Materials

viewed through a Froebelian lens



Pete Moorhouse 24

This model offers a way of reflecting on the value and potential of various materials weaving together traditional Froebelian principles with contemporary new materialist thinking - especially positioning materials within their ecological context. When we reflect on materials we could also consider the additional 'affects' of the tools and techniques used. A brief explanation on the elements (all of which inter-relate and overlap):

Sustainability

Carbon footprint of material used, use of recycled material, potential to be recycled/reused, embedding a mind-set of make and repair, making meaningful connections with nature, opportunities of opening understandings around sustainable development and ecology.

Physiological responses

Physical 'affect' of material and process on the body/senses. Potential to 'affect' stress/wellbeing.

Emotional connections

How we feel about the material, early memories, feelings about process/tools/techniques, feelings about 'output'/product

Technique progression

Potential for multi-layered progression over time, slowly building from the known, opportunities for increasing challenge and complexity, mastery and skills

Deepening

Possibilities for a slow pedagogical approach over time. Locating the material within a logical progression (e.g. moving from paper to card or tool progression). Potential to offer breadth and depth within a wider context (e.g. wood/ trees/ planting etc) – Potential making meaning and new understandings

Self-activity, symbolic life, creativity

Potential for re-presenting experience, self-expression, children's voice, creating meaning, potential for symbolic representations

Forms of knowledge

Constructing knowledge, new understandings, making sense, making meaning, development of new skills and techniques. Inner-outer, concrete to abstract

Forms of life

Links to encounters with materials in daily/community contexts, links we can offer to wider contexts

Forms of beauty

Aesthetics of material, tools, process, output. Beauty of nature visible. Aesthetics of whole experience/set up - space/clothing (such as doing paining wearing thick plastic aprons – vs cotton shirts)

Law of contrasts/opposites

What options does the material offer for exploring knowledge/sensitivity gained from exploring/experiencing contrasts and opposites.

Freedom with guidance

What is the level of our guidance needed, in early stages/during process. How does this afford independence/choice/freedom/ autonomy and intrinsic motivation/resilience/ perseverance/persistence/risk-taking.