

Artifacts—Truth and ideas in things

Artifacts are simply objects found or made by humans. We live our lives surrounded by artifacts and they become connected to our identity.

Why Artifacts?

- Objects, or artifacts are present in all lives
- They may not have value in the outside world, but they symbolize and represent relationships, history and events that matter
- Objects are handed down over generations
- They are present in homes of families that have migrated from other parts of the world.
- They connect the worlds of home and school because they can travel between them.

Habitus—is the set of socially learned dispositions, skills and ways of acting, that are often taken for granted, and which are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life. It represents the lived experiences of everyday life; family life is structured by the habitual/dispositions.

Objects are linked to habitus and to cultural stories. When these objects come to school they can act as boundary objects, crossing domains.

Some Key Questions:

- What is the relationship between artifacts and stories?
- How do artifacts represent identities, cultures and memories?
- How can artifacts connect communities through interaction?
- How can artifacts lead to literacy learning?

Third Space -- If we consider the home as the “first space,” and the public sphere (the classroom) as the “second space,” often children have difficulty navigating the gap between these very different ways of life. This is especially true for students from non-mainstream backgrounds whose values and ways of life are often not reflected in the schools. The idea of the “third space” is to create a space where these identities and ways of life can meet. Understandings can be shared. Students can learn to relate what they know outside of school to what they are learning, and teachers can better understand students’ out of school lives to be able to better connect concepts to students’ prior understandings. When teachers and students share artifacts, we can move towards a more equal collaborative relationship.