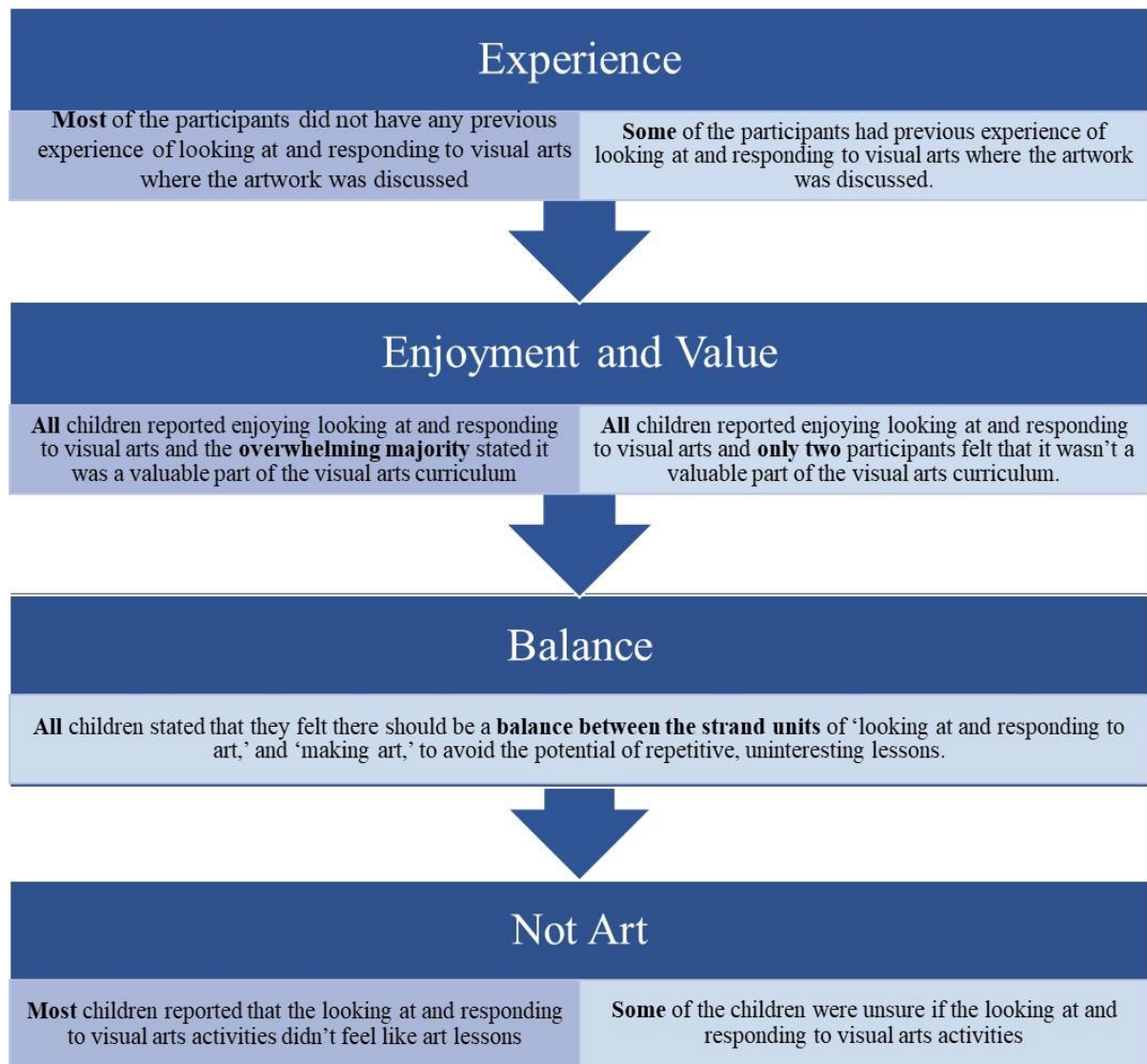


Figure 6. Summary of findings in relation to research question one: What are the opinions of primary school children on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit?

Experience. Upon analysis of observations, the children engaged excellently with both research activities which focused on looking at and responding to visual arts. From the analysis of checklists used, the majority of children offered their initial impressions about the artwork, asked questions of each other which led to further inquiry, contributed to the group discussion, and offered their perspectives and interpretations of the artwork. Overall, the participants came across as very adept at the looking at and responding to visual arts tasks.

The children needed little input from me as a researcher and held considered and thought-provoking conversations about the artworks in question. However, upon carrying out focus groups with the children to ascertain their perspectives, it became apparent that this group of 30 children had little to no experience of the LAR strand unit. This finding supports the conclusions of NCCAs (2005) primary curriculum review where it was found that teachers prioritised the strand unit making art, over looking at and responding to art.

Integrated Learning Experience. The participants in five of the six focus groups (FG) unanimously concluded that they had little experience in looking at and responding to visual arts in a manner akin to that carried out in either research activity. However, participants of FG2 reported having a relatively similar experience to the first research activity when they discussed Van Gogh's "Sunflowers," as part of an integrated lesson with their class teacher. The children recalled examining the painting, answering questions, and discussing the different brushstrokes and painting techniques used as a whole class. One child noted that this would not be a usual occurrence and felt they only did it as part of their literacy work stating that "it was like part of an English plan or something" (Sarah, FG2). Teaching looking at and responding to visual arts in this integrated manner to support the development of literacy skills has been noted in the literature discussed previously (Eisner, 1972; Greene, 1995; Housen, 2007; Pavlou, 2015). Such a learning experience, and the inherent link to literary skill development within LAR, may serve as a reason for the participants proficient engagement with the activities I initially observed.

Other experiences. Highlighted in the 1999 curricular documents is the importance of the balance between artistic creation in the form of making art, and deriving meaning and understanding from looking at art (Government of Ireland, 1999a). As Eckhoff (2008) suggests, this overwhelming focus on art formation has resulted in children having less of an

opportunity to view and reflect upon art critically. The participants of this study supported this view as they reported that the majority of their art lessons concentrate on making art and that “in school, it’s more doing art than seeing art,” (Cassie, FG4). Some children from focus groups one, five, and six did, however, highlight some of the opportunities they had had to look at art indirectly in schools, outside of their art lessons. Rob and Patrick from FG1 suggested that they look at and respond independently to their art. Rob went on further to say that “technically we are looking at art, but it’s our own art. It’s obviously not as good as other art, but we’re still looking at art” (FG1). Louise and Seán, from two separate focus groups, recall a gallery visit they went on as part of a school tour a few years previous:

Like when we went to the art gallery a couple of years ago... and we got to see really cool paintings and some statues as well... I liked looking at the colours they used and wondering what the artists were thinking about when they were doing the art (Louise, FG6).

Well one time, I remember we went on a tour to an art museum, and we got to look at art with the school, and that’s what kind of got me interested in art and why I like art now. It’s just really creative, and I like looking at the different way’s artists show their creativity (Seán, FG5).

John commented on how he loved seeing his artwork, and the work of other classes displayed in the school corridors and how he would discuss them with his friends: “when there’s art up along the hallway, like the butterflies. Seeing that on the wall, knowing the amount of time it took us to paint them, talking about it with the guys...” (FG1). As discussed in the literature review, best practice for the teaching of the LAR strand unit of the curriculum is purposeful planning of discussion activities which revolve around works of art

(Wilson & Clark, 2000). Except for once-off gallery excursions and integrated learning activities, the analysis of the focus groups did not yield any evidence of purposeful planning of the LAR strand unit on behalf of the teachers of this specific group of children.

Replicating art. A common practice which did emerge from all focus groups in relation to their experiences with the LAR strand unit was the idea of looking at an artwork to reproduce it. Famous works of art appeared to serve as the initial impetus for content creation within the classrooms of the participants. Children commented that they look at works of art to inspire them to draw or paint a replica of the piece itself, but that these classroom activities involved no depth of discussion about the artwork, its techniques, content, or themes:

Well, we do sometimes when they're famous paintings, but if other times and they're not and they're just nice we'd just say, 'oh that's a nice picture.' We might not necessarily really talk about it, the theme, or the techniques used by the artist (Aisling, FG3).

Well because we always are expected to do the same piece of art, really just copying a piece put up on the board, you don't discuss it, or talk about it, or interpret it yourself. (Jane, FG5).

No, we haven't really looked at or discussed art, other than the times we've had to look at something to copy it. We would have never discussed it (Zara, FG4).

Obstacles. The children reported that their lack of specific experience in looking at and responding to the work of artists was due to the overriding focus on making art in primary schools, as highlighted previously in the NCCA review (2005) and by the literature (Eckhoff, 2008). One child suggested that if you wanted specific LAR experience, you would have to

“go to an art club or something” (Zara, FG4). Participants of FG4 suggested that “in this day and age, less people do art, so teachers focus more on maths and English” (Greg, FG4), and that “schools focus on the subjects that will help get children a career” (Mark, FG4). This view of developing interdisciplinary skills that will help children navigate life successfully is also evident in relevant literature which links excellent visual arts teaching to the development of skills transferrable to other domains (Sandell, 2009; Winner et al., 2013; Winner et al., 2006).

Some children equated their lack of experience within the strand unit LAR with the lack of time available to their teachers. When asked why they thought they did not have much experience discussing artworks, Edith (FG6) replied “We don’t really have the time to do it,” further followed by Louise (FG6) who frustratedly stated, “because if we did that, then we’d have to like talk about the artist himself or herself, and why they did the art, and then we’d do the art, and then it’s just the time it takes!” The literature reviewed supports these perspectives by highlighting the limited time available for engagement in individual and group reflection and evaluation on art due to the heavy demands of the curriculum (Campbell & Gallagher, 2002; Wilks et al., 2012). One child also stated that lack of teacher knowledge concerning art, and the desire teachers have to replicate aesthetically pleasing products sourced on the internet, rather than teach specific content and skills, plays a factor in the participants’ inexperience within LAR: “I think it’s because most teachers don’t know that much about art... plus, they just find something on the internet that they think is cool, and they just want you to make that” (Lisa, FG6).

As previously stated in the literature review, providing children with opportunities to look at artworks with openness and appreciation aids the development of their critical faculties, encouraging them to become more discriminating and critically aware (Government

of Ireland, 1999b). Despite the recommendation of a renewed focus on LAR (NCCA, 2005), it is clear to see from the attitudes of this group of children, that the balance between creative expression and critical response, recommended by the literature (Sandell, 2009), is still somewhat skewed, and that the majority of them are inexperienced in the strand unit because of this.

Enjoyment and value. All the children reported enjoying looking at and responding to visual arts, with only two participants stating that it was not a beneficial part of the curriculum. From the analysis of checklists and field notes, it appeared as though the majority of children enjoyed in both research activities. An overwhelming majority presented as enthusiastic, excited, interested and on task. They worked collaboratively and engaged with the resources respectfully. These observations were shown as accurate when the children all unanimously stated that they enjoyed both research activities whilst taking part in the focus groups. The children specified that looking and responding to art was not only fun but also provided a helpful way to express and channel emotions. They stated that it was a creative use of time and offered inspiration for artistic creation. The children reported that it allowed them to view things from different perspectives, and to share their interpretations as well as being an exciting activity, which was not difficult. The children explained that looking at and responding to visual arts serves as an opportunity to see different styles of art and enables them to reflect not only on the artist's thoughts and feelings but also upon their own (FG1 – FG6). It is important to note, however, that although the activities were deemed enjoyable and easy, one child highlighted that she sometimes found LAR a challenging task, as she said artwork could be difficult to understand:

Well I like it, but sometimes when we go somewhere, and there's just these things, and everyone's like "Oh that's really good." and I'm like "I don't really know what that is."

So, some art you can't figure out, but adults think you should know, and they ask you about it (Sarah, FG2).

Different perspectives. This uncertainty when viewing art was echoed by other participants in the focus groups. However, the opportunity to view art from different perspectives in this way was reported as an enjoyable experience as it helped to develop their interpretations. The opportunity for the children to share their opinions on the work of art, hear the varying interpretations of others, and have their contributions appreciated was important to these children:

I like looking at art because there are so many meanings behind art, and you can never really be too wrong with your own interpretation, so it takes away the fear that some children have about being wrong about things. With art, everyone could see different things, and it would still be ok (Beth, FG5).

It's kind of like a movie, with like the director - you don't know what they're saying or what they said when they were directing the movie, but you can guess and think 'well that's what he meant to say,' when you look at the movie (Greg, FG4).

I like the way there's like, the painters, and they like - you might think it's about something, but they might think it's about something else, so there could be a million different ways to interpret it...(Edith, FG6).

Similarly, one child suggested looking at and responding to art is "like a puzzle because if you don't know what it means you have to figure it out," (Aoife, FG4). As well as providing the scope for different interpretations, the participants reported valuing not having to be a technically skilled artist to be good at, or to enjoy LAR activities, and that there was no

right or wrong answers: “You kind of, didn’t have to be good at art or drawing or anything to enjoy it” (Henry, FG3). The children enjoyed viewing art from a variety of perspectives, supporting literature suggestive of visual arts providing opportunities to view the world through other lenses, subsequently developing an appreciation of discrepant viewpoints (Greene, 2007; Hunter, 2012; NAEA, 2016).

Importance. An overwhelming majority, only two participants saying the contrary, reported feeling that LAR was an important feature of the Irish primary school curriculum as it was educational, inspirational, and creative (FG1 – FG6). One child specifically noted that the meaning of art is for it to be perceived and viewed by an audience of people, and therefore LAR should feature as an aspect of the visual arts curriculum:

Yeah, I think it is important because it’s kind of like the whole meaning of art - to look at it, think about it, and see how pretty it is and stuff, so if we look at art, we can get ideas (Fiona, FG2).

Relevant literature previously discussed also noted the value of looking at and responding to visual arts in allowing pupils to perceive, interpret and judge visual imagery and content (Burton, 2009; Sandell, 2009) in the ways highlighted by the children in five of the six focus groups in this study. However, two participants of the sixth focus group had a somewhat discrepant view, considering LAR an essential strand unit only if you wanted to be an artist. However, otherwise, it was not an essential curricular component:

Researcher: Do you think looking at and responding to art is an important part of the visual art curriculum?

Mark: If you want to be an artist, yeah.

Researcher: And if you don’t want to be an artist?

Cassie: A tiny bit, but like making art in school is more fun, but if you want to be an artist then I guess you'd need it in the curriculum... In primary school, you're not an artist, so actually doing and making art is more fun. You don't really need to know about the art. You can learn that independently yourself if you're interested (FG4).

Literature and educational documentation have suggested that children should be allowed to reflect on their initial judgement of artwork, taking time to consider the skills and techniques used by the artist, before making a final decision on what it means to them (Burton, 2009; Government of Ireland, 1999b; Sandell, 2009). From the analysis of the focus groups, it is evident that this specific group of children appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to share their interpretations and to hear the perspectives of their peers, an opportunity advocated by the literature.

Balanced approach. The NCCA review (2005) reports that children enjoy taking part in visual arts lessons. All children involved in this study reported that they too enjoy visual arts for several reasons, predominantly because it provides them with an artistic outlet for creative expression and a means by which to convey their emotions. They enjoy learning artistic techniques and the sense of satisfaction they feel after they have made something using their newly acquired skills. Whilst they enjoy making art, all participants of this study reported that there should be more of a balance between the strand units for many reasons.

Interdisciplinary Skills. Whilst mentioned as a barrier to LAR in previous themes, the cultivation of creative capacities as an interdisciplinary disposition which can be applied to other domains, was reported as an essential feature of the visual arts curriculum. When asked what is important in visual arts education, Greg (FG4) responded: "I'd probably say being creative because like the more creative you are and [the more] opportunities you have to be

creative, the better you'll be able to put your ideas across and do what you want to do in life."

Another child, Sinéad (FG2) commented on creativity used in other disciplines: "Well my Dad is a secondary school teacher and he teaches science, and you have to draw diagrams, so I think art and being creative would be good for that." The interdisciplinary nature of visual arts education is a perspective also supported within the literature (Sandell, 2009; Winner et al., 2013), with excellent visual arts teaching being described as having the power to nurture a vast array of multidisciplinary skills in this way (Winner et al., 2006). Visual arts education is vital for the development of artistic concepts and skills, but also for the development of creative forms of thinking and understanding which can be applied to other domains (Donahue & Stuart, 2010; NAEA, 2016), a view very much supported by the participants of this research.

Potentially Boring. Many children reported believing that "creativity is really why art exists in the first place" (Mark, FG4). When explicitly asked what their favourite aspects of visual arts lessons were, they responded with a selection of activities spanning across the six strands: painting, paint and colour, drawing, fabric and fibre, construction, and clay. All children responded with activities in the strand unit of making art, which, considering their lack of exposure to the LAR strand unit before the study, was expected. From analysing the focus groups, it became apparent that although the participants enjoyed looking at and responding to visual arts, with many finding it a beneficial aspect of the curriculum, they all still preferred making art. The participants believed some children might find art lessons that focus solely on the LAR art strand unit uninteresting:

They might find it a bit boring. Some people might think 'oh art lesson we're going to be painting or drawing or cutting or something,' and then if they're just looking at art, they might find it a bit boring (Louise, FG6).

Like when we were looking at the art, I got a bit bored after a while. If you were just looking at it for a long time, you might just start wandering off subject, like I know I did that a couple of times (Zara, FG4).

As the researcher, I found these points of interest, as from my analysis of the checklists, it appeared that these specific children were engaged and interested throughout both LAR activities. This discrepancy highlights the importance of the use of multiple data collection tools to provide triangulation, but more importantly ascertaining the perspectives of the children themselves, as discussed previously in the literature (Mulcahey, 2002).

Balanced approach. Considering the opinion that “looking at art and making art are of equal importance” (Sinéad, FG2) all children suggested that there should be a balance between the looking at and responding to art and making art strand units in primary schools to counteract this potential monotony. A view supported by curricular documents (Government of Ireland, 1999b). Art lessons should feature elements of both, rather than focus on one in particular:

If you did it [looking and responding to art] for five minutes, or even less, as part of a whole art lesson and then most of the lesson focuses on making art, but you do have the opportunity to look, respond and think what the art could be about too. So then when you are making it, you’re also reflecting on what you just saw, and it influences you more (Cassie, FG4).

Not art. The majority of children initially stated that these research activities did not feel like art lessons because they did not involve making art. There was no drawing, painting, or sketching involved, and because in art ‘you draw, you just don’t look at a page and talk

about stuff' (Patrick, FG1). The consensus within groups after discussions was that these activities were not art lessons in the traditional sense:

Like it was kind of taking part in an art lesson, well it was kind of also not – like people think when you say art lesson that you're going to be making, drawing or painting or something but we were looking and responding to the art as well so, I don't know (Louise, FG6).

It kind of was because you get to like to learn more about art skills and techniques and everything like that when you look at the art piece...But you're not drawing, or doing anything or making art (Jane, FG5).

Well no, it wasn't really like an art lesson because we weren't doing art, we were talking about the artwork, so it was really more like an oral language lesson (Zara, FG4).

As highlighted in the literature, the NCCAs curricular review (2005) reported that many educators found that children do not think they are participating in an art lesson during LAR activities as "they are just looking at something and talking about it" (NCCA, 2005, p. 156). A perspective further supported by the participants of this study. All of the children from these focus groups enjoyed looking at and responding to visual arts, despite the majority being inexperienced in the strand unit. Many valued it as a part of the curriculum but felt there were more important things that should take priority, an opinion possibly influenced by the overwhelming concentration on art formation evident in schools (Eckhoff, 2008; NCCA, 2005). The children's perspectives discussed above appear to support the attributes of the "being creative" key competency of the draft primary curriculum framework (NCCA, 2020a)

and suggest a more balanced approach between making art and looking at and responding to art in schools.

Findings Relevant to Research Question Two

As discussed another area of development which presented itself from the primary curriculum review (NCCA, 2005) was the lack of ICT used in the teaching of visual arts. Although 27% of teachers surveyed reported that their most frequent use of ICT was in the LAR strand unit, they also explained that it was most commonly used in the research of visual artists, their lives and works. (NCCA, 2005). Over three-quarters of these teachers surveyed hardly ever used ICT to show how other artists create their work (NCCA, 2005). The use of ICT is listed as one of fifteen considerations which shaped the formation of the 1999 curriculum and is included as a potential methodology for learning (Flannery, 2010). Some literature recommends gallery visits as the best approach for developing meaningful looking at and responding to visual arts experiences (Adams et al., 2006; Kay, 2008). However, with advancements in technological software and the introduction of resources such as interactive whiteboards into schools, other literature acknowledges the potential in using ICT to look at and respond to visual arts (Ash, 2000). The perspectives of this specific group of primary school children on the use of green screen technology as a methodology when teaching looking at and responding to visual arts are documented under the following themes:

- All of the children enjoyed looking at and responding to art using green screen.
- The majority of children reported feeling that they learned more about looking at and responding to art without the use of green screen.

- An overwhelming majority of children reported feeling that the looking at and responding to activity without greenscreen was more suited to a classroom setting.

Figure 7 presents a summary of findings concerning these themes, findings which are explored further in the section that follows.

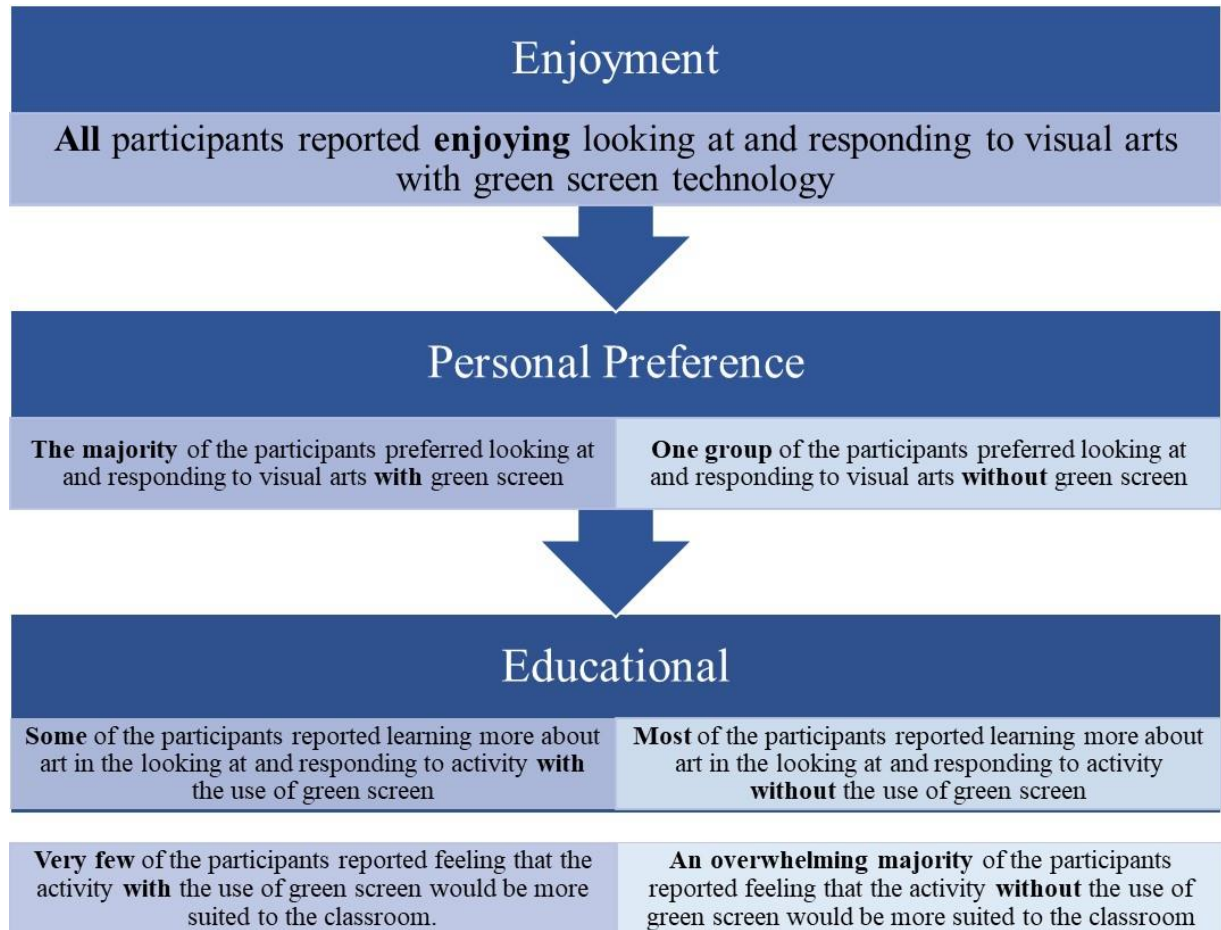


Figure 7. Summary of findings in relation to research question two: What are the opinions of primary school children on the use of green screen technology as a methodology when teaching looking at and responding to visual arts?

Enjoyment and preference. From analysing checklists and field notes taken on the research activities, it appeared as though all children enjoyed participating in the LAR activity,

which featured the use of green screen as an ICT methodology. They demonstrated excitement and enthusiasm, not only about the use of technology but also about the artwork itself. The children offered their initial impressions about the artwork, viewing it both on the tablet and projected onto the interactive whiteboard. They asked questions of each other which led to further inquiry. They not only contributed their interpretations about the piece but also identified emotions evoked by the art. All children reinforced these observations by reporting that they enjoyed using green screen to look at and respond to art in the focus groups.

With green screen technology. From the analysis of the focus groups, all children stated that they enjoyed taking part in both research activities, the majority indicating that they preferred looking at and responding to art with the use of green screen. A variety of reasons were put across in the focus groups as to why they enjoyed taking part in the green screen activity. The children noted that it was a fun and “cool” (Sinéad FG2; Zara FG4; Rita, FG5) experience. It was a shared, social activity between friends rather than an independent, solitary art lesson. They enjoyed sharing their interpretations of the artwork with their friends and listening to the contributions of others which helped them develop a deeper understanding of the artwork. It was an interactive way to experience art as they were physically involved with the artwork (FG1 – FG6):

I liked the green screen because if I just looked at art by myself, like in the first activity, I wouldn't really get it, but if someone else is saying something, then I'd be like 'oh that could be it.' It was the same with the green screen. I thought it was really hard. I didn't know what any of it was, and then when we started pointing at different parts, it broke it up a bit more which was a help because looking at the whole thing you couldn't really see (Sarah, FG2).

The second [green screen] one. I don't know, but it was easier to pay attention to everything in the slightly chaotic picture because you'd have someone pointing at it and blocking out other aspects that you might get distracted or confused by (Aisling, FG3).

I enjoyed the second [green screen] one more than the first because you could physically interact with it. We weren't just looking at the piece of paper in our chairs, with the green screen you could almost be a part of it really (Mark, FG4).

I enjoyed them because you could see the painting or drawing, and in the green screen especially, because you could imagine that you were in the painting and you could see and understand what was going on around you (Keith, FG6).

Without green screen technology. Despite all children having reported their enjoyment of the green screen activity, some of the participants reported preferring the activity without the use of green screen. These children reported feeling they had had a better discussion when their sole focus was on the artwork, and not distracted by the use of green screen. Cassie (FG4) commented: "you didn't talk about the art as much or have as much of a discussion, you were more focused on actually being in the art and surrounded by the art and the novelty of the green screen." Some of the children reported that they got to share their opinions and thoughts more without using the green screen, and also reported feeling more validated by hearing other people agree with their opinions or ideas:

I enjoyed the first one [without the green screen] more because you actually talked about it [the artwork] more because in the second one you weren't really talking about it you were just trying to be in it, and you didn't learn as much... Everyone weren't

really focusing on the art they were just kind of focusing on oh what's a funny position to put you in, it was a bit of a distraction (Edith, FG6).

As reported in the literature, the popular opinion amongst teachers as regards visual arts and ICT integration is that it is very beneficial for pupils (Prohaska, 2011). Indeed, by providing the new medium of green screen through which to explore art in the LAR strand unit of the curriculum, the children were able to explore art and artists and expand upon artistic technique in a unique manner. It is important to be cognisant, however, that despite the wealth of literature promoting the general understanding that integrating ICT with visual arts increases knowledge and understanding (Hackles, 2012; Hilcenko et al., n.d.; Isgreen, 2009; Wilks et al., 2012) that some of this group of children favoured traditional methods of learning.

Educational Value. Despite the enjoyment all children reported concerning green screen use, the findings cast doubt on whether the use of green screen enhances pupil learning in the LAR strand unit and whether ICT integration had the positive impact on the participants which is suggested in the literature (Wilks et al., 2012). Whilst the majority of participants reported learning more without green screen, some participants said that they learned more through the use of the green screen. These findings apply only to this group of children, however, and are not a generalisation on the use of ICT integration within visual arts as a whole.

With green screen technology. Upon analysis of focus group transcripts, some of the participants reported learning more through the use of green screen. The children who reported learning more through the use of green screen linked their learning with their overall enjoyment of the activity. Triangulation of the data from the transcriptions with data from the

observation checklists regarding these specific participants confirmed this apparent correlation between enjoyment and learning. The children from focus group three were all unanimous in having learned more from the green screen activity. They felt it was easier to concentrate on and analyse the artwork when they had the help of their friends highlighting various aspects and sharing their interpretations:

The second one [green screen] because when we were just let loose to look at the art, I think we all came up with some pretty extreme and varying ideas. But then when we were there having people point things out and give us their perspective, and we could zoom in and zoom out and experience it from every angle, and then we knew what everything was, it was a lot clearer for us (Aisling, FG3).

I did prefer the second one, so for the first one we didn't really look as close because we didn't really notice as many things but when it came to the second one other people were saying their opinions because they were more interested, and you thought to yourself 'well hold on a second it could be that as well,' so I actually learned more (Katie, FG3).

Upon further analysis, some of the children who stated they learned more from the green screen activity were referring to technical skills relating to green screen use, rather than artistic looking and responding skills:

I think I learned more in the green screen, but we learned a lot in both of the groups. Because even though we weren't learning about green screen in the first one, we still learned a lot about the picture. The green screen we just did a little bit more because of the technology (Rob, FG1).

I learned more during the green screen because whenever I watched YouTube, I always wondered how they work a green screen, and now I have learned how to do it here (David, FG1).

Without green screen technology. The majority of participants stated that they had learned more from the first research activity, which looked and responded to visual arts without the use of green screen. Collectively the children felt that they learned more in this activity because there was a more focused discussion on the artwork. They had a prolonged opportunity to interrogate and reflect upon the artwork whilst sharing their interpretations and listening to the contributions of others, without the distraction of the green screen technology:

With the green screen, everyone was ‘oh its technology, and it’s new and exciting,’ whereas with the art you’ve kind of seen it before, so you can look at it more, and you don’t get over-excited, and you can calmly discuss it (Rita, FG5).

Interestingly, as observed in my field notes, the children took it upon themselves to rotate the artwork in this first activity. They stood up to view it from different angles, which allowed them to see it from a different perspective, similar to how the children from FG3 mentioned zooming in and out of the artwork on the iPad to see it from different angles. New approaches as to how to integrate ICT into visual arts teaching in a purposeful, pertinent manner are needed (Wilks et al., 2012). However, for many of these participants, the use of green screen as a methodology proved a distraction from the activities content. This view suggests it may not be an appropriate way to integrate ICT into our visual arts curriculum within the LAR strand unit, to cater for all learning needs.

Organisation. An overwhelming majority of children reported feeling that the looking at and responding to activity without greenscreen was more suited to a classroom setting.

Although relatively easy to set up and use, the green screen activity did involve equipment that some schools may not have access to, such as an iPad equipped with a green screen application, a green screen, an interactive whiteboard, and an overhead projector. Whilst not reliant on internet connectivity, there were other issues, as outlined below, which arose during the activity sessions, which were also highlighted by the children in the focus groups. Because of these issues, the applicability of this greenscreen activity to classrooms across Ireland may prove challenging.

Disadvantages. Despite all enjoying the green screen activity, an overwhelming majority of participants reported that the LAR activity without the use of green screen was more suitable for classroom use. The “green screen is a lot of hassle to put up, and it would take up a lot of space in the classroom, and you’d have to get rid of tables and then move them back in when you’re finished” (Patrick, FG1). The green screen activity was further described as being “really complicated to set up” (Mary, FG2) as it would need lots of equipment. It would also be difficult to maintain classroom management (FG3, FG4, FG5, FG6) as “with the green screen, the whole class would be giddy and excited” (Edith, FG6). Some other disadvantages in using green screen as a methodology to look at and respond to visual arts that were highlighted by the children include the negative health benefits associated with increased screen time, the unreliability of technology, and the distraction from the artwork which the novel technology creates (FG1- FG6).

Advantages. Although very few children favoured the use of green screen in a classroom setting, they did emphasise some advantages associated with the technological methodology. The participants reported that the green screen was more interesting, engaging and would excite pupils more. They also reported feeling that it made art, as a subject, more accessible to children who may not be as interested in art as they were. One child, Mark

(FG4), highlighted that “you didn’t have to be good at art or drawing or anything to enjoy it.” Teaching children using a methodology that was of interest to them was also highlighted as an advantage of the use of green screen:

These days kids are really interested in technology, you can hardly get them off their phones, so if they learned how to use technology creatively like this in school at least, they might be inclined to use it creatively at home rather than just playing games and being on social media (Zara, FG4).

However, the idea that both activities would become uninteresting after a period if used all the time to teach LAR was highlighted and the point was made that maybe the most appropriate use in the classroom would be a balance of the two methods and activities. A perspective supported in the literature where excellent visual arts education is described as being balanced, interdisciplinary and meaningful which results in art lessons that can be viewed independently as works of art in and of themselves (Sandell, 2009).

Other Findings

Another theme which emerged from the data analysis, which may not answer the research questions directly, gives more insight into the perspectives of the children regarding visual arts education and ICT integration. An overwhelming majority reported that the use of technology in general within visual arts was beneficial, which is important to note for future exploration.

Benefits of ICT. After commenting on the advantages and disadvantages of the use of green screen as a teaching methodology for the LAR strand unit of the visual arts curriculum, many of the children stated that they thought technology, in general, was beneficial within visual arts when used in moderation. The main thread which linked all the focus groups

together was the idea of connecting their education to their extracurricular interests, which a lot of the time were technologically based. The participants acknowledged children's love of technology and how it would be beneficial to cater to these interests in the classroom to make their lessons more exciting and engaging:

Definitely, absolutely. I think you know like, children these days always have their eyes glued to a screen, so I think they would understand more if they had a screen in front of them, because like a piece of paper, how do I put this, they just wouldn't find it interesting (Fiona, FG2).

Interestingly, children also highlighted how technology and the internet make art more accessible to people by providing new ways to experience art if you do not have the opportunities to visit it in person:

And it being online is more accessible. Because if you want to go see an art piece you have to go to a museum where if you just want to look it up, you can just look it up on a computer, or a phone, or a tablet (Rita, FG5).

The children also offered some valuable suggestions for other activities to teach looking at and responding to visual arts through the methodology of ICT, such as the use of green screen to place yourself into self-made works of art, the use of the website www.bookcreator.com to make an online eBook where you upload your artwork as illustrations, and:

If you made a spot the difference with one famous piece of art, you would be able to notice all the details because you'd be looking for the differences, and then you could try to figure out which is the real piece of art (Aoife, FG4).

Summary

In the discussion and analysis of the findings from the study, I discussed the participants' perspectives concerning the two research questions.

- What are the opinions of primary school children on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit?
- What are the opinions of primary school children on the use of green screen technology as a methodology when teaching looking at and responding to visual arts?

From the thematic analysis of the data gathered, it appeared that most of the children were inexperienced in the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit of the curriculum. They all reported that they enjoyed looking at and responding to visual arts in these research activities. An overwhelming majority believed it a valuable and beneficial part of the curriculum. The participants also reported that they enjoyed looking at and responding to visual arts using green screen technology. Whilst the majority reported feeling that they learned more about looking at and responding to art without the use of green screen, some participants said that they learned more through the technological method. However, most of the participants did report that they felt that green screen technology was not suited to classroom use.

Being cognisant of the fact that this was an exploratory piece of research, with participants recruited through convenience sampling, the findings discussed above are specific to this group of children alone. They do not serve as a generalized representation for children universally (Cohen et al., 2007). In chapter five, the study concludes with implications based on the perspectives of these participants. Also included are recommendations for further

research in this area which would help to explore further or investigate more thoroughly the children's perceptions regarding looking at and responding to visual arts and ICT integration.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Regarding children's opinions on the value of looking at and responding to visual arts and ICT integration in particular, there seems to be a gap within the research literature that warranted further investigation. In response to this apparent literary gap, and the recommendations of the primary curriculum review (NCCA, 2005) centring around the LAR strand unit and ICT integration, this study explored primary school children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology when looking at and responding to visual arts. It explored their perceptions on whether to "screen or not to screen" concerning the teaching of the strand unit. This concluding chapter summarises the findings of the research, discusses the implications of these findings, suggests recommendations for future research, and revises the limitations of the study mentioned in chapter three, before offering a final comment on the research as a whole.

Main Findings

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis were applied to analyse the data gathered from observation notes and focus groups resulting in the development of themes in light of each research question. As this research was qualitative and exploratory in design, underpinned by social constructivist theory, it concentrated on investigating the attitudes and perspectives (Churches & Dommett, 2016; Dawson, 2002; Stake, 2010) of participants on their experience with using green screen as a methodology within the LAR strand unit. Because it did not seek to yield any measurable results, it was essential to present the majority and minority perspectives of the participants in the findings of this research. Although only specific to this set of participants due to the small sample size and use of convenience sampling, by avoiding the use of selective data the children's perspectives were presented

more accurately, therefore, enhancing the validity of the study (Cohen et al., 2007). Tables four and five illustrate the main findings of this study concerning the research questions.

Table 4

Findings in relation to research question one highlighting majority and minority perspectives

Findings	What are the opinions of primary school children on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit?
F1	All of the children reported enjoying the looking at and responding to visual arts activities and most found it a beneficial part of the curriculum with the exception of two participants.
F2	The majority of children, with the exception of the children in one of the focus groups, were inexperienced when it came to looking at and responding to visual arts
F3	All of the children suggested that there should be a more balanced approach in the curriculum in relation to the looking at and responding to art strand unit
F4	The majority of children reported that they didn't feel that the looking at and responding to visual arts activities felt like art lessons, although some children remained unsure about this.

Table 5

Findings in relation to research question two highlighting majority and minority perspectives

Findings	What are the opinions of primary school children on the use of green screen technology as a methodology when teaching looking at and responding to visual art?
F1	All of the children enjoyed looking at and responding to art using green screen technology
F2	Whilst the majority of participants reported feeling that they learned more about looking at and responding to art without the use of green screen technology, some of the participants reported feeling that they learned more through the use of green screen.
F3	An overwhelming majority of children reported feeling that the looking at and responding to activity without greenscreen was more suited to a classroom setting, while a select few favoured the green screen activity for classroom use.

Other Findings

Another significant finding additional to the ones above, is that an overwhelming majority of children reported that the use of technology within visual arts education, in general, was beneficial. Although not specific to the research questions in discovering the children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology when looking at and responding to visual arts, it is important to note their positive attitude towards ICT and visual arts integration. As highlighted in the literature review, integrating ICT into visual arts, curriculums is said to have a positive impact on teaching and learning (Hackles, 2012; Wilks et al., 2012). Many of the participants reported that using technology, something which many children enjoy, to teach aspects of the visual arts curriculum would make it more exciting, accessible and engaging, in turn, having the positive impact on teaching and learning as noted in the literature.

Implications of Findings

From these findings, limited by sample size and the use of convenience sampling, it appears that the use of green screen technology, whilst an enjoyable addition to the classroom may not be a meaningful integration of ICT within the LAR strand unit of the visual arts curriculum for all learners in this sample group. Whilst some participants reported that they learned more with the green screen, the majority of participants reported that they learned more without the use of the added technology. This majority perspective echoes literature stating that technology directed pedagogy is often more concerned with the technology itself, rather than using it as a tool to enhance learning within other domains (Delacruz, 2009; Wilks et al., 2012). The children's perceptions revolving the use of green screen in a classroom setting are also reflected in the wealth of literature which indicates the difficulty of translating ICT and its associated techniques into meaningful teaching and learning experiences

(Carpenter & Tavin, 2010; Choi & Piro, 2009; Wilks et al., 2012). This is not to say that green screen technology is not of any use for the LAR strand unit and would not be effective in a classroom setting. However, it may not be the best way of learning for all children, so a variety of approaches would be more useful. The challenge for educators, therefore, remains the same: to find a meaningful way to teach the looking at and responding to strand unit of the curriculum (NCCA, 2005) and a relevant way to integrate ICT (Wilks et al., 2012).

Although the use of green screen may not have been entirely successful in the teaching of the LAR strand unit for many of the participants, that is not to say its use would not be beneficial within other strand units of the visual arts curriculum as these findings cannot be generalised due to sampling size. Indeed, the children recommended some other activities in which they could use green screen technology. Claymation, displaying their artwork, and movie making were all activities mentioned by the participants, suggesting that green screen is a strategy better suited to the making art strand unit of the visual arts curriculum.

Overall, the integration of ICT within visual arts was deemed beneficial by the children as they reported its potential in enhancing the accessibility of art as a subject for all pupils, a point supported by the literature and curriculum documentation (Government of Ireland, 1999a; Hilcenko et al., n.d.; Wilks et al., 2012). From these findings, the use of green screen technology may prove a worthy way of integrating ICT into visual arts to achieve objectives under the “being a digital learner” and “being creative key competencies” of the proposed curriculum for 2024 (NCCA, 2020a). However, in relation to the strand unit “looking at and responding to visual arts” of the 1999 curriculum, although it was reported as being a useful learning tool for some children, it may not be the most beneficial use of ICT integration.

Interestingly, with the LAR activities, the children also reported feeling that they were unsure as to whether they constituted art lessons, a perspective supported by the lack of focus on LAR as a strand unit highlighted in the NCCA review (2005) and the participants' inexperience in the strand unit. Combined with the children's views on visual arts potential to develop skills transferrable to other domains (Sandell, 2009; Winner et al., 2013), and their thoughts on how educators give prevalence to academic subjects, perhaps further support in the implementation of the entire visual arts curriculum is needed, not just within the LAR strand unit as suggested by the NCCA (2005). Although art education does serve a purpose in the development of such cross-disciplinary skills (Greene, 2007; Hunter, 2012) its fundamental essence should be creative expression in its own right (Polster, 2010). Although the framework for the 2024 arts education curriculum states that whilst music, art and drama have "a common creative process and share transferable skills," (NCCA, 2020a, p. 13) each subject, including visual arts, also has subject-specific knowledge, concepts and skills which should not be overlooked (NCCA, 2020a).

Limitations of the Study

As discussed in chapter three, a significant limitation to this study was its necessary use of convenience sampling. Because of the short timeframe for this project, and as its overall purpose is that of submission as part of a Masters programme whilst working full time, it was deemed necessary to use convenience sampling when carrying out this research. The small number of participants bound by age group and class level has resulted in negligible parameters of generalizability (Cohen et al., 2007), meaning that the findings presented above only serve as a representation of this specific group of participants. As previously highlighted, if this study were to be conducted on a larger scale with a broader participant yield, it may offset this limitation. Other possible limitations of this study, as previously discussed, were:

- Potential participant bias derived from power differentials between child participants and an adult researcher.
- Potential participant bias in participant efforts to impress their peers
- Researcher engaging in passive observation, in efforts to offset potential researcher bias, rather than engaging in the activity with the participants, or having the activity educator led. This may have affected the educational value of the activity.

The recommendations below aim to compensate for some of these limitations if future research were to be carried out.

Recommendations for Further Research

As suggested in the literature, exploratory research typically tends to provide initial research on areas which have previously lacked investigatory studies (Blumer, 1969; Brown, 2006; Dudovskiy, 2018; Singh, 2007). From such exploratory studies more decisive research can be undertaken to generate more substantial hypotheses (Blumer, 1969; Brown, 2006; Dudovskiy, 2018; Singh, 2007). From the perspectives gained, and the findings presented in this dissertation, despite the benefits of ICT highlighted by the participants, the use of green screen may not be the most appropriate way for educators to teach the LAR strand unit of the current visual arts curriculum to cater for all learners. The children reported that looking at and responding to visual arts was an important part of the curriculum. However, educators still need other meaningful ways to teach the LAR strand unit to their pupils (NCCA, 2005). Cognisant of the limitations of this study, mentioned above and discussed in chapter three, the following are my recommendations for future study:

- Explore children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology in the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit using a different sampling approach to broaden the range of participants and generalize the findings.
- Explore children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology in the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit using an educator led investigation.
- Explore children's perspectives on the use of a variety of ICT tools in the looking at and responding to visual arts strand units to ascertain if there is a technological approach better suited to enhance the teaching of the LAR strand unit as opposed to green screen.
- Explore children's perspectives on the value of the looking at and responding to art strand unit across a variety of schools, ages, and educational settings.

Final Comment

As an educator passionate about visual arts education, and enthusiastic about the integration of ICT to broaden children's perceptions of art and enhance the development of their skills and techniques, I was surprised with the overall findings of this research study. It did not surprise me that all of the children reported enjoying using green screen, as not only was it evident from their interaction in the activity, but research also dictates that children are growing up in a technologic world and enjoy interacting with ICT (Buckingham, 2007; Cuban, 2001; S. Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2005; Selwyn, Boraschi, & Özkula, 2009). What did surprise me was the astuteness of the participants in separating their enjoyment of the activity from the educational value of the activity, in the identification of teaching and learning tools that would be more suitable in a classroom setting for educators and pupils. Although some participants reported enjoying and learning more from the green screen activity, many of them

carefully considered whether their enjoyment of a task created a more valuable learning experience for them, which in many cases, it did not. Trusting children's perspectives within educational research which concerns them is therefore of paramount importance, as they are capable of making critical, informed decisions for their best, educational interests (Roberts, 2017).

Summary

There is a lack of research on children's perspectives on both looking at and responding to visual arts and ICT integration within this strand unit of the visual arts curriculum. This research obtained the opinions of a group of children concerning the use of green screen technology to teach the LAR strand unit. From the analysis of these perspectives, it appears that the use of green screen technology may not have been a meaningful integration of ICT in the teaching of this strand unit to cater for all children in this sample group. Despite being reported as being of value to some of the group, many participants found the green screen to be a distraction from the artwork and reported it as being potentially difficult to set up and manage in a classroom environment.

There is an ever-growing pressure placed upon educators to integrate ICT into their visual arts teachings. Although it has the potential to enhance learning experiences (Wilks et al., 2012), as reported in this research, not all uses of it are valuable and advantageous to all pupils. Although the benefits of ICT integration were highlighted by the children concerning visual arts as a subject, in terms of the LAR strand unit, perhaps, as one of the participants said, "you just have to look at art simply and appreciate it as it is, the way it was intended to be looked at, not through a screen or device" (Greg, FG4).

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Research Activity Plan without Green Screen

Activity Outline

The following research activity was developed in line with the 1999 visual arts primary school curriculum to enhance its relevance as an activity and its potential applicability to the visual arts classroom.

Looking and Responding Activity 1 – without green screen		
Subject	Strand	Strand Unit
Visual Art	Paint and Colour	Looking and Responding
Content Objectives <i>The children should be enabled to:</i>	Learning Objectives <i>The children should be enabled to:</i>	Skills and Concepts <i>The children should be enabled to:</i>
Look at and talk about the work of artists by: - Describing what is happening in the painting - Discussing complementary or harmonious colours and tones and subtle colour differences. - Commenting on how rhythm, movement, atmosphere, variety, space-in-depth, or form is suggested in a painting. - What he/she or the artist was trying to. - Explaining how he/she feels about the painting.	Look at and talk about the painting <i>The Great Wave off Kanagawa, 1830-32, by Katsushika Hokusai</i> by: - Describe what they think is happening in the picture – who is in the picture? What is in the picture? What is happening in the picture? What is the picture about? - Discuss the use of colour – what is the colour scheme used? Is this effective? Why? Why not? Are the tints and shades of the colour used effectively in displaying the theme and content of the piece? - How was this piece made? Is it a painting? A drawing? What makes you think this? What is	Awareness of line - Recognise that lines can have varying qualities, e.g. of density, texture, pattern, and direction, and can create shapes and suggest movement, rhythm, and form. Awareness of shape - Be sensitive to shape in the visual surroundings. - Focus sometimes on shape, edges and layout on the picture plane without emphasis on depth Awareness of colour and tone - Develop sensitivity to subtleties in colour and tone in the visual environment. - Develop awareness of the effects of warm and cold colours, of complementary and

	the mood of the piece? How is this conveyed? • What message do you think the artist is trying to convey? Do you like this piece?	harmonious colours and variations in tone
Learning Activities		
Introduction • Thank the children for participating in the research and reiterate their participatory rights. Explain that much of the activity will be independent discussion whilst you are taking observation notes on their interactions and engagements. • Place a large image of <i>The Great Wave of Kanagawa</i>, 1830-32, by Katsushika Hokusai on the whiteboard to discuss with the children. Explain to the children that they will be looking at and responding to this work of art together in groups by asking and answering questions about it with each other. • Children will not be informed of any information regarding the piece – title, artist, medium, size, or thematic content will not be discussed. Development (During the main section of this research activity the children will be discussing the artwork independently as I take up the role as research and observe in passive observation of their discussions) • Children will be divided into groups of four. Each child will be given a copy of <i>The Great Wave of Kanagawa</i>, to look at and examine. • A list of questions will be given to the groups to guide their discussion. The children look at and respond to the work independently through discussion. • When the children have discussed the artwork in their groups, they will go back to their seats with their copy of <i>The Great Wave of Kanagawa</i>. The children will now be informed of the artist, the title, and some background information about the piece. Closure • Children will now share their thoughts, opinions, and answer to the questions orally on an individual level • Thank the children for participating in the first research activity		

Appendix B: Research Activity Plan with Green Screen**Activity Outline**

The following research activity was developed in line with the 1999 visual arts primary school curriculum to enhance its relevance as an activity and its potential applicability to the visual arts classroom.

Looking and Responding Activity 2		
Subject	Strand	Strand Unit
Visual Art	Paint and Colour	Looking and Responding
Content Objectives <i>The children should be enabled to:</i>	Learning Objectives <i>The children should be enabled to:</i>	Skills and Concepts <i>The children should be enabled to:</i>
Look at and talk about the work of artists by: - Describing what is happening in the painting - Discussing complementary or harmonious colours and tones and subtle colour differences. - Commenting on how rhythm, movement, atmosphere, variety, space-in-depth, or form is suggested in a painting. - What he/she or the artist was trying to. - Explaining how he/she feels about the painting.	Look at and talk about the painting <i>Guernica</i>, 1937, by Pablo Picasso by: - Describe what they think is happening in the painting – who is in the painting? What is in the painting? What is happening in the painting? What is the painting about? - Discuss the use of colour – what is the colour scheme used? Is this effective? Why? Why not? Are the tints and shades of the colour used effectively in displaying the theme and content of the piece? - How was this piece made? Is it a painting? A drawing? What makes you think this? What is the mood of the piece? How is this conveyed?	Awareness of line - Recognise that lines can have varying qualities, e.g. of density, texture, pattern, and direction, and can create shapes and suggest movement, rhythm, and form. Awareness of shape - Be sensitive to shape in the visual surroundings. - Focus sometimes on shape, edges and layout on the picture plane without emphasis on depth Awareness of colour and tone - Develop sensitivity to subtleties in colour and tone in the visual environment. - Develop awareness of the effects of warm and cold colours, of complementary and harmonious colours and variations in tone

	What message do you think the artist is trying to convey? Do you like this piece?	
Learning Activities		
Introduction The green screen is set up before the activity. A tripod holding the iPad stands in front of the green screen, connected to the projector via HDMI cable to project the iPad screen onto the whiteboard. - The children will gather around the interactive whiteboard where the painting <i>Guernica</i>, 1937, by Pablo Picasso will be displayed. Children will not be informed of any information regarding the painting – title, artist, medium, size, or thematic content will not be discussed. - When they have finished this activity they will be introduced to the technology they will be used to look at this piece of artwork in more detail – <i>Do Ink</i> green screen app, the interactive whiteboard, the iPad, green screen and tripod, which will be set up before the lesson. - The teacher, as a researcher, will choose one volunteer to take part in the demonstration. A different artwork will be used in the example against the green screen, which will be synced to the interactive whiteboard for viewing purposes. The volunteer will then stand in front of the green screen and see themselves projected in front of the artwork up on the interactive whiteboard. - The teacher and volunteer will then demonstrate the looking and responding activity. The volunteer will be encouraged to <i>walk through</i> the painting, stopping at different points where the researcher asks them questions. Development (During the main section of this research activity the children will be discussing the artwork independently as I take up the role as research and observe in passive observation of their discussions) - The children will be divided into three groups: - The Actors - The Directors - The Audience - The Actors will take their place in front of the green screen to <i>walk through</i> the artwork under the instruction of the Directors. When the actors are in place, the directors will ask the Audience questions about the art. Each child will have the opportunity to be in each of the three groups. The directors will have a list of guiding questions to ask the audience but will also be encouraged to generate their questions. Closure - The children will compare both art activities and discuss which one they enjoyed more, which they thought was more beneficial and why.		

Appendix C: Data Collection Tool: Observational Checklist**Observational Checklist**

Art Activity 1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Looking at and Responding to Visual Art using Printed Images									
a	Offers initial impressions about the artwork								
b	Asks questions that lead to further inquiry								
c	Contributes to discussion which help elicit student responses								
d	Uses observation skills when giving descriptions of the artwork								
e	Uses appropriate vocabulary								
f	Identifies images, sensations, or ideas evoked by the work								
g	Considers interpretations put forward by peers								
h	Offers personal perspectives and interpretations of the artwork								
i	Works co-operatively in the group								
j	Respects other's opinions and contributions								
k	Appears to enjoy the lesson								
l	Engages with resources provided								



Observation Key		Additional Comments
YES	√	
NO	X	
SOMETIMES	S	

Art Activity 2		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Looking at and Responding to Visual Art using Green Screen Technology									
a	Offers initial impressions about the artwork								
b	Asks questions that lead to further inquiry								
c	Contributes to discussion which help elicit student responses								
d	Uses observation skills when giving descriptions of the artwork								
e	Uses appropriate vocabulary								
f	Identifies images, sensations, or ideas evoked by the work								
g	Considers interpretations put forward by peers								
h	Offers personal perspectives and interpretations of the artwork								
i	Works co-operatively in the group								
j	Respects other's opinions and contributions								
k	Appears to enjoy the lesson								
l	Engages with resources provided								

Observation Key		Additional Comments
YES	√	
NO	X	
SOMETIMES	S	

Appendix D: Data Collection Tool: Focus Group Questions

	Question	Probe/ Prompt
1	Does anyone remember anything about the first piece of art we looked at?	What was the name of the piece? What colours were used? What was depicted in the piece? What was it about? Why do you think about this?
2	Does anyone remember anything about the first piece of art we looked at?	What was the name of the piece? What colours were used? What was depicted in the piece? What was it about? Why do you think about this?
3	Which piece of art did you prefer?	Why? Can you tell me a little bit more about why you liked that one?
4	Do you like looking at art?	Why? Why not? What do you like about looking at art? Where can you look at art?
5	Do many of your art lessons in school involve looking at art?	Why do you think this is?
6	What is your favourite thing to do in art class?	Do you like making art? Looking at art? Drawing? Painting?
7	What do you think is the most important thing to learn from art lessons in school?	Why do you think this? Skills and techniques, painting, drawing, art history, talking about art?
8	Did you enjoy the art activities you took part in for this research project?	Why? Why not?
9	Did it feel like you were taking part in an art lesson when you were participating in the activities?	Why? Why not?
10	Which of the research project activities did you enjoy more?	Can you tell me why you preferred this activity?

11	Which of the research project activities did you feel you learned more about art in?	I wonder why that is?
12	Which activity do you think would work better in a classroom setting?	Why do you think this?
13	Were there any advantages of using the green screen to look at and respond to art?	Is using green screen a good way to look at art?
14	Were there any disadvantages of using the green screen to look at and respond to art?	
15	Would you be interested in using technology more within visual arts lessons?	Why? Why not?
16	Could you recommend any other ways teachers could use technology more when teaching visual arts?	Anything that you use at home that you think could be applied in school art lessons?
17	Do you have any other comments to make or opinions to share based on the two art lessons and the focus group discussion that we had?	Did you enjoy the art activities? Did you enjoy taking part in this focus group?

Appendix E: Information PowerPoint for Participants

Slide 1



Slide 2

What is Green Screen Technology?

Green screens are often used in blockbuster movies. Using one allows an editor to remove the green background and replace it with an image or background of their choice to set a specific scene. Characters can then be shown in front of this new background.



Slide 3



What is meant by looking at and responding to art?

Looking at and responding to visual art is part of the primary school art curriculum that teachers have to teach their pupils. It often involves children looking at their art, the art of other children and the work of artists and describing the artwork.

Slide 4

What is this Research Project About?

I am currently completing my Master in Visual Arts Education in Marino Institute of Education. This year I am engaging in a research project as part of my studies, the findings of which will be included in my final dissertation.

This research project wants to listen to the voices of children and see if they think using green screen technology will improve art lessons that focus on looking at and responding to art.



Slide 5



Using a green screen app called *Do Ink* on an iPad, an image of a famous painting will be set as a background, projected onto an interactive whiteboard. Rather than just looking at and talking about the work of art, you will have the opportunity to insert yourself into the painting, walk around the scene and discuss what you see.

Slide 6



What will I have to do to participate in this research project?

This research project will involve you taking part in two looking at and responding to art lessons—one where we use green screen technology, and one where we don't!

During these lessons, Ms. Kelleghan, will ask if it's ok to take observational notes on your participation in both lessons.

When both lessons are complete, you will be given the opportunity to express your opinions about them in a focus group.

In a focus group you will get together with Ms. Kelleghan and some of your friends who also participated in the research project to discuss your experiences of the research project art lessons. You will also get to share your thoughts on whether you think green screen technology is beneficial when looking at and responding to visual art.

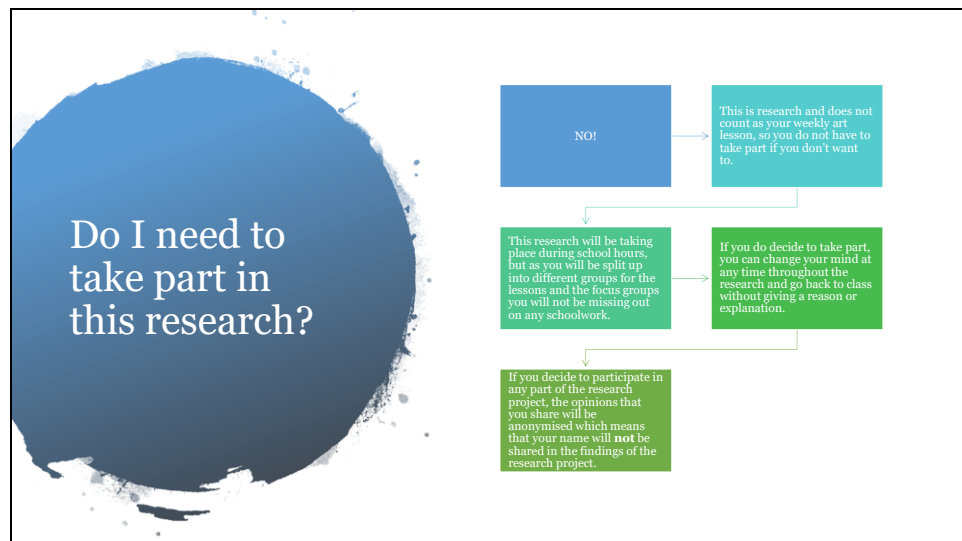
Slide 7

Pilot Study

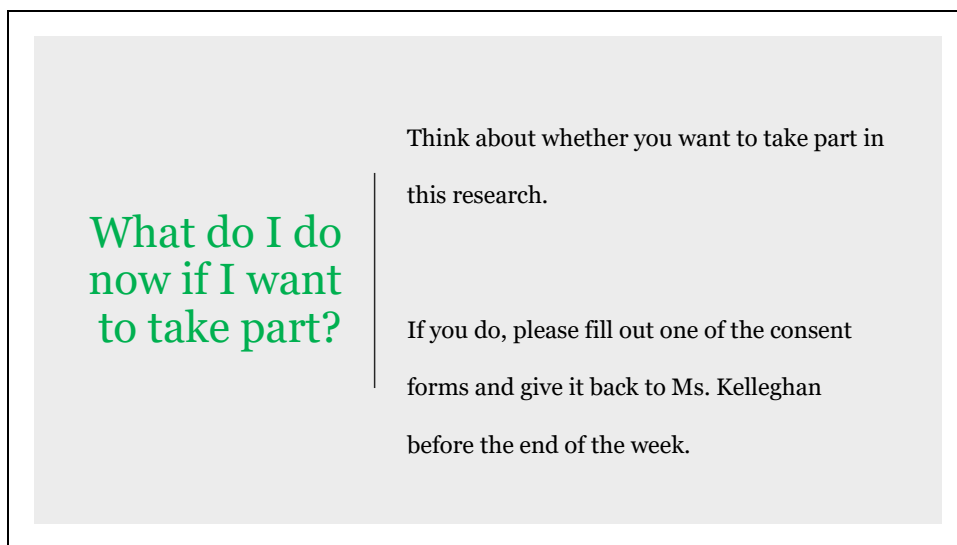
A **pilot study** is a smaller study conducted before the main research project in order to see if the research project will work well or if any changes need to be made to make the research project run more smoothly.

Pupils from 4th class will have the opportunity to take part in the pilot study

Slide 8



Slide 9



What do I do now if I want to take part?

Think about whether you want to take part in this research.

If you do, please fill out one of the consent forms and give it back to Ms. Kelleghan before the end of the week.

Slide 10



Any Questions?

Appendix F: Information Leaflet for Participants

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? NO! This is research, and does not count as your weekly art lesson so you do not have to take part if you don't want to. This research will be taking place during school hours, but as you will be split up into different groups for the lessons and the focus groups you will not be missing out on any school work. If you do decide to take part, you can change your mind at any time throughout the research and go back to class without giving a reason or explanation. If you decide to participate in any part of the research project, the opinions you share will not be connected with your name or identity in the research findings. Any information collected will be kept safely and privately. Your name and identity will not be included in the findings of the research project.	 Marino Institute of Education Griffith Ave, Northside, Dublin, D09 R232 Phone: Fax: If you have any further queries or questions you can contact Ms. Kelleghan at Phone: E-mail: 	Using Green Screen Technology to Look at and Respond to Visual Art  What do you think? <i>A research project to listen to the views of children</i> Marino Institute of Education
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WHAT IS GREEN SCREEN TECHNOLOGY?

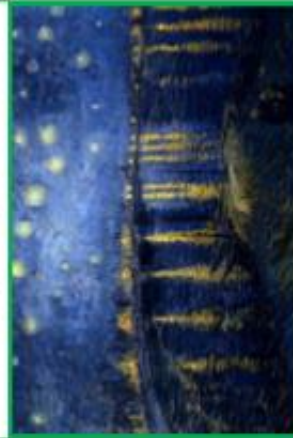
Green screens are often used in blockbuster movies. Using one allows an editor to remove the green background and replace it with an image or background of their choice to set a specific scene.

WHAT IS MEANT BY LOOKING AT AND RESPONDING TO ART?

Looking at and responding to visual art is part of the primary school art curriculum that teachers have to teach their pupils. It often involves children looking at their art, the art of other children and the work of artists and describing the artwork.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ABOUT?

Ms. Kelleghan is doing this research project as part of her masters in visual arts education at MIE. This research wants to listen to the voices of children and see if they think using green screen technology will improve art lessons that focus on looking at and responding to art.



Starry Night Over the Rhône, Vincent Van Gogh.

Using a green screen app called *Do Ink* on an iPad, an image of a famous painting will be set as a background, projected onto an interactive whiteboard. Rather than just looking at and talking about the work of art, you will have the opportunity to insert yourself into the painting, walk around the scene and discuss what you see.

WHAT WILL I HAVE TO DO IF I WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

This research project will involve you taking part in two looking at and responding to art lessons—one where we use green screen technology, and one where we don't! During these lessons Ms. Kelleghan, will ask if it's ok to take observational notes on your participation in both lessons. When both lessons are complete, you will be given the opportunity to express your opinions about them in a focus group.

In a focus group you will get together with Ms. Kelleghan and some of your friends, who also participated in the research project, and answer questions about your experiences. You will also get to share your thoughts on whether you think green screen technology is beneficial when looking at and responding to visual art.

Appendix G: Parental Information and Consent Form



Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Laura Kelleghan and I am completing a Master in Visual Arts Education in Marino Institute of Education, an associated body of Trinity College, Dublin. I am engaging in a research project as part of my Master in Education Studies, the findings of which will be included in my Master in Education Studies final dissertation. The research project explores primary school children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology in looking at and responding to visual art.

I will be asking the children from 4th class to pilot this study, and children from 5th and 6th class to participate in the project itself. The children have received a presentation and accompanying information leaflet to inform them of the details of the study, as well as a consent form. In addition to requesting the children's assent to participate, I am also requesting your consent as guardians to allow your child to take part in this research project.

The details of the research project are as follows:

- The project will run for approximately four weeks from January 20th until February 16th.
- Assenting children will be asked to take part in two art activities:
 1. Looking at and responding to a famous artwork using a traditional teaching methodology.
 2. Looking at and responding to a famous artwork using green screen technology.
- During these activities I will record observational data based on the children's engagement and participation.
- After the activities, children will participate in focus groups where they will have the opportunity to share their perspectives on the use of green screen to look at and respond to visual art.
- These focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed. All information collected, including observational notes and audio transcription of focus groups, will be anonymised, and stored securely. Your child's name and identity, and the school's name and identity will not be attached to any findings presented in the final dissertation.
- Physical data will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet, whilst digital data will be stored on a password protected online drive for security and confidentiality purposes. This data will only be available to myself and my supervisors from the MIE research team. It will be destroyed after 13 months.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and your child is under no obligation to participate. If you, or your child wish to withdraw consent at any stage throughout the process you are free to do so without reason or explanation. I foresee no risks for your child's participation in the study, beyond those experienced in everyday life. It would be greatly appreciated if you could fill out the consent form attached and return it to the school in the envelope provided by the end of the week. If you do not wish for your child to participate please return the blank consent form.

If you have any further questions or would like more information about the study, please feel free to contact me at [Contact details omitted from appendix]

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Yours sincerely,

Laura Kelleghan.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

If you wish your child to participate in the research project, *Exploring primary school children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology in looking at and responding to visual art*, or its pilot study, please complete the following consent form and return it to the school in the envelope provided before the end of the week.

		YES	NO
1	I have read and understood the information provided on this study.		
2	I understand what the study is about and what the results will be used for		
3	I am fully aware of all the procedures involving my child and I am aware of any risks or benefits to do with the study.		
4	I consent to allow my child to take part in the art lesson on looking at and responding to visual art WITHOUT green screen technology		
5	I consent to allow my child to take part in the art lesson on looking at and responding to visual art WITH green screen technology		
6	I consent to allow Ms. Kelleghan to take observational notes on my child during the research project art lessons		
7	I consent to allow my child to take part in the focus groups after the research project art lessons		
8	I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they can stop taking part in the research project at any time, and that I can stop my child from participating at any time without reason or explanation		
9	I know that my child's name and identity will not be included in the findings of the research project.		
10	I know that the name of my child's school will not be included in the findings of the research project.		
11	I agree to my child participating in the research project.		

This study has been considered from an ethical perspective by the Marino ethics in research committee. Should you have any questions or concerns about the ethical approval or conduct of this study, please contact MERC@mie.ie

Ms. Laura Kelleghan has also received permission from the Board of Management to undertake this research within the school.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix H: Participant Consent Form



Dear Pupils,

After careful consideration, and reading the information booklet provided, if you wish to participate in the research project: *Exploring primary school children's perspectives on the use of green screen technology in looking at and responding to visual art*, or its pilot study, please provide your consent below by ticking the boxes:

		√
1	I have read and understood the information booklet on the research project	
2	I understand what the research project is about and what the results will be used for	
3	I agree to take part in the art lesson on looking at and responding to visual art WITHOUT green screen technology	
4	I agree to take part in the art lesson on looking and responding to visual art WITH green screen technology	
5	I agree to Ms. Kelleghan taking observational notes about me when I am taking part in the research project art lessons.	
6	I agree to taking part in the focus groups where I will get to share my ideas, opinions and talk about the research project art lessons.	
7	I know that my participation in the research project is voluntary and I can stop taking part in the research project at any time.	
8	I know that my name and identity will not be included in the findings of the research project.	
9	I know that the name of my school will not be included in the findings of the research project.	
10	I agree to participate in the research project.	

Pupil's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix I: Letter Seeking Permission to the Board of Management

School address omitted



Dear Chairperson,

My name is Laura Kelleghan, and I am currently studying my Masters in visual arts education with Marino Institute of Education. This year as part of my assessment and accreditation of my Masters degree, I have to carry out some research. I wish to explore children's perspectives of the use of green screen technology on the looking at and responding to visual arts strand unit of the visual arts curriculum. I am writing to the Board for permission to carry out this research with 4th, 5th, and 6th class pupils of your school, upon their assent and parental consent. Below I have included a brief outline and timeframe for the research:

6/01/20 – 10/01/20	Informing participants about the study Send out consent forms to parents of children in 4 th , 5 th , and 6 th class (pilot & study participants)
20/01/20 – 24/01/20	Pilot Study with 4 th Class Participants • Research activity without greenscreen (Monday) • Research activity with green screen (Wednesday) • Focus Groups (Friday)
10/02/20 – 14/02/20	Main Study with 5 th Class Participants • Research activity without greenscreen (Monday) • Research activity with green screen (Wednesday) • Focus Groups (Friday)
24/02/20 – 28/02/20	Main Study with 6 th Class Participants • Research activity without greenscreen (Monday) • Research activity with green screen (Wednesday) • Focus Groups (Friday)

When providing information to the children from 4th, 5th, and 6th class, it will be made clear that taking part in the research is entirely optional and that they do not have to participate.

It will also be made clear that if they give their consent, they can withdraw it at any time throughout the research study if they wish to. Anonymity and confidentiality of children will also be assured, and parental consent will be sought.

Consenting children will take part in two art activities. One will involve looking at and responding to visual arts without green screen, and the second one will involve them looking at and responding to visual arts with green screen. Throughout these two activities, I will be collecting data by taking observational field notes on each child's engagement and participation in the activities. After the activities have taken place, the children will also be taking part in focus groups, where I will ask the children to share their perspectives on the activities. These focus groups will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and securely stored in a password protected online drive as well as a locked filing cabinet.

This research has received ethical approval from Marino Institute of Education's ethical board and will adhere to strict guidelines throughout its duration. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Kelleghan.

Appendix J: Letter of Approval from the Board of Management

School Address and Letterhead omitted

Dear Laura,

Thank you for your detailed explanation of the research you are undertaking for your Masters in Visual arts Education. I am writing to inform you that you have received Board of Management and Principal consent to undertake and carry out this research in full in (school name omitted) with pupils from fourth, fifth and sixth class.

I acknowledge that this study will be submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of the degree Master of Education Studies in Visual arts Education.

I wish you every success with your research and future studies.

Yours faithfully,

(Principal name omitted)