



Education and the Arts Research Overview

A summary report prepared
for the Australia Council for the Arts
Dr Mary Ann Hunter
September 2005



Australian Government





Australian Government



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CEO's Foreword

In the 2001 report, *Australians and the Arts*, 85 per cent of Australians agreed that the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian child. In addition, 86 per cent of Australians said they would feel more positive about the arts if there were 'better education and opportunities for kids in the arts' and 77 per cent agreed that 'we should all learn more about the arts'.

It seems Australians know the benefits of linking arts and education intuitively, but we have needed solid 'home-grown' evidence to back this up. So, over the last four years, the Australia Council has commissioned research into the impacts of arts participation on student learning and development.

The six projects we supported were diverse. Each one is a valuable investigation of a particular issue or area, but part of our intention in commissioning the research was to consolidate the Australian evidence-base for the impacts of the arts in education.

This *Education and the Arts Research Overview* was prepared for the Australia Council by Dr Mary Ann Hunter. It brings together the projects and allows us to consider them as a whole body of work. Dr Hunter brings a fresh perspective to the findings, summarising each project and analysing the findings to identify common themes.

We believe this document is an important addition to the growing body of research in arts and education, as it helps to close the gaps between research, policy and practice.

I encourage you and other arts champions to use this Overview to promote the benefits of arts-rich education and help realise the Australia Council's vision: to see the arts and creativity positioned as central to all Australian education.

Jennifer Bott
Chief Executive Officer



Introduction

Since 2001 the Australia Council has commissioned six education and the arts research projects with the aim of developing an Australian evidence base on the impacts of arts participation on students' learning and development. Four of these projects were state-based and supported through the Australia Council's Education and the Arts Partnership Initiative, and two were national studies. All projects centred on arts participation with children in middle school years (aged 9 to 15 years) and most projects also focused on children perceived to be 'at risk'.

This overview summarises the scope and results of these projects: it acknowledges the diversity and particularities of the projects' contexts and research methods; summarises each project's aims, methods and findings; identifies evidence-based claims and analyses commonalities in these findings about the impact of arts participation; and lists the reports' recommendations for the future. It does not, however, aim to critique the comparative merit or scholarly integrity of the projects.

Generally, the research findings demonstrate that arts participation can positively impact students' development, particularly if professional support is provided for teachers and collaborative partnerships are established between students, teachers, artists, families and communities. There is evidence in the research reports to indicate that arts participation, to varying degrees, positively impacts on students':

- social and personal development
- attitude to learning
- literacy
- numeracy
- arts knowledge and skills
- generic competencies (writing, communicating, problem-solving, planning, organising, perseverance)
- enjoyment and value of the arts.

The research also suggests that arts programs in schools can effectively:

- contribute to improvement in teaching quality
- provide students with positive role models
- encourage family involvement in students' learning
- raise specific cultural issues in Indigenous communities.

The reports present useful findings and inferences about what constitutes an effective arts education program. In summary, the attributes of such a program are:

- student-centred learning
- administrative support
- integrated professional development
- positive learning environment
- an integrated program
- 'authentic' learning
- exposure to the diversity of the arts
- positive role models
- program transparency and flexibility
- recognition of cultural difference
- continuity and sustainability
- artists as effective partners.

The reports raise a number of recommendations regarding future research. As it is not the purpose of this overview to critique these recommendations, nor to add to them, they have simply been replicated here. Calls for further research to validate these initial Australian findings and for more substantial longitudinal studies are repeated among the reports. The importance of further developing the community, school, and family partnerships established through these research projects is also expressed.

Dr Mary Ann Hunter



Section one Background

The six education and the arts research projects commissioned by the Australia Council are detailed below. The first two were national studies; the remaining four were state-based and supported through the Australia Council's Education and the Arts Partnership Initiative (EAPI).

THE RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 1 Jennifer Bryce, Juliette Mendelovits, Adrian Beavis, Joy McQueen and Isabelle Adams. (March 2004). **Evaluation of School-based Arts Education Programmes in Australian Schools.** Australian Council for Educational Research. Jointly commissioned by Department of Education, Science and Training & Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts **(Herein referred to as ACER)**
- 2 Margaret S. Barrett and Heather M. Smigiel. (May 2005). **Australian Children and the Arts: Meaning, Value and Participation.** Australian Research Council/Australia Council for the Arts linkage project report. University of Tasmania. **(University of Tasmania)**
- 3 Anne Bamford, Reg Newitt, Jan Irvine with Rachel Darell. (c 2004). **EAPI Report: Promoting the Value of the Arts.** NSW Ministry for the Arts, The University of Technology, Sydney, and the NSW Department of Education and Training. **(NSW-EAPI)**
- 4 Anja Tait. (Oct 2004). **A Pedagogy of Trust: Improving Educational Outcomes through Partnerships.** Northern Territory Music School, NT Department of Employment, Education and Training, Wagaman Primary School, Moulden Park School and Neighbourhood Centre, Charles Darwin University Learning Research Group, and ArtsNT. **(NT-EAPI)**
- 5 Barbara Piscitelli, Angela Renshaw, Julie Dunn, David Hawke. (2004). **Education, Enculturation and the Arts: Fuelling an Innovation Culture.** Arts Queensland, Education Queensland and Queensland University of Technology. **(QLD-EAPI)**

- 6 Felicity Haynes and Beryl Chalk.(Nov 2004). **The Impact of Arts Education Programmes on Student Motivation: Final Report on a Research Project.** University of Western Australia, Western Australian Department of Education and Training and Western Australian Department for Culture and the Arts. **(WA-EAPI)**

This overview is intended to be used as a tool for evidence-based decision-making by government agencies. **This overview does not aim to critique the comparative merit or scholarly integrity of these research projects.** Rather, the following summary and analysis focuses on:

- acknowledging the diversity and particularities of the contexts and research methods used in the projects
- summarising the projects' aims, methods and findings
- identifying evidence-based claims about the impact of arts participation and learning, and drawing out commonalities in the research findings
- listing the reports' recommendations for future research.

The remainder of **this chapter** identifies contextual issues arising from the research projects.

Chapter 2: Project Summaries compiles each projects' aims, methods and stated key findings.

Chapter 3: Impacts of Arts Participation lists and discusses commonalities in the evidence-based claims about the impacts of arts participation on students' learning and development.

Chapter 4: Attributes of Effective Arts Programs details effective arts program features based on a collation of the six reports. **Chapter 5: Research Recommendations** lists the recommendations made in the six reports.

DIVERSITY OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

Each research project used different sets of objectives and methods to investigate the impact of arts participation on students' learning and development. This diversity reflects the variety of arts practice in Australian schools and communities.

Two projects involved 'interventions' in educational environments. The NT-EAPI research delivered and evaluated classroom programs with embedded music education content and teaching strategies, for Indigenous ESL (English as a Second Language) learners in two urban primary schools in Darwin and Palmerston. The NSW-EAPI project involved integrating multi-arts programs in the curricula of an urban and a regional primary school in New South Wales. The ACER project evaluated the impact of four pre-existing arts programs in drama and music in schools and youth arts settings in the Northern Territory, South Australia, and Victoria. The QLD-EAPI researchers conducted a survey about arts curriculum provision in schools across Queensland and developed six case studies of children's arts engagements in urban, remote and rural schools and communities (including one study of a touring organisation). The University of Tasmania project involved children at 28 schools and 27 non-school sites across Australia expressing their perceptions about the arts in their lives; and the WA-EAPI project identified and analysed the impact of 10 artists-in-schools programs in Western Australia. (Further detail about these projects' aims, methods and findings appear in Chapter 2).

Each report outlines the specific methods used to collect and analyse information. Some methods are consistent with protocols in social sciences research while others reflect modes of enquiry more common in the arts and humanities. All six projects derived qualitative information (sometimes described as 'rich data') using methods such as observations, interviews, surveys, group discussions, children's

stories and journals. Some projects also employed standardised tests to gain numerical data to measure students' achievements. The NT-EAPI project also drew on the 2004 Indigenous Research Reform Agenda to acknowledge the critical issues inherent in choosing methods and approaches when working with Indigenous students whose view of the world may be different from non-Indigenous teachers and researchers. Although almost all the reports' authors acknowledge that the small scale of their projects means that further studies are required to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings, these multi-method approaches are appropriate to the complexities and particularities of the diverse programs and children involved.

Given the diversity of the projects' contexts and processes, it would be inappropriate to simply aggregate their findings as proof of causal links between the arts and other areas of students' personal, social and academic development. As international studies confirm, such a claim would be fraught with problems given the complexity of the arts learning experience, the diversity of arts participation possibilities, and myriad other factors that impact on students' development and achievement. However, given these caveats, an analysis of the reports' findings provides, firstly, a multi-dimensional picture of arts education across the country, with evidence of perceived effects; and, secondly, they provide a valuable framework for future research into the effects of participation in the arts on students' learning and development. Project researchers agree that further research is necessary to explore and strengthen the claims of this baseline data.

RESEARCH VALIDITY

As is the case with international benchmark studies on arts education¹, the Australian projects summarised here offer an abundance of 'rich data' that befits the multi-layered experience of arts learning. Yet, the reports' authors also raise significant concerns about the validity and reliability of their data. These relate to matters such as sample size, the validity of quantitative and qualitative measures, and the duration of studies, among other things. As many of the researchers point out – including those who used quantitative methods – the effectiveness of arts participation on students' other learning areas cannot be measured solely by standardised tests and statistics. A full discussion of these matters is beyond the scope of this document and this analysis of their findings is necessarily qualified by these issues.

'DIRECT LEARNING TRANSFER'

Given the qualifications above, consideration needs to be made for claims of 'direct learning transfer' from the arts to other areas of learning. As the international research cited above suggests, the question that needs to be asked is: What is it about arts programs – as distinct from other well-designed, well-taught educative programs – that produces these particular results? The research projects here directly and indirectly respond to this question in different ways. For example, the WA-EAPI report provides discussion on the uniqueness of the arts generally; the NT-EAPI report provides detailed descriptions of the actual arts activities which took place as part of the research; and the ACER report forthrightly addresses the question and offers specific findings.

Overall, the diversity of the six projects indicate that future research in arts and education in Australia needs to take into account not only the facts and figures that may demonstrate positive impact on students' achievement in other learning areas, but attention needs to be maintained on the 'what' and the 'how': that is, what constitutes exemplary arts learning in the first place (to allow it to have such wider positive effects) and how does it happen?

The Australian projects summarised here offer an abundance of 'rich data' that befits the multi-layered experience of arts learning.

MIDDLE SCHOOLING AND STUDENTS 'AT RISK'

In line with the Australia Council's priorities for the research, each project focused on children in middle schooling (aged 9 to 15 years); although no projects sought to explicitly address how the impacts of arts participation for this age group differed from that of younger or older children. One related observation made by the QLD-EAPI team was that, in a survey at one of their case-study schools, 21% of 9 to 12 year olds indicated that the arts were 'extremely important' to them personally compared to only 7% of 13 to 15 year olds (QLD-EAPI 81.) This suggests that arts education in the middle schooling years is quite a valid focus for research given that, as students grow through this age range, their initial high level of engagement with the arts tends to wane.

¹ Edward B. Fisk, ed. (1999). *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. The Arts Education Partnership, The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities; Laura Longley, ed. (1999). *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*. The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and the Arts Education Partnership; Richard J Deasy, ed. (2002). *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. The Arts Education Partnership, National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. Department of Education.

Most of the projects also involved the participation of students identified as 'at risk' although varied definitions and interpretations of the term 'at risk' were evident. In the NSW-EAPI project, young people identified as 'at risk' were those 'with a constellation of inter-related risk factors, either within themselves, or within the community in which they live' including factors such as 'substance abuse, poor educational and employment histories, poor health' (NSW-EAPI 123). In one of the schools participating in the NT-EAPI project, seven academically successful Indigenous female students were identified as 'at risk' by Indigenous staff who perceived that they were at risk of 'not achieving their potential as emerging youth leaders for the Indigenous community' (NT-EAPI 43). The WA-EAPI report outlines the Western Australian Department of Education and Training's definition of 'at risk' as 'those students who may be at risk of not achieving their major learning outcomes of school to levels which enable them to achieve their potential' (WA-EAPI 7): a definition which could include students with exceptional potential.

While no projects sought to address how arts participation impacts those students perceived to be 'at risk' compared to those deemed 'not at risk', useful observations were made about the features of programs that seemed to successfully engage these targeted individuals and groups. For example, the ACER report describes a music program in which the Indigenous male musician involved in the project became a positive role model for the participating Indigenous students in aspects beyond music. In the same report, another reference is made to the importance of praise in arts programs with students 'at risk'. Frequent praise in this context (that is, in creative activity that doesn't necessarily rely on a right and wrong way of doing things) was perceived to dispel many students' fear of failure – a perceived major factor in 'at-risk' students' non-engagement with learning.

Frequent praise in creative activity that doesn't necessarily rely on a right and wrong way of doing things was perceived to dispel many students' fear of failure.



Section two Project Summaries

ACER

Jennifer Bryce, Juliette Mendelovits, Adrian Beavis, Joy McQueen and Isabelle Adams. (March 2004).

Evaluation of School-based Arts Education Programmes in Australian Schools. **Australian Council for Educational Research.** Jointly commissioned by Department of Education, Science and Training & Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. **(Herein referred to as ACER)**

This project evaluated four Australian school-based arts programs: Arts@Direk in South Australia, a program mentoring teachers to enhance their professional understanding and implementation of literacy learning through drama; the Boys' Business Music Program in the Northern Territory, an experimental music education program to engage male middle-school students; the Indigenous Music Program, a secondary level Indigenous instrumental music delivery program for remote community schools; and SCRAYP Youth Arts with an Edge in Victoria, a youth arts drama program in Melbourne that aims to engage all young people, particularly 'at risk' young people, in schools and the wider community.

What is the impact of each arts program on participating students' academic progress, engagement with learning and attendance at school?

Significant features of the ACER report include an extensive literature review which surveys current international research in the area; a useful distinction between student outcomes that are 'ends in themselves' and those 'enabling skills

and attitudes' that are partly instrumental; and a comprehensive list of the attributes of effective arts programs. These attributes are outlined with others in Chapter 3 of this overview.

AIMS AND METHODS

The central questions guiding this research were:

- What is the impact of each arts program on participating students' academic progress, engagement with learning and attendance at school?
- Are empirical or anecdotal examples of improved learning outcomes substantiated?
- What are the attributes of arts programs that are of particular benefit to the students?

Each program was evaluated using multiple methods. Some of these methods included:

- statistical comparison of students who had, and had not, participated in the arts programs on their system-level literacy, numeracy and writing test scores as well as tests for key competencies (such as problem solving, communication, planning and organising and working with others);² observations of lessons
- one-on-one and focus group discussions with students, teachers, artists, principals and community leaders
- pre and post-program narrative writing tasks
- comparison of questionnaire data which measured attitudes to school and reading engagement between a test group of arts participants and young people matched on background characteristics from a larger Australian OECD PISA³ database.

For the Indigenous Music Program, evaluation rested solely on field visits because it was found that ranking-based assessment was not important to the educational focus of the community schools involved.

² ACER assessment tools were used.

³ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Programme for International Student Assessment's 2000 student survey.

KEY FINDINGS

- Students' self-esteem was increased through arts participation, particularly for students from 'dysfunctional backgrounds' and those who suffered from particular disabilities such as attention deficit disorder and autism. It was suggested that an increase in self-esteem helped students feel more positive about themselves as learners.
- Students were better able to work co-operatively with others through arts participation. This involved working together as a team, learning that each person was an integral member of the team, and learning various social and communication skills needed to contribute to the team.
- Students learned to plan and set goals through arts participation and to realise that working hard over a relatively long time can be more rewarding than obtaining immediate results.
- Arts programs that enhanced students' learning offered:
 - positive reinforcement
 - engagement in 'authentic activities'
 - consistent procedures and processes
 - a 'safe' environment where risk taking was acceptable and everyone's contribution was valued.
- The programs also offered the following features that could be perceived as unique to the arts:
 - learning opportunities for students who did not fit the conventional mould of institutional learning
 - particularly tangible experiences for working in a team
 - an opportunity for reflection and constructive criticism
 - a 'levelling' effect in that students who had disabilities or who were socially ostracised for various reasons could be included
 - helpful ways of expressing and exploring emotions.
- The extent to which skills acquired in arts programs could be transferred to other areas of the curriculum depended on the school itself. The example of Direk demonstrated that a 'whole school' approach to arts implementation can result in easily observed transferal of processes and skills to other learning contexts.

Students learned to plan and set goals through arts participation and to realise that working hard over a relatively long time can be more rewarding than obtaining immediate results.

Margaret S. Barrett and Heather M. Smigiel. (May 2005). *Australian Children and the Arts: Meaning, Value and Participation*. Australian Research Council/Australia Council for the Arts Linkage Project Report. **University of Tasmania**.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This was an arts linkage project supported by Australian Research Council and Australia Council for the Arts. *Australian Children and the Arts* reports on a project that explored the meaning, value and purpose of the arts in Australian children's lives. Interviews to discover children's perceptions of the arts were conducted with children aged between 5 and 15 years in 28 school settings and 27 non-school settings across Australia.

Significant features of this research include its rationale to redress a lack in national data about Australians' perceptions of the arts and its focus on children as 'co-researchers' with the design of the study.

The design of the project sought to 'build on children's knowledge and experience, and to value their engagement as co-researchers in exploring research questions'.

AIMS AND METHODS

The main aims of the project were:

- to explore the meaning, value and purpose of the arts in Australian children's lives
- to develop research methods and techniques sensitive to children's ways of communicating and constructing meaning.

The design of the project sought to 'build on children's knowledge and experience, and to value their engagement as co-researchers in exploring research questions'. The researchers encouraged children to relate their own stories concerning their engagement with the arts. Target schools and youth arts organisations were selected to offer as diverse a cross-section as possible (e.g. metropolitan and regional, isolated schools as well as a representative spread of art forms).

Data was generated from:

- small group open-ended interviews
- photo generation techniques in which children were asked to photograph the arts as they occurred in their school
- artefact elicitation in which young children (aged 5 to 8) were invited to discuss the artefact concerned on an individual basis
- photo elicitation in which discussion in paired interviews with children aged 8 to 15 years was facilitated.

All interviews were video-taped, transcribed and analysed by:

- identifying themes in children's accounts of their participation in arts experience and 'their attributions of meaning and value in these experiences'
- re-presenting children's stories 'to illuminate understanding of children's perceptions of the function and value of the arts in their lives, and their beliefs concerning their future engagement with the arts'.

KEY FINDINGS

The research indicated that Australian children in school settings:

- described the arts in multiple ways and held 'open categories' of definition for what constitutes the arts
- identified the processes of 'reflective thinking, problem-solving, skill development, applying a learned skill in new and unique ways, practising and hard work' as features of arts participation that are also common across the arts
- perceived the arts to have important meaning in their lives as a means of expressing and communicating thoughts and feelings
- described engagement with the arts as a 'retreat' or 'escape' from reality

- described their engagement with the arts in terms of 'flow' or optimal experiences
- emphasised the all-pervasive nature of the arts in the world, suggesting that 'the arts are embedded in everything'
- did not require the practice of the arts as a professional to determine the identification of an individual as an artist
- described their arts practice and that of their families and peers in terms of their participation as a 'maker' rather than as an audience-member
- viewed engagement with the arts as an 'attitude', a 'way of seeing' their worlds
- described key differences between arts engagement in school and at home
- differentiated between doing the arts and learning the skills to do the arts
- worked in the arts out of school, by themselves
- valued the opportunity to talk about the arts
- were aware and appreciative of the physical structure of schools and the efforts that are made to produce school environments that are artistic/aesthetic/attractive, well-planned and thoughtful.

The research indicated that Australian children in youth arts (non-school) settings:

- spoke of being driven by a passion to engage with arts in youth arts settings
- emphasised the role of 'being part of a group of like-minded individuals' to their engagement in youth arts settings
- describe successful youth arts environments as those that provide a 'safe' learning environment that is infused with 'trust' and encouraged risk-taking

- described arts engagement in youth arts environments as less controlled, more experimental, less judgmental, more supportive, flexible, and with fewer time constraints than that available in many school settings
- suggested youth arts organisations foster personal growth

Teachers in youth arts organisations demonstrate care and understanding of each student as an individual, and hold different values in their approach to arts practice and arts education.

- suggested that teachers in youth arts organisations demonstrate care and understanding of each student as an individual, and hold different values in their approach to arts practice and arts education
- identified individual autonomy as a feature of their arts engagement in youth arts organisations
- described youth arts teachers as having high standards, high expectations, and dedication and commitment to the teaching and learning enterprise
- described arts engagement in school settings as being driven by assessment rather than artistic endeavour
- described personal well-being as a key outcome of their engagement with the arts.

Anne Bamford, Reg Newitt, Jan Irvine with Rachel Darell. (c 2004).
EAPI Report: Promoting the Value of the Arts. NSW Ministry for the Arts,
The University of Technology, Sydney, and the NSW Department of
Education and Training.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This was a project of the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Ministry for the Arts, and the Centre for Research in Education and the Arts with the University of Technology, Sydney. It involved a partnership with Merrylands East Public School in Fairfield and Kelso Public School near Bathurst. The project was supported by the Australian Theatre for Young People, Musica Viva in Schools, the Western Sydney Dance Action Program, Campbelltown Bicentennial Gallery, Bathurst Regional Gallery and the Fairfield and Bathurst School District Offices.

This was a project of the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Ministry for the Arts, and the Centre for Research in Education and the Arts with the University of Technology, Sydney.

Promoting the Value of the Arts reports on the trial and evaluation of an educational intervention: that is, a program specifically designed and implemented for the purposes of this research. The intervention involved teacher professional development (in arts-specific skills and knowledge, and planning and programming an arts curriculum), artists in residence, and students' attendance at arts performances and exhibitions. The project involved 9 to 13 year olds at Merrylands East, an urban school in metropolitan Sydney, and Kelso Public School outside of Bathurst. Students and teachers worked over a school year with artists, consultants and arts educators to integrate, enhance and expand arts practices within the schools so that up to one-third of each day was spent learning through or about the arts. At Merrylands, this was done through a program centred on communication and identity and, at Kelso, a unit on the theme of gold and the history of Bathurst was implemented.

Significant features of this research include the integrated curriculum approach and the aim of these programs to involve students in learning through or about the arts for at least one-third of each school day.

AIMS AND METHODS

The central research question was: How does an intensive arts-based program impact on the school experience of 'at risk' middle school-aged children, the school and the community?

The specific aims of the research were:

- to determine the extent to which an arts intensive program with 'at risk' middle school-aged children impacts on the school experience and learning
- to test a range of arts interventions to determine the characteristics of quality interventions within the Australian context
- to use the data as a pilot study for the future development of a large-scale, Australia-wide research investigation into the impact of arts-based education with 'at risk' learners in the middle school years.

The schools selected for the project were identified by their school district – one metropolitan Sydney, one non-metropolitan school. Each had low socio-economic status and a limited arts curriculum offering in Years 5–6. One school community had a high proportion of non-English speaking background students – many from the Middle East – the other had almost equal representation of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous students, low overall performance in state literacy and numeracy tests, variable attendance, a mobile population and little community interest in the school. Selection was also based on the fact that these schools had supportive principals and class teachers, and supportive district superintendents.

The data for analysis was collected through observation, surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups and interviews with students, teachers, principals and artists. In addition, written documentation was collated including student portfolios, work programs, attendance records and basic skills test results.

The methodology was based on the Kennedy Centre's 1999 'Intersections' study⁴ that identified nine critical success factors essential to effective arts and education collaborations:

- 1 leadership and vision
- 2 effective planning
- 3 broad-based community representation
- 4 teacher participation
- 5 artist participation
- 6 public awareness and communication
- 7 awareness of program catalyst
- 8 site-specific program design and
- 9 ongoing assessment of partnership. These provided a critical framework for the development and evaluation of the project.

KEY FINDINGS

- Children's reading comprehension and ability to interpret characters improved.
- Children's confidence to express ideas improved as did their skills in written and oral communication.
- Children's perceived level of confidence and pride in their work, school and achievement increased.
- Teachers perceived children to be more independent and motivated learners.
- Teachers perceived students to be more mature, independent and cohesive by demonstrating improved ability to work independently, listen and respond to each other's ideas and 'move around the school without disruption'.

- Teachers observed that students were able to speak with confidence about their experiences and reflect on their learning.
- Teachers observed students' improved body awareness.
- Teachers perceived students to be more settled in class.
- Teachers observed children tending to use more complex language forms.
- Teachers observed students' enhanced ability to use technology.
- Teachers gained confidence in the arts and collaborated more closely in their planning and teaching.

Children's confidence to express ideas improved as did their skills in written and oral communication.

- Principals perceived that there was enhanced collaborative and holistic planning undertaken by teachers.
- Principals observed that the project encouraged teachers to develop integrated programs that were creative, innovative and connected.
- Principals recognised opportunities for community collaboration through the arts.
- Artists developed greater reflective and planning skills and an enhanced understanding of syllabus requirements.
- Parents observed their children to be more motivated to learn and go to school.
- Parents perceived increased opportunities to be more involved in school activities.
- The school's profile in the community was enhanced.

Anja Tait. (Oct 2004). **A Pedagogy of Trust: Improving Educational Outcomes through Partnerships**. Northern Territory Music School, NT Department of Employment, Education and Training, Wagaman Primary School, Moulden Park School and Neighbourhood Centre, Charles Darwin University Learning Research Group and ArtsNT.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This was a project of the Northern Territory Music School within the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training. It involved a partnership between the NT Music School, Wagaman Primary School, Moulden Park School and Neighbourhood Centre, Charles Darwin University Learning Research Group and ArtsNT.

A **Pedagogy of Trust** reports on the trial and evaluation of an educational intervention: that is, a program specifically designed and implemented for the purposes of this research. The intervention was an intensive process of music education that was integrated into the Years 5, 6 and 7 curricula of two urban primary schools in the Northern Territory for a full school year.

Significant features of this research include its focus on Indigenous learners and very detailed explanations of the arts activities that helps to make clear the links between music and maths learning in the middle school classroom.

For the participating Indigenous students, the project evaluated the impact of the integrated music education on attendance, participation in classroom-based learning opportunities, oracy and literacy levels for Standard Australian English, numeracy levels, and arts knowledge and skills development. For the school communities, the project evaluated the impact of the integrated music education on the educational outcomes of Indigenous learners for recognised numeracy and English literacy benchmarks and community expectations as found in the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NIELNS). For the three participating teachers, the project evaluated the impact of in-school mentoring and team-teaching in the arts as a transformative model of on-the-job professional learning.

The 61 Indigenous students who participated were all Years 5, 6 and 7 students. Most students had low Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy levels and 38 were irregular attendees at school. Seven students were identified as emerging Indigenous youth leaders. During the project, the students participated in whole-class work, small group cooperative learning activities, and individual active and reflective home and class tasks.

The data collected included background information available through the Australian Bureau of Statistics, attendance records, NTDEET summaries for the Multilevel Assessment Program⁵, results of standardised testing in reading, spelling and maths, as well as audio recordings of interviews with students and staff, and audiovisual documentation of in-class teaching, student presentations and work samples.

This was a project of the Northern Territory Music School within the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training.

AIMS AND METHODS

The research focused on two questions:

- 1 Does music skills development, embedded in daily learning across the curriculum in urban upper primary classrooms, provide educational outcomes for Indigenous ESL (English as a Second Language) learners with low literacy and low numeracy levels?
- 2 What are the implications for policy, practice and research?

⁵ The NT Multilevel Assessment Program (MAP) assesses student achievement in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. The test determines the number of students in the NT who are competent in these areas as measured against national benchmarks.

Perceptions about students' engagement with learning were collected from the students themselves as well as from families and teachers. Audio and audiovisual materials were subject to thematic analysis as part of a case study approach and numerical data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The project was served by a reference group and steering committee with representation from arts, Indigenous, curriculum and youth development arenas, and was externally evaluated. A critical issue was that non-Indigenous teachers and researchers were participating in the project from a non-Indigenous perspective, with the intention of investigating the impact of an educational intervention upon Indigenous students who may hold an alternate view of the world. This was acknowledged with reference to the 2004 Indigenous Research Reform Agenda.

KEY FINDINGS

- The students generally achieved statistically significant higher 'maths age' results in Term 4 compared with Term 1 in the year of the arts program. A highlight was that an Indigenous student demonstrated an improvement in maths age of 4 years 8 months, adjusted for the passing of time (9 months).
- Although not statistically significant, target students' mean improvement in reading age was 1 year, 8 months over a 9-month period.
- Teachers reported that students attempted more test items in state-wide benchmark tests for literacy, compared with their efforts 2 years prior. Teaching staff perceived this as evidence that arts-based teaching and learning contributed to students' increased confidence to attempt unfamiliar tasks.

- Numerical findings of students' attendance did not necessarily correlate with teachers' perceptions of those records: some students perceived to have improved in attendance in fact did not. The researchers suggested that, as a result of their arts participation, the students had become more visible and engaged in the school community. Conversely, a student who continued to be described as an 'irregular attender' was found to have actually improved his attendance rate throughout 2003.

The students generally achieved statistically significant higher 'maths age' results in Term 4 compared with Term 1 in the year of the arts program.

- Students acquired an understanding of the elements of music by engaging in arts-based learning tasks that had relevance to their lives outside school.
- There was a marked transformation in the quality of student-teacher relationships and in teachers' confidence and competencies in music pedagogy, which may have contributed to improved outcomes for students. Teachers also expressed an increased sense of efficacy as a result of their participation in the research project.

Effective partnerships that enabled the research process were built between stakeholders in the school community, including Indigenous staff, teachers, school leaders, and students.

Barbara Piscitelli, Angela Renshaw, Julie Dunn, David Hawke. (2004). **Education, Enculturation and the Arts: Fuelling an Innovation Culture**. Arts Queensland, Education Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This was a collaboration of Arts Queensland, Australia Council for the Arts, Education Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology, which sought to survey the ways in which schools across Queensland were implementing the new Years 1 to 10 Syllabus and provide case study examples of how local people in communities have generated programs for arts education and enculturation.

Significant features of this research are the comprehensive and detailed case studies and its state-wide scope in surveying arts curriculum activity across Queensland.

This was a collaboration of Arts Queensland, Australia Council for the Arts, Education Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology.

AIMS AND METHODS

The research focused on three questions:

- 1 How do the arts fuel an innovation culture?
- 2 What contribution do the arts make to the public good?
- 3 How do children (9-15 years) from 'at-risk' and disadvantaged populations become enculturated in the arts?

In addressing these questions, the project aimed to acquire evidence about:

- the qualities and characteristics of exemplary arts programs in 'at-risk' and disadvantaged schools/communities for children in the middle school years
- the characteristics of arts education that build strong relationships between students, schools and communities
- baseline data on student achievement as measured against Queensland Studies Authorities' arts syllabus outcome statements and other performance indicators
- the outcomes and benefits for 9–15 year olds' participation in the arts with reference to personal qualities (preferences, motivation, values, habits, wellbeing), academic performance, family wellbeing, community capacity, and social wellbeing.

A state-wide questionnaire for all Queensland schools, especially developed for this project, provided the quantitative data, while five case studies derived from observations, student surveys and interviews with children, parents, school personnel, artists, arts administrators and civic leaders delivered detailed qualitative data. Contextual information relating to each community was provided through a specially commissioned community profile report. Case-study communities were selected according to the degree of arts/education innovation evident and socio-economic grouping. All cases in the study were from the two lower categories of Queensland's Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage. The project was served by a steering committee and a research committee with representation from all key partners.

KEY FINDINGS

Given the scope and particularity of their research, the QLD-EAPI team expressly did not want to present their findings as categorical statements. Rather their findings were presented as a discussion around the following topics:

- Why children in Queensland value the arts.
- How social and creative benefits grow from arts engagement for children.
- The development of arts and education partnerships for children in Queensland.

Within the discussion, the following observations and evidence-based claims about the impact of arts participation on students' learning and development were made:

- Many children believed that participation in the arts strengthened their learning in other subjects.
- Many children believed the arts were important for building creativity, identity and self-esteem, and claimed that their lives would be poorer without the arts.
- Children were proud to be recognised for arts achievements.
- Many parents supported children's arts learning by forming support groups, raising funds, attending events and paying for tuition outside of school.
- Many parents recognised the arts as a healthy way to bring people together in the school environment and as a way of forming new relationships between families.
- Some parents viewed children's arts enrichment and cultural engagement as family responsibilities, and willingly accepted the task of enrolling children in extra-curricular classes and activities.
- Many teachers and principals saw the arts as a source of creativity, self-esteem and achievement for children at school.

- Teaching staff recognised the benefits of the arts for student learning, and saw links between arts-engaged children and overall academic performance.
- Some schools saw the arts as a key curriculum area which attracts and retains students at school and fosters positive behaviour management outcomes.
- Arts providers (galleries, art centres, Reach Arts local branches) wanted to generate arts activities for and with children, but few had sustainable or longstanding programs or policies directed specifically at young audiences.
- Community leaders advocated for the arts because they believed that the arts are a 'leveller' (especially when disadvantage affects families and communities) and engage people in positive and healthy activities.

Many children believed the arts were important for building creativity, identity and self-esteem, and claimed that their lives would be poorer without the arts.

The report also discussed the partnerships and possibilities that could arise by approaching arts learning and research via a 'connecting web' of schools, families and communities.

Felicity Haynes and Beryl Chalk. (Nov 2004). **The Impact of Arts Education Programmes on Student Motivation: Final Report on a Research Project.** University of Western Australia, Western Australian Department of Education and Training and Western Australian Department for Culture and the Arts.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The WA-EAPI research project aimed to reveal how students that were categorised by teachers as being at 'educational risk' perceived the programs offered by artists-in-residence in their schools.

A significant feature of this research is its testing of data with the WA Curriculum Framework Principles of Learning, Core Shared Values and Overarching Learning Outcomes.

Sixty-one students between the ages of 10 and 14 years from 10 schools volunteered to participate.

AIMS AND METHODS

The central research question was: Does an arts education, especially where there are links to our creative community and professional artists, have a positive effect on motivation for students – especially students at educational risk – establish a lifelong valuing of the arts, a sense of community and a deeper commitment and engagement with all learning opportunities?

Further guiding questions included:

- Are students at educational risk a homogeneous group?
- What counts as success for the students/teacher/artist and are there tensions between their intended outcomes?
- Did participating students see a future for themselves as artists following the program?
- Did they learn arts-related skills?
- Did they gain in self-confidence?
- Did they become more engaged with the school and why?
- Did their active involvement with the making of an artwork contribute to their sense of engagement?

At a more general level, the researchers were looking for 'any reasonable inferences', including:

- a pattern to the way students saw successful artists-in-residence teaching
- any contribution of a perceived homogeneity of the class/school
- whether certain artforms lent themselves more readily to success
- whether pedagogical differences that students perceived between their classroom teacher and the artist-in-residence were significant to them
- whether the school ethos affected students believed to be at educational risk in any way.

Sixty-one students between the ages of 10 and 14 years from 10 schools volunteered to participate in the research. The schools included four inner-metropolitan primary schools, one outer-metropolitan primary school, one rural school, two metropolitan senior high schools and one country district high school in Western Australia. Another 'program' was not a school but a specialist 'highly-at-risk' youth program.

Methods for collecting data included focus group discussions and interviews. A process of open and selective coding was used to identify emergent themes in the qualitative data. The data was then compared with the themes that emerged through research related to the WA Curriculum Framework. Data from this project was therefore 'tested' in relation to the WA Curriculum Framework Principles of Learning, Core Shared Values and Overarching Learning Outcomes.

In the report, the data is discussed according to the following key themes: wellbeing, 'the call to play', freedom from pressure and anxiety (includes mistakes and learning), some control over learning, mutual trust and respect, self confidence and self awareness, pride and belief in self, perseverance, belonging, supportive, arts as a vivid learning experience, arts skills, processes and techniques.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings of this research project, which are listed below, are described by the researchers as provisional, forming a basis for further research and confirmation in varied settings.

- Students expressed that they felt more self-confident.
- Teachers observed students displaying more self-confidence.
- Students expressed that they felt some control over their own learning process, of 'feelings of freedom from anxiety at having to be right and of using their mistakes as learning opportunities'.
- Students expressed that they felt relaxed and joyful while making and doing art.
- Students perceived that the artists were more relaxed about meeting outcomes or measuring improved outcomes.
- Students perceived that the artists trusted them to be responsible for their own learning.
- Students perceived the artists as supportive mentors.
- Students perceived themselves as disengaged or alienated from the learning experiences offered in schools.
- Students expressed the desire not to be taught to 'make them the same', but to be respected for who they are.

- Artwork placed in the classroom helped students feel that they belong to the class.
- Artwork placed in the school helped foster a wider sense of participation in and belonging to the school and community.
- While the sample was too small to measure change in attendance rates, most students commented on 'how much more fun the programs were in contrast to school'.

Students expressed that they felt some control over their own learning process, of 'feelings of freedom from anxiety at having to be right and of using their mistakes as learning opportunities'.

- While the students made no direct reference to the arts as a future career, they did reveal a greater understanding of what it was like to be an artist and learned to value artists and artworks.
- Students were aware of developing personal qualities of patience, empathy, goal setting and perseverance through arts participation.
- Students could name some of the mathematical and arts skills required in their arts programs, but did not articulate awareness of transfer of other skills.



Section three Impacts of Arts Participation

Impacts of Arts Participation⁶ 24

As noted in the introduction, this overview does not aim to critique the comparative merit or scholarly integrity of the six research projects. Instead, the analysis centres on the commonalities across the projects in terms of evidence-based impacts of arts participation on students' learning and development; and similarities across other findings. One major area in which commonalities were found was in the reports' discussions of the attributes of effective arts programs. These findings are featured separately in Chapter 4.

As also noted earlier, almost all the reports' authors acknowledge that the small scale of their projects means that further studies are required to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings. This means that, in turn, the following list of impacts drawn from the reports is also to be confirmed with further larger scale research. However, this is not to diminish the strong positive impacts experienced by those who took part in this commissioned research.

This chapter has evolved from a process of:

- identifying claims about the impact of arts participation across the six reports
- coding the information
- categorising and cross-referencing the information to identify key thematic claims
- confirming each thematic claim by locating evidence in at least two of the six reports.

The majority of findings in the reports are derived from the perceptions and observations of students, teachers, artists and researchers. This type of information provides a necessary degree of particularity and 'richness' to allow for the uniqueness of each arts program and context. However, this also makes the process of summarising and analysing the findings of six such diverse projects particularly hazardous. In an overview of this scope and purpose, it is impossible to qualify each claim

with all the complexity and nuance required. The following, therefore, is a general guide to the evidence-based claims made in the research. They are first listed in a table and then discussed in summary without specific reference to the individual reports, except where necessary.

EVIDENCE-BASED IMPACTS OF ARTS PARTICIPATION ON STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

This list of evidence-based impacts is derived from the findings of six research reports. The reports' aims, objectives and findings are diverse and were not intended to provide a 'whole' body of work addressing all areas of potential impact. More research is required to extend, validate, and ensure reliability of the following claims. Refer to page 37 of this document for further comment.

Social and personal development

Arts participation.

- enhances personal confidence
- helps develop the skills of cooperation and collaboration
- helps to foster relationships of trust and a sense of belonging
- can contribute to positive changes in behaviour
- enhances feelings of empathy.

Attitude to learning

Arts participation.

- can lead to improved motivation, interest and participation in classroom learning
- can foster self-reflective learning processes
- enhances skills of planning and independent learning
- enhances confidence in learning.

⁶ The term 'arts participation' is used to refer to the broad set of activities that actively involve children in making art and learning about the arts. It is interesting to note that the University of Tasmania study, which focused on children's perceptions of the arts, found that children's descriptions of their arts practice revolved around participation as a 'maker' in the arts rather than as an audience-member. All but one of the programs considered in these research projects place children primarily in the position of 'maker'.

Literacy

Arts participation enhances literacy.

Numeracy

Arts participation improves numeracy.

Generic competencies

Arts participation.

- improves competencies in writing, problem-solving, planning and organising, and perseverance
- develops communication skills.

Attendance

Arts participation enhances students' motivation to attend school and increases individual students' profile in the school.

Arts knowledge and skills

Arts participation generally improves students' arts knowledge and skills.

Enjoyment and value of the arts

Arts participation.

- enhances students' enjoyment of the arts
- enhances students' valuing of the arts.

Other findings

Arts participation.

- can contribute to improvement in teaching quality
- can provide students with positive role models
- encourages family involvement in students' learning
- raises specific cultural issues in Indigenous communities.

Important aspects of arts participation for students are:

- the opportunity to be involved in 'authentic' learning tasks.
- the opportunity to present their work to others

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the reports, there is evidence that teachers, parents and particularly students perceive that arts participation fosters personal growth, group skills and social cohesion. Further specific impacts of arts participation on personal and social development are detailed below.

Arts participation enhances personal confidence.

- Teachers perceived enhanced personal confidence in the observation of students':
 - improved ability to communicate with others (including new people)
 - improved ability to express themselves in physical movement
 - increased willingness to participate in school assemblies, school councils and performances for familiar and unfamiliar audiences
 - improved grooming
 - praising of each other and willingness to share their achievements.
- Teachers identified that personal confidence had especially improved for students who were disadvantaged or who had a disability.
- Students indicated public performance as 'the best thing' about their arts participation, indicating their enhanced personal confidence.

Arts participation helps develop the skills of cooperation and collaboration.

Arts participation often requires students to work with others to achieve a common goal, such as a performance or the completion of an activity or game.

- Students identified that, through arts activity, they learned how to:
 - work in a group
 - get on with people
 - be helpful.
- Students perceived:
 - a positive difference in the way they functioned as a group when participating in arts activities
 - that the collaborative and non-competitive nature of some types of arts learning directly contributed to making all students more cooperative.
- Teachers perceived that, as a result of arts participation, students:
 - learned to work cooperatively through arts participation
 - used the skills of collaboration because they did not want to ‘let the team down’
 - made commitments knowing that others were dependent on this commitment
 - were generally less aggressive towards each other
 - displayed greater cooperation in the playground
- Researchers perceived that students developed self-discipline.

Arts participation helps to foster relationships of trust and a sense of belonging.

- Researchers and teachers perceived that, through arts participation, students:
 - developed relationships of trust
 - developed positive personal relationships with other participants (including teachers)
 - were more willing to share personal aspects of their life.

- In arts projects with Indigenous students, teachers and community members perceived that children felt a sense of belonging, leading to a greater sense of social and cultural cohesion and connectedness.
- Participants of youth arts activity emphasised the importance of ‘being part of a group of like-minded individuals’.

Arts participation can contribute to positive changes in behaviour.

- Teachers perceived positive changes in the behaviour of students as a result of arts participation, particularly for students likely to exhibit antisocial behaviour.
- Students identified that, as a response to arts participation, there was less disruptive behaviour and more focus in their classes.

...arts participation can foster a positive attitude to learning by helping to develop ‘enabling’ skills that can be transferred to other learning contexts.

Arts participation enhances feelings of empathy

- Teachers perceived that:
 - students demonstrated greater empathy toward each other and were less likely to engage in ‘peer put-downs’
 - students were more able to understand personal and social issues from others’ points of view.
- Over 70% of students in one study felt that they had learned new things about their peers and that their views of particular children had changed for the better as a result of arts participation.

ATTITUDE TO LEARNING

The following evidence demonstrates how arts participation can foster a positive attitude to learning by helping to develop 'enabling' skills that can be transferred to other learning contexts.

Arts participation can lead to improved motivation, interest and participation in classroom learning.

- Teachers perceived that, as a result of arts participation, students:
 - improved their attitudes to school, their own learning and the learning of their peers
 - were more committed than previously to learning in other areas
 - became more articulate in expressing and acknowledging their learning needs
 - demonstrated greater levels of classroom and playground cooperation
 - displayed increased pride in their work
 - displayed increased enthusiasm for performing or exhibiting work for others.
- During arts learning, teachers observed students:
 - being more responsive in verbal interactions with teachers
 - conducting self-initiated writing
 - being on-task
 - taking their learning seriously
 - participating and experimenting in class with a high level of motivation.
- Teachers observed students transferring the processes of arts learning to other learning areas (e.g. using the 'drama circle' in other subjects).
- Students perceived that arts participation had made them 'better learners'.
- In one study, 93% of participating students agreed and strongly agreed with the survey's statement: 'I found my learning in the creative arts ... to be very interesting'
- Parents perceived students to be more motivated to attend school.

Arts participation can foster self-reflective learning.

- Teachers and researchers observed students:
 - consciously stop an activity to reflect on what they had learned, before moving on to further develop their work
 - develop a detailed understanding of their arts work
 - share the understanding of their work with others, including other children, teachers from other schools and the general public.
 - become more conscious and thoughtful about their learning.
- Parents observed their children talking more about their school activities.

Arts participation enhances skills of planning and independent learning.

- Researchers observed students effectively undertaking conscious planning to achieve a goal while participating in arts learning.
- Teachers observed students become more able to work independently and follow instructions when involved in arts learning.
- Students identified that 'how to organise' was a non-arts skill learned from their arts participation.
- Within a youth arts setting, children identified 'individual autonomy' as a feature of their arts engagement.

Arts participation enhances confidence in learning.

- Students perceived that arts participation had:
 - improved their confidence
 - increased their willingness to attempt difficult learning tasks
 - encouraged them to 'think outside the square'
 - improved the support of their peers who, as a result of arts participation, were 'less likely to laugh' at them if they made a mistake.
- In one survey, 60% of students perceived that the arts had had a positive impact on their learning in other subjects.

- A group of Indigenous students expressed that arts participation gave them more confidence, made them feel good and made them 'feel less shame'.
- Teachers perceived that, as a result of arts participation, students were more:
 - imaginative in their approaches to presenting work
 - willing to explore different ways of approaching a learning task
 - willing to take risks and attempt unknown tasks
 - confident to ask for help or further information
 - more willing to attempt to answer questions in tests.
- Researchers observed teachers and students 'taking risks together' in the learning activities with the perceived effect that the classroom became 'a safe, supportive and non-punitive' environment.
- Teachers perceived students' level of literacy improved when practised within creative arts activities (e.g. when they were required to read or write song lyrics or, for ESL students, to follow instructions in English).
- Researchers and teachers observed, in arts-based assessment and practices, 'rich verbal responses' from students who 'might otherwise struggle to participate in classroom talk'.

Teacher and student observations and perceptions suggest that arts participation enhances literacy ability.

LITERACY

Arts participation enhances literacy.

In a number of research projects, systematic tests were used to gain statistical evidence that arts participation improved literacy levels. Using standardised testing processes and after correcting data for the passing of time (for pre- and post-tests used with arts intervention projects), improvements in literacy were apparent, but no statistically significant results were found.⁷ However, the teacher and student observations and perceptions detailed below suggest that arts participation enhances literacy ability.

- Students perceived that their ability in reading, spelling and story writing had improved.
- Students attempted more items on literacy tests than prior to the period of arts participation.
- In one study, students who had participated in an arts program showed an average improvement in reading age of 1 year, 8 months over a 9-month period.

NUMERACY

Arts participation improves numeracy.

Two of the research projects focused on the intervention of integrated music programs in maths learning. These projects indicated that students' numeracy levels improved as a result of the music interventions.

- In one study, students showed statistically significant higher maths ages in the final term than the first term of a four-term program (with results adjusted for the passing of time — nine months).⁸
- Another study demonstrated that after participating in a music program, students had improved in their systematic tests in maths in their individual learning portfolios.
- Students identified that they had learned counting and their times tables through arts participation.
- In one study, 60% of students who had participated in an arts program perceived that their maths skills had improved.

⁷ Programs and tests used in the NT-EAPI and ACER research were: the Multilevel Assessment Program, the ACER Progressive Achievement Test in Reading, Waddington Diagnostic Reading Test, Waddington Diagnostic Spelling Test, and Schonell Spelling Age Test.

⁸ A highlight was that 'an Indigenous student demonstrated the greatest improvement in maths age of 4 years 8 months, adjusted for the passing of time (9 months).' (NT-EAPI vi).

GENERIC COMPETENCIES

Arts participation improves competencies in writing, problem-solving, planning and organising, and perseverance.

- Students who had participated in ‘arts-rich’ learning demonstrated significantly higher levels of ability in writing, communication, problem-solving, planning and organising than those who hadn’t participated in arts-rich learning.⁹
- Students perceived that, through arts participation, they had developed:
 - planning skills
 - decision-making skills
 - thinking skills.
- Teachers perceived that, through arts participation, students had developed:
 - self-organisational skills
 - leadership skills
 - conflict resolution skills
 - better understanding of human relationships.
- Students identified that arts activity commonly involved:
 - reflective thinking
 - problem-solving
 - skill development
 - applying a learned skill in new and unique ways
 - practising
 - hard work.

Arts participation develops communication skills.

- Teachers observed:
 - students (and in particular, Indigenous students) develop their communication skills by working in teams and sharing arts knowledge with peers
 - an improvement in students’ desire to listen to others during arts participation.

– Students:

- identified listening skill as a non-arts skill learned from arts participation
- perceive the arts as a means of expressing and communicating thoughts and feelings.

ATTENDANCE

Increases individual students’ profile in the school and enhances students’ motivation to attend school

Teachers perceived that attendance improved through the impact of arts participation. However, in the reports no numerical data was found to support this claim. In fact, in one study, attendance had dropped for the year that an intervention arts program had taken place. Teacher perception of improved attendance did, however, suggest that students became more visible and engaged in the school community.¹⁰ Furthermore, students identified arts participation as a reason for attending school.

ARTS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Arts participation generally improves students’ arts knowledge and skills.

From the available evidence, it is not possible to make useful claims about the impact of arts learning on the development of arts knowledge and skills – the reported outcomes of individual programs are too specific. However, overall, the studies indicated that students’ arts knowledge and skills improved with arts participation. In terms of understanding of the arts generally, there is evidence to indicate that:

- children differentiate between **doing** the arts and **learning the skills** to do the arts
- children describe the arts in multiple ways and hold ‘open categories’ of definition for what constitutes the arts, including non-traditional practices such as hairdressing and welding.

⁹ The researchers of this study note that given the quasi-experimental design of the study and the small student numbers available in each group (i.e. ‘arts rich’ 17, ‘non arts rich’ 14). Yet these findings provide strong indications of positive outcomes for those students in the ‘arts rich’ group (ACER 68).

¹⁰ One study, noting this situation, stated that ‘attendance records are not necessarily a good relative measure of student engagement and participation in learning’ (NT-EAPI iv). Further, ‘fluctuations in attendance from term to term could be attributed to the complex interaction of many factors ... [such as] ... basic needs (food, shelter, safety), stability of home setting, family obligations and responsibilities, individual responses to the demands of the school context.’ (NT-EAPI 18).

ENJOYMENT AND VALUE OF THE ARTS

Arts participation enhances students' enjoyment of the arts.

The studies indicate overwhelmingly that students enjoy participating in arts programs. This was evident in the following ways:

- In one study, 92% of students agreed and strongly agreed with the comment 'I found the creative arts activities exciting'.
- In the same study, 74% of students agreed and strongly agreed with the statement 'I want to do more creative arts next year'.
- Children expressed that:
 - they enjoyed arts lessons and enjoyed school more because of arts participation
 - they wished arts programs could be longer
 - within youth arts settings, they are driven by 'passion' to engage with the arts.
- Teachers perceived that:
 - students wanted to be in arts lessons
 - students enjoyed participating in arts learning
 - students' positive attitude towards the arts activities transferred favourably to other aspects of the curriculum.
- Researchers observed children describing their arts engagement in terms of 'flow' or optimal experiences.

Arts participation enhances students' valuing of the arts.

The studies suggest that students develop positive attitudes towards the arts as a result of participating in the arts.

- In one study, just under 60% of the students surveyed indicated that the arts were important to very important for them personally.¹¹
- Children who had participated in arts activities expressed that:
 - art is extremely important to them and their friends at school
 - art makes them feel better
 - art helps them understand their families
 - art makes them feel happy at home
 - the arts are a means of expressing and communicating their ideas, thoughts and feelings
 - the arts are embedded in everything
 - their engagement with the arts was about an 'attitude'; a 'way of seeing' their world
 - they valued the opportunity to talk about the arts
 - they were aware and appreciative of the efforts that are made to produce school environments that are artistic, aesthetic, attractive and well-planned
 - artwork made for and in the community are significant to them
 - artwork in which they had participated holds more meaning and significance than that made by adult artists for them
 - arts programs can be 'unforgettable' and life-changing.
 - Teachers perceived that, as a result of arts participation, students developed positive attitudes to the kinds of arts that they might not have usually been interested in (such as boys' attitudes to dance).

¹¹ In this study, 17% also saw the arts as not being important at all in their lives: 'Significantly, only 7% of these older students (13–15 year olds) view the arts as being extremely important, quite a contrast to the results previously noted for the 9–12 year olds where three times that number (21%) held this view.' (QLD-EAPI 82).

OTHER FINDINGS

Quality of teaching

Arts participation can contribute to improvement in teaching quality.

Two of the studies involved planning, implementing and evaluating supported arts 'interventions' in schools. As these interventions included professional development for and/or close collaboration and mentoring with classroom teachers, positive impacts of arts participation on teaching quality were observed.

- Teachers perceived their own:
 - improved abilities in arts teaching
 - improved quality of relationships with students
 - increased confidence and sense of efficacy in the classroom
 - motivation to help the professional development of other teachers
 - engagement with a greater diversity of teaching practices
 - increased motivation to teach the arts
 - changed attitudes towards students not previously perceived as successful learners
 - more innovative approach to teaching literacy and numeracy.
- Students:
 - perceived a positive change in their teachers
 - were impressed when their teachers became directly involved in arts activities.

ROLE MODELS

Arts participation can provide students with positive role models.

Some types of arts programs, particularly those directly involving artists from outside the school, were found to have provided students with positive role models.

- Students indicated that they respected working with a talented artist who provided a vision of 'something they could aspire to' – this was particularly evident with Indigenous participants.
- Researchers perceived 'a sense of purpose and rapport' between students, artists and teachers who provided positive role models.
- Parents perceived local Aboriginal Elders and artists participating in school arts programs as influential in promoting 'a more positive future' for their children.
- Researchers and teachers perceived that, through arts participation, students were presented with positive gender and cultural role models.

INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS/FAMILIES

Arts participation encourages family involvement in students' learning.

There is evidence to suggest that parents and families became more aware of and more involved in students' learning as a result of students' arts participation.

- Parents perceived that:
 - their children told them more about their school learning¹²
 - their children encouraged them to be more active in the school
 - arts participation lead to improved social and academic outcomes for their children
- Researchers and teachers observed that parents became more active in the school.
- Students encouraged their families to attend more arts activities outside school.

¹² In one study, some Indigenous students indicated that, as an effect of the program, they had been able to talk about school with their families who had little interest in Western ways of learning.

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Arts participation in Indigenous communities raises specific cultural issues.

A number of the research projects involved Indigenous students. As a result, the reports highlighted a number of issues related to school-based arts learning in Indigenous communities. These included:

- the need to acknowledge the difference in world views that may be held by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in arts research and education
- the importance of implementing, where appropriate, Indigenous-focused pedagogy that is approved by Indigenous community members/or teachers
- recognition of the potential of arts education to act as a bridge between traditional Indigenous cultures and more 'Western' approaches to learning
- acknowledgement of the tensions and difficulties that may occur in school-based arts provision in communities where the arts may have traditionally been passed on through extended families and community members
- that arts learning provides good opportunities for students to come in contact with Indigenous role models.

AUTHENTICITY OF TASKS

An important aspect of arts participation for students is the opportunity to be involved in 'authentic' learning tasks.

The studies indicated that students valued opportunities to be engaged in 'real life' tasks, to work with real artists, to present to real audiences, and, for some, to work towards real jobs in the arts. This finding is also indicated in Chapter 4.

— Teachers perceived that students:

- respected working with experienced artists
- displayed an openness to and enthusiasm for opportunities to meet and learn from people who were from outside the school environment
- were more engaged in activities that had an authentic purpose
- developed life skills through real life situations played out in arts activity.

— Some students valued arts learning because it would lead them to 'my dream job'.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENTING

An important aspect of arts participation for students is the opportunity to present their work to others.

The studies indicated that, for students, the process of presenting was an integral aspect of the arts learning experience. This was not necessarily limited to performing arts. This finding is also indicated in Chapter 4.

— Students:

- expressed pride for their work and wanted to show it off to others
- indicated that they enjoyed public performance
- valued the opportunity to present their work to a 'real' audience
- rated the processes of 'putting on performances and learning the technical skills related to performance' highly in terms of their achievements in the arts.



Section four Attributes of Effective Arts Programs

The research reports provide information about the perceived attributes of effective arts learning programs. In some projects, these attributes form an aspect of the research itself and in others they are referenced in discussions about the impact of the program or recommendations for the future. In one study, international research is used as a benchmark for identifying and comparing effective program features such as supportive administration, quality provision, recognition of progress, opportunities for individualised instruction, risk taking and innovative teaching techniques.

The list of program attributes in the box below is drawn directly from the six Australian studies and confirms and expands on some of the features explained above. The list has been collated from students', teachers' and researchers' observations, perceptions and reflections on a range of diverse arts programs so not all these attributes would be expected to be evident in all programs perceived as effective.

PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES

- Student-centred learning
- Administrative support
- Integrated professional development
- Positive learning environment
- An integrated program
- Authentic learning
- Exposure to the diversity of the arts
- Positive role models
- Program transparency and flexibility
- Recognition of cultural difference
- Continuity and sustainability
- Artists as effective partners
- Adequate resources and financial support

STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING

- Teachers demonstrate care and understanding of each student as an individual.
- There is a focus on students' needs and levels, including their cultural backgrounds and experience.
- The content of the program draws on students' own experiences and language.
- There is encouragement of student effort, commitment and ownership.
- Teachers encourage students to learn by using senses and skills other than the traditional 'logico-deductive' approaches.
- Students are encouraged to be organised and to set goals.
- There is a focus on small-group learning.

There is a focus on students' needs and levels, including their cultural backgrounds and experience.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- There is practical and moral support from the school senior management, administration and individual teachers.
- School executives and teachers actively support participating artists.

Students are totally responsible for all aspects of presentation including publicity and budgeting.

INTEGRATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Professional development is provided for all teachers including those not directly involved in the arts program (to help raise awareness).
- Teachers are provided with inspirational mentors for guidance and support.
- Professional development and mentoring for teachers is scheduled as a regular part of the school timetable.

POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- An environment is fostered in which all contributions from participants are valued.
- The learning environment is 'safe', infused with trust, encourages risk-taking and is not punitive.
- Students are encouraged to have a go, to use their energy, and to 'utilise who and what they are'.
- Students are encouraged to develop self control and tolerance of others.

AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM

- There is an integrated program which is not an 'add on' for teachers or students, but is 'whole school'.
- Both teachers' and students' learning in the arts is integrated into the normal school program and timetable.

AUTHENTIC LEARNING

- Students work towards something 'authentic' – a specific and tangible outcome such as a performance or exhibition.
- Students are totally responsible for all aspects of presentation including publicity and budgeting.
- There is appreciation of the arts program as something from beyond school indicating that arts learning is part of the wider ('real') world.

EXPOSURE TO THE DIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

- Students are exposed to a range of arts and to diversity within each artform.

POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

- Students are provided with positive role models, be they teachers, artists, or community members.

PROGRAM TRANSPARENCY AND FLEXIBILITY

- There is an explicit and stable organisational structure.
- Teachers and artists collaborate or closely liaise in planning and articulating sessions, outlining goals to students, and evaluating and reviewing the impact of the sessions.
- There is a degree of flexibility in the program and processes.

RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

- There is recognition of cultural difference and the effects it may have on the program.

CONTINUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- There is continuity of teaching personnel.
- There is continuity of infrastructure support, particularly release time for teachers' and artists' planning and reflection.

ARTISTS AS EFFECTIVE PARTNERS

- Artists are perceived by the students as effective.
- Artists are able to link arts learning to the syllabus.
- Artists provide a clear and identifiable sequence or process that teachers can understand and follow.
- Artists participate in the writing of work plans and in debriefing sessions.
- Artists become fully integrated into the school environment.
- Teachers value working alongside professional artists, especially those who have sustained experience in educational contexts.

ADEQUATE RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Principals and teachers perceive that arts programs are successful when they have adequate resources and financial support.

Teachers value working alongside professional artists, especially those who have sustained experience in educational contexts.



Section five Research Recommendations

Some of the project reports included recommendations for further research based on emerging themes and issues within the work. The following are mostly direct quotes from the relevant reports and include page number references where appropriate.

ACER

Acknowledging their work is a starting-point for exploring the impact of arts programs on students' learning and the attributes that are of particular benefit to students, the ACER researchers propose a number of directions in which their beginning research could be developed. These are:

- The arts as a vehicle for learning in Indigenous communities. To what extent can the arts provide a bridge between cultures of learning?
- What are the necessary conditions for transferring the learning processes in the arts to other areas of the curriculum? Which ingredients of the 'whole school' approach are essential for this transfer to occur?)
- To what extent does involvement in the arts enhance students' generic competencies/employability skills? In the study there was an indication that students involved in arts programs scored better in the generic competencies of problem-solving, planning, communication and working with others, than students who were not involved in arts programs. It would be useful to look at this phenomenon more intensively, using a larger sample and possibly assessing the more recently developed 'employability skills'.¹⁹ The generic competencies assessed for this study happen to be included in the more recent 'employability skills'.

- Working from the attributes of arts programs that enhance learning derived from the study, it would be useful to consolidate the present research with a more longitudinal study. For example, take cohorts of students involved in arts programs that can demonstrate positive role models, positive reinforcement of achievements, 'authentic' activities, negotiated procedures and safe environments for risk-taking, and track the progress of these students over, say, three years (longer if feasible), noting in particular school completion, post-school study and employment pathways (71–72).

It is recommended that there be a trialling and evaluation of targeted programs for isolated children and families, with a focus on early years care and education, and an emphasis on building partnerships across agencies and sectors.

NSW-EAPI

The NSW-EAPI researchers commented on the need for further longitudinal research to determine if the findings noted in their pilot research are consistent and more widespread (5).

NT-EAPI

The NT-EAPI researchers provided the following recommendations:

Research partnerships

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that there be a trialling and evaluation of targeted programs for isolated children and families, with a focus on early years care and education, and an emphasis on building partnerships across agencies and sectors. These ideas build on the current research and grow this approach beyond the boundaries of school communities. Case studies may focus on one or more of the following groups: teenage parents, immigrants, children in refuges, children in long-term care, Indigenous children, children with disabilities and additional needs in educational settings, children in hospital or requiring long-term medical intervention.

Outcomes would be in the areas of:

- 1 Education: school and family literacies
– English literacy, numeracy, the arts
- 2 Wellbeing for families: resilience, risk and prevention, parenting skills
- 3 Strengthened ‘whole of government’ approaches
- 4 Further research into the socio-economic impacts of music and other art-forms
- 5 Practical train-the-trainer guides.

Key personnel would be in the areas of research, early childhood education and care, arts education and arts therapy, family and children’s services and the music industry.

Key personnel would be in the areas of research, early childhood education and care, arts education and arts therapy, family and children’s services and the music industry. Community and industry partners would be determined by the case study focus. Research would be conducted with reference to the work of the Goodling Institute of Family Literacies, Pennsylvania State University, and the Risk and Prevention Program, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the Learning Research Group, Charles Darwin University, in partnership with DEET, engage school communities through arts education, as one intervention in Territory-wide trialling and evaluation of a learning communities model of professional development. This would support the key tenets of the NT DEET Workforce Development Strategy (2003–2005).

Practice partnerships

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the NT Music School and DEET develop a model of professional learning in arts education that is aligned with key policy directions across government, including the DEET Workforce Development Strategy (2003–2005), NT Arts Policy Review (2003), NTPS Remote Workforce Development Strategy (2003–2006). An ensemble of registered teachers and music educators could develop repertoire and performance <AQ change to ‘repertoire for performances’?>, professional learning workshops, in-school mentoring programs, and a resource package for teachers in urban, rural and remote schools.

Recommendation 4: The effective partnerships that were built between school-based teachers, a community musician and an arts educator provide evidence for a sustainable model of implementation in artist-in-residence programs. It is recommended that ArtsNT and DEET consider the results of this research with respect to essential criteria for future Artists-in-Schools (AiS) project funding.

Industry partnerships

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that Vocational Education and Training (VET) Music Industry competencies be linked to arts-infused literacy and numeracy tasks with early-childhood and primary-aged students, and explicit literacy and numeracy outcomes within the NT Curriculum Framework. By promoting community and school partnerships in urban and remote settings this approach would support the growth of employment pathways for Indigenous artists in remote communities. These partnerships could be managed and actioned by the NT Music School and DEET, in collaboration with Charles Darwin University's Remote Music Delivery.

QLD-EAPI

The following recommendations are put forward in the QLD-EAPI report (which contains further extensive detail on each on the following):

- Build on the Queensland Government's existing support for arts education by improved coordination of resources, strategies and delivery systems.
- Implement further professional development programs for sustainable arts education curricula and programs in Queensland schools and communities.
- Generate children's engagement with artists and cultural assets.
- Develop 'mixed table' partnerships to focus on arts and education in local communities (95–96).

WA-EAPI

The WA-EAPI research team recommends longer time frames to conduct research projects such as theirs to allow time to present results to students (and therefore modify interpretation of results if needed), to make a more thorough investigation of the experience of all stakeholders, to be able to identify what happens in artists-in-residency programs that can or cannot be transported into regular arts lessons, and to explore the impact of arts and education partnerships on the perception of the place of art in schools. As the authors note, 'Further evidence, gathered over time, is needed to create a base for the benefits of learning and through the arts for students and young people.' (34).

'Further evidence, gathered over time, is needed to create a base for the benefits of learning and through the arts for students and young people.'



Australian Government

