

Diversity × Colour: Understanding Cultural Diversity

Chihiro Tetsuka¹, Maho Sato², Koichi Kasahara³, Satoshi Ikeda⁴, Satoshi Ikeda⁵

¹Tokyo University of Social Welfare, Japan; chtetsuk@ed.tokyo-fukushi.ac.jp

²Chiba University, Japan; satomaho007@gmail.com

³Tokyo Gakugei University, Japan; kasahara@u-gakugei.ac.jp

⁴Hiroshima University, Japan; ikedas@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

⁵Gunma University, Japan; mogi@gunma-u.ac.jp

Abstract

The authors conducted a workshop intended to promote an understanding of cultural diversity. The participants engaged in a colour-arrangement activity at the InSEA European Congress 2018 Finland, held at Aalto University. During this workshop, we focused on colour as a device to show the participants' individual natures, including the socio-cultural background of each participant to support the creation of an understanding of cultural diversity. Art was made in the following way: the participants each selected three sheets of coloured paper and arranged them in relation to each other on a background piece of paper and then discussed the meaning of each colour on a worksheet that was passed out, with the participants naming the colour arrangements. An analysis of the data produced by the workshop showed that this activity was effective for promoting the understanding of self, others and other cultures and backgrounds.

Keywords

Diversity, colour arrangement, workshop, socio-cultural background.

Introduction

We developed this workshop as an aid for understanding cultural diversity. In it, we focus on colour as a device to show the participants' individual natures, which exhibit the varied socio-cultural backgrounds of the participants and promote the understanding of cultural diversity. The process of choosing colours is influenced by both personal factors and those having to do with socio-cultural backgrounds.

On the other hand, innovation in the dye technologies and globalisation made it possible for people choose colours not only limited to what was given by the institutional culture they lived in but choosing based on their own colour preferences as well. We designed a colour-arrangement workshop, in which participants choose and arrange colours based on their own senses and cultural background, founded on this insight. During the workshop, participants create a colour arrangement in response to the theme 'Art Education and I'; this is a common activity for all the participants. The activity promotes a deep reflection on the part of each person on his or her own identity and supports an aesthetic exploration of the participants' experience. We expect that various meanings will be found for each colour and that cultural identities will be reconsidered.

Colour-arrangement workshop

In this workshop, we focused on traditional Japanese colour arrangement, called *Kasanenoirome*; this word refers to the colour arrangement for kimonos (Fig. 1). In the Heian period (794–1192), women of high status wore colour arrangements that changed with the season. For example,



Figure 1: Kasanenorome for kimono

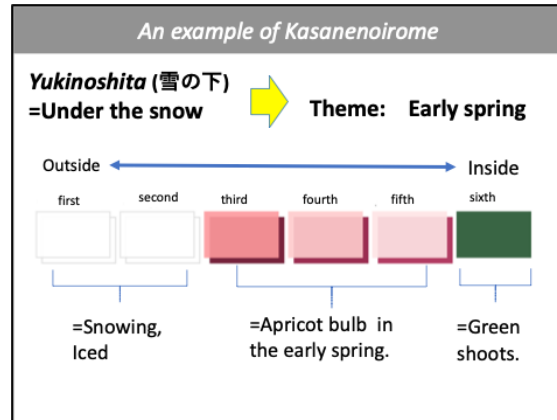


Figure 2: Example of Kasanenorome

the name of the arrangement Yukinoshita means ‘under the snow’, an expression referring to early spring. During this period, spring has already begun underground, although the ground is covered with snow and ice (Fig. 2). Kasanenorome uses a variety of colours, and each arrangement is given a name based on the arrangement of colour. A group name, Yukinoshita, first described the whole. Then, each colour had a special significance and was given a particular name. For example, the first and second layers had the colour names yuki or snow. The sixth layer represents green shoots, which are given the name new green. The above, led us in our design of the colour-arrangement workshop.

This workshop was held from 12:30 to 13:00 on June 20, 2018, at Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland during the InSEA European regional congress. There were 23 participants, drawn from many countries, namely, two from Australia, four from Austria, one from Canada, one from Cyprus, three from Finland, three from Hungary, one from Iceland, one from Latvia, one from the Philippines, three from Portugal, one from Spain and two from Sweden.

Participants were asked to do the following. 1) Choose pieces of paper of three colours and glue them onto the small white piece of paper provided. 2) Insert the small sheet of paper into the plastic film. 3) Complete the worksheet to explain the meaning of the colours you chose. 4)

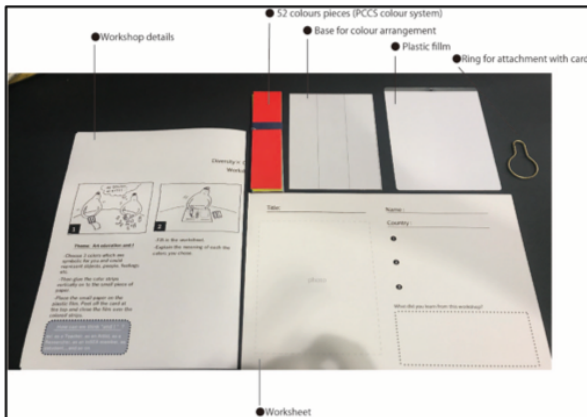


Figure 3: Packed workshop materials

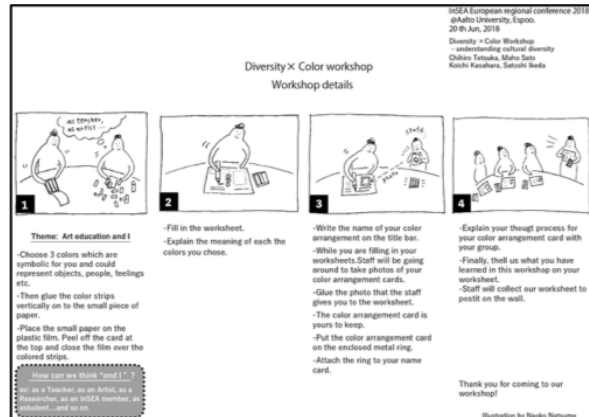


Figure 4: Workshop details

Name your colour arrangement and write the name on your worksheet. 5) Present your work to the group and respond to others' work. 6) Exhibit your arrangement.

To reduce the time needed to discuss the details of the instructions and of the workshop, we prepared materials for each participant (Fig. 3) and made a handout with the outline of the workshop outline (Fig. 4).

Documentation of workshop



Figure 5: The workshop began at 12:30



Figure 6: The workshop materials for each participant were packed in a plastic wrapper like a gift to express our welcome



Figure 7: Participants choose three colours that symbolize themselves. We used the PCCS (Practical Color Co-ordinate System) colored paper made in Japan



Figure 8: The participants chose colours in 10–15 minutes. After the choice is made, they wrote an explanation of each colour. Then, the participants spoke about themselves and deeply explained why they had chosen the colours they did



Figure 9: The completed colour card was attached to the participants' name tags. We hoped that the card will mediate conversation among the participants about art education

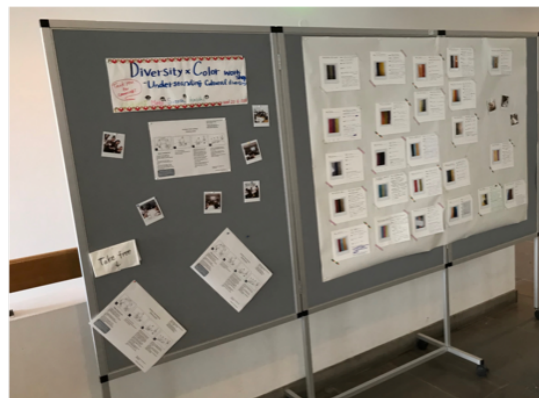


Figure 10: Exhibition in the lobby. Photos and participants' worksheets are displayed to share learning through the colour-arrangement workshop. It was a great opportunity for us as well. Thank you for everything

Data analysis

This is practice-based research. In this project, the data are participants' worksheets, colour-arrangement cards and the transcriptions of videos of the participants' comments on the work. At the first level of the analysis, the workshop was described both qualitatively and holistically. At the second level, important themes were drawn out from the events of the workshop and related to the theory of art education. During this data analysis, certain research questions came up. One concerns the individual themes that can be grouped under the theme 'Art Education and I' through this colour-arrangement workshop? How can participants design and make arrangements?

Colour-arrangement cards

Table 1 shows the work of the participants, including their titles, the meaning of each colour and the given participant's nationality.

Table 1: List of participants' work and worksheets

Participant	Nation	Title	Selected colors	Meaning
A	Iceland	Memories from ICELAND		1 LAVA: Beginning 2 Cover 3 September midnight sky: Dream
B	Filip (Finland/Lapland)	Sipuli-Itse (Onion-Self)		1 Passion 2 Light, Power? Energy? Strength? 3 Joy Warmth
C	Hungary	Finnish Sky Taste/ Japanese Fruit		1 Finnish air with a small breeze 2 Trees, little leaves, moves 3 In the sunlight as moving shadows
D	Hungary	Natural creativity		1 Nature(sky) & human creativity together(decorativity) 2 Nature, Green fields, Green Grass, Feel comfortable 3 Nature(sky) high, air perspective
E	Basque country (Spain)	Balance		1 My favorite colour 2 Give me confidence 3 Love how it contrasts with the purple and I love contrazouch
F	Sweden	Vertical striped landscape		1 I choosed blue color for the ice and air. I love clouds also. 2 The ochra is for I mke painting in yellow. I've been to the ochra-mountains. 3 The brigt green is a thouht color who the other up. Together they are a swedish---
G	Portugal	Summer		1 Flowers that smile 2 Peace 3 Sun
H	Canada	Spring, my birthday season		1 Spring sky color 2 Cherry blossom 3 Newleaves color
I	Sweden	To enjoy yourself together with people in a green world		1 Sky, Clean,Pure 2 Flowers 3 green, trees
J	Austria	Now Back Forward Oszillator		1 Action 2 Being in universal consciouness 3 Future & spirit
K	Latvia	Landscape		1 Baltic seasand 2 Morning fog 3 Ratvian forest
L	Austria	Changing		1 It's me 2 My husband 3 Our cat
M	Portugal	Wondering		1 Expecting 2 Infinity 3 Reality
N	Finland/ Germany	Light		1 Love 2 Surrender 3 Trancendence
O	Australia	Barossa Valley-Home		1 Sky 2 Wine 3 Earth
P	Finland	I'm never ready		1 Surprise and new thing s 2 Growth and professionalism 3 Hardship and
Q	Finland	Summer with the baby		1 My baby choose it. Yellow is commonly color that babies like 2 I choose reddish color by () warm summer to 3 Represent fresh air
R	Australia	Possibilities		1 Energy - the energy I both need and receive from creating alongside children 2 The Journey - symbolising the Nordic Forests and the green for growth + renewal of ideas. 3 Grounded - My creative practice sustains and grounds me as an artist / educator / self / mother / wife etc.
S	Cypos	Myself		1 The sea - my freedom, my peace, my two lovable persons 2 My passion for life and what I love 3 My eyes - my trouht
T	Portugal	Coloring Life		1 As artist: Warm 2 As teacher: Nature like seeds grow up 3 As researcher: Transparence of the other forms
U	Philippines	Art Educator		1 Flanbovsence and warmful 2 Fresh and harmony with the enviornment 3 Creativity and mystery
V	Hungary	Art Education and I		1 The joy of creation 2 The creative space 3 Nature: human, man made and natural enviornment
W	Austria	Refarence on the landscape of Finland		1 Strenght and majesty of the woods that can be so mumorous and silent on the same time 2 The small of the sea that brought hopenesher with the small of the pinees that make me breath deeply 3 The moment when the sun fouches the surface of the land and bring on worm feelings that worms the people

Themes in art education

We carefully examined the participants' work carefully, and recurring words and ideas were checked. The work was classified according to nine themes (Table 2).

Table 2: Variation of the themes

NO.	Theme of work	participants
1	Self-reflection in the quotidian	B, E, H, L, M, P, Q, S, T
2	Impression and experience of their trip to Finland	C, D, R, W
3	Nature of participants' own country	A, K, O
4	Relationship to art education	T, V
5	Consciousness of art teaching	G, Q, R, U
6	Representation of artists' work	F, K
7	Research themes	J
8	Universal theme	I
9	No clear expression	N

1. Self-reflection in the quotidian

Participant B represented the multi-layered identity she possessed, describing it as onions, clothed in the colours of passion, energy, joy and warmth. Participant M represented an image that looks for what is possible and what is not, and while maintaining expectations of herself, participant R presented the story of her life as it related to art education. Participant S selected colours subjectively, saying that they were 'my favourite', 'representing my passion', 'the colour of my eyes'. There were also representations of negative things as well: participant P said 'I'm never ready', saying she needed to develop herself. We could see the following representations among the participants: 1) subjective expressions of participants' appearances, intentions and passions, 2) represented images that meta-recognise themselves as reflective and 3) representing a relation between important experiences in life and the meanings of the things in their lives.

Some participants described current life. Participant E, a doctoral student, wrote of the cen-

tral of three colours, 'Please give me confidence'. It appeared that the colours chosen followed the central colour. Furthermore, participant L said that she had noticed that changes in her mind are affected by her husband and her cat. Thus, they also recognised their current state themselves through the workshop on colour arrangement.

2. Impression and experience of their trip to Finland

Some participants were inspired by the wild places of Finland that they had seen during the conference.

Participants C, D and W described the Finnish skies, winds, trees, swaying leaves, sun, which feels warm, the mysterious and dignified deep forests, the sunsets touching the horizon and the kind people of Finland. From this inspiration, they represented beauty of nature and their impressions from visiting Finland.

3. Nature of participants' own country

Participant A depicted nature Iceland, where he was from. He selected dark grey to represent lava, which means 'beginning'. Participant O represented the natural environment of Latvia, where he was born and raised and which forms the root of his art work. Additionally, participant K represented the area where she lives, a well-known wine-producing area. She depicted the colour of the sky of that area and of the ground and wine in a symbolic way. In this category, the participants represented colours metaphorically and symbolically, relating the memory and natural beauty of the land where they were born and grew up.

4. Relationship to art education

Some participants objectively represented an overview of art education. Participant T selected the three colours using the three aspects of the artist, the researcher and the teacher to represent art education from a different standpoint. Further, participant V used the colours of the Hungar-

ian flag, giving an original meaning to the three colours. She represented the red as herself, the white as the possibility of art education and the green as the nature of Hungary. These points were set from a bird's-eye perspective, and art education was represented from several aspects.

5. Consciousness of art teaching

Participant R pointed to 'energy' as a representative concept that is necessary for teachers to exhibit. In addition, participant U represented the abilities and competences necessary for art educators using three colours to mean warmth, harmony and creativity. This showed a view of the occupation of an art educator. In addition, participant G, an elementary school teacher, represented abstractions with colour, such as children's faces as 'flowers that smile' and attitudes that children take on during art classes.

6. Representation of artists' work

Some artists were participating in the workshop. Participant F explained that she wanted a colour combination for the picture to be as bright as a painter, and the three selected colours were combinations of the colours of the French landscape that she regularly painted. The colours were combined such that the colour of the ochre-coloured mountain would stand out. Participant K represented the natural environment of Latvia, a source of his art. They selected and used (and represented) the colours, which are used for their art making, in their colour arrangements.

7. Research themes

Participant J represented his research theme in colour. He stated that it was important for teachers to reflect the refuge they find in their own teaching. Thus, one of the participants represented key concepts of the research framework in colour.

8. Universal theme

Participant I chose three colours that represented the sky, flowers and trees, and she said, 'Let's treasure the future of the green world, full of love and enjoy ourselves'. Thus, some participants represented themes of environmental protection and a peaceful and sustainable world beyond the representation of individuals.

9. No clear expression

Some of the participants said that they could not express what they wanted to say. Participant N gave the meaning of the three colours chosen as 'Love', 'Surrender' and 'Transcendence', and when she was called upon to explain her artwork, she said, 'I cannot explain it clearly'. In other words, the artwork contained a superfluity of meaning represented by colour and image, an expression that verbal expressions are inadequate.

Process of –making: How did participants arrange three colours?

In this workshop, process is also an important factor to understand the participants' work. The results of analysis show seven variations of the relationship of the three colours, and specific examples for each variation are shown below.

Several participants represented themselves by setting the colours as the axis of their own existence and granting colours to set viewpoints. The setting and positioning of the three aspects were different for each participant; participant T set the aspect as an artist, a teacher and a researcher; participant V set it as herself, art education and the nature of her country, participant R set the aspect as a faculty position, a trip to Finland and herself. Participant Q coloured in relation to childbirth, an extraordinary event in life and related to the nature of the country. Thus, there was a representation that analytically showed the elements that are shape themselves, relating them as components.

Some participants also represented a combination of colours that were related to visual landscapes and nature. Participants C, D and W extracted three iconic colours from the Finnish landscape that they saw and felt, and this structure of colours was constructed in a sort of reproduction. In addition, participant A selected three colours to represent the memory of the beauty of nature in his country; participants F and K selected colours used in their paintings, namely of what they usually painted, participant O selected the three colours to represent the sky, earth and wine or grape, which were always present and available and that was expressed with boldness. Participant H selected the colours representing the cherry blossom and the colour of new leaves related to the season since her birthday was in the spring. In this way, three colours were chosen and related for to reproduce nature and landscapes that can be visually perceived or symbolically represented.

Participant P represented her history as related to her education in art. With the colours she chose, she represented emotions founded in experiences such as suffering, growth and enjoyment. In this way, the three colours she chose were chosen for the purpose of representing events that she remembered and the emotions at that time in chronological order, representing colours to be related on the time line.

Participant V represented using the colour of the Hungarian flag, her national origin. However, each colour among red, white and green received a new, different meaning, such as ‘the joy of creation’, ‘creative space’ and ‘nature’. There was thus representation that incorporated already-existing colour combinations into their own representations and created an artwork by adding different meanings.

Discussion

The results showed that this workshop could demonstrate a rich depiction of the diversity of the participants in various aspects, and it provided them a chance to become more aware of

their different ways of life and identities related to 'Art Education and I' by making colour arrangements and sharing them with the members of a group.

Nine diverse directions emerged for the research question 'What themes do participants express in their representation?' Nine participants expressed 1) self-reflection in the quotidian using three colours and arrangements. Four more reflected their 5) The consciousness of art teaching as is indicated in Table 2. Their arrangements brought them to reflect on their present status as a teacher, a researcher and an artist, and sometimes as an individual within the family. Participant T showed a clear, strict reflection of 'Art Education and I' from an A/r/tographic viewpoint, in which individuals feel and think themselves to be in multiple roles and identities. For the consideration of identity in diversity within or through art education practice, A/r/tography is very suggestive. Inquiry through various and multiple commitments to ways of being in the world, negotiating personal engagement in a community of belonging and creating practices in in-between diverse individuals personally and socially form important practical feature of A/r/tography (Irwin 2013). Certainly, such inquiries were conducted over a short time period, and they did not have enough reflective text. However, this workshop could nevertheless bring them into a small inquiry about their identity and to first step of A/r/tographic inquiry.

Other categories, 4) relationship to art education, 6) representation of the artist's work and research themes as researcher are merely one aspect of a complex being and identity. Irwin (2008) illustrates that our being is a being singular plural (Nancy, 2005/2010). Further, for 8) universal theme and 9) could not express clearly, it may be said that the approach of this workshop dealt with inexpressible things in an aesthetic way. Therefore, the practice of using sheets of coloured paper and asking participants to arrange them, creating reflective short descriptions and sharing them, allowed participants to rethink, express and share their identities among people with different backgrounds and who live in different circumstance, and it let them explore the possibility of this type of art-based inquiry for understanding themselves as individuals amid

cultural diversity. Art-based exploration can employ this framework.

It could also promote recognition of the relationship to nature. Many participants conjured up images of the sun, the wind, the air, the sky and the sea from their coloured paper arrangement. They may have been inspired by the beauty of nature in pleasant Finland, and their memories of a pleasant light, wind, air, sky and sea were evoked. Another variation of the category from Table 2 of 2) impressions and experiences from their trip to Finland expressed the deep impression the participants had of nature in Finland, with a display of the fundamental characteristic of human beings, that we can realise ourselves within our relationship to nature. 3) Nature of participants' own country showed an identification of the participant with the colour of nature.

Dewey (1934/2010) asserts that there is an integrative relationship between the aesthetic experience of nature and the arts. Art is a singularity within a range of everyday life, forming an aesthetic and experiential point of view. Is a more significant consideration possible? Jónsdóttir (2017) demonstrated a relationship between identity and the colour of nature in her study of art in education for sustainability. She showed how individuals are influenced by the nature of the places they inhabit place in her project. Her work was inspired by the concept of the everyday aesthetic (Saito, 2013), and she states that all people 'participate in the world-making project as citizens and consumers, and everyday aesthetics plays an important role' (Saito, 2013). To find out the relationship between oneself and the colour of nature in an inhabited place makes it possible for individuals to realise what they are in an aesthetic way.

Some of participants mentioned an identity as an artist, a teacher and a researcher, and they spoke of the colour of nature in their own country. It seems that at first, these are unrelated. However, the accumulation of impressions of nature and their lives are connected on a deep level, where mind and aesthetics meet, which is expressed in everyday life. Such connections emerged through this art-based exploration.

In this workshop, narrative was woven in coloured paper, which was arranged and named, and their work and reflection was shared with others. Not only is there clear reflective intention but also ambiguity that cannot be clearly expressed. Personal identity and culture are nourished within -term transactions in everyday life. Diversity is rooted in that multi-layered affection within thought and the socio-cultural background. Although this is a short-term practice, it contains an A/r/tographic viewpoint and approach.

This workshop can awaken participants' awareness of identity, and that has a deep connection with the aesthetic domain of the experience of the quotidian. A route could be found here, from the individual to culture, within the variation of the use of colour and arrangement. A diversity of colour makes it possible for us to realise ourselves and communicate with others.

Conclusion

This educational activity is effective for developing an understanding of self, others and different cultures and backgrounds. It also illustrated a deep connection with individuals and nature in one's home. These aesthetic and art-making processes awaken the participants' awareness of identity. We learned, through analysis, that, as the social-cultural background appeared as a colour arrangement, it appeared that personal experience, memories and sensibilities were expressed in relation to exploring themes. Furthermore, this workshop opens diversity, although it does so over the short term, and it promotes understanding of cultural diversity through inquiry. This is the distinct advantage of this workshop, that such deep self-reflection and mutual reflective and creative exchange could be created through this simple coloured paper workshop. It is necessary to meet the next challenge of this activity in different conditions and with different objectives to develop greater reflection through deep consideration.

Acknowledges

The authors would like to thank all participants in this workshop. Some picture provided by Mitsuyo Yoshimura. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI, grant numbers JP15K17415, JP1801010, JP18H0100701 , JP18K131600A and SSHRC 890-2017-0006.

References

- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York, NY: Minton, Balch & Company. (Trans Osamu Kurita. (2010). KEIKEN-TOSHITENO-GEIJUTSU, Koyoshobo)
- Irwin, L. R. (2008). Communities of A/r/tographic practice. In S. Springgay & et al. (Eds.), *Being with A/r/tography* (pp. 71–80). Rotterdam: Sernse Publishers.
- Irwin, L. R. (2013). Becoming A/r/tography. *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research*, the National Art Education Association, 54(3), 198–215.
- Nancy., J.-L. (2005). *Being singular plural*. (Trans Keisuke Kato. (2010). FUKUSU-NISHITE-TANSU-NO-SONZAI, shoraisha)
- Saito, Y. (2013). *Everyday aesthetics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ásthildur B. Jónsdóttir. (2017). *Artistic actions for sustainability: Potential of art in education for sustainability* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Lapland.