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Philosophy for children in a foundation phase literacy classroom in South Africa : multimodal representations of knowledge.

Thompson, Robyn Dyan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to understand how children explore and communicate philosophical concepts in the oral, written and visual modes as part of a literacy lesson and how Philosophy for Children (P4C) can be used as an approach in the Foundation Phase classroom. An additional aim is to determine whether a P4C approach complies with the National Curriculum's requirements as stipulated in the CAPS documents to develop young children's creative and critical thinking.

This research study was important as it has implications for the theory and the practise of teaching early literacy in South Africa, in particular thinking, reasoning and comprehension. The research was carried out with my own class of Grade Two children as active participants throughout the process. Action research proved to be the most suitable methodology for this study as this methodology encourages both practioner based research and self reflective practise. The research provides evidence that the visual mode can be a sophisticated mode of communication and not only an aesthetic activity that supplements the written work. This mode allows children to express their own original ideas and offers rich material for reflection on children's thinking and reasoning.