

Chapter 5

Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed but Not Blue:
The Educational Impact of the Arts

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Music really helps me learn a language. I learn German and many of the words are the same.
– Chloe, Year 8 student from John's College

This chapter explores the educational impact of arts programmes in four Australian educational environments encompassing formal and non-formal schooling. Educational impact includes identification of new talent, the generation of new knowledge, arts skills development, conceptual development, professional education and education of the broader field or community. In the case studies there was evidence to suggest that a significant gain in musical and other skills occurred both for children and the professionals involved at case-study sites. Learning took many forms and styles and, for some students, learning had been transformational for motivation towards schooling.

Educational impact

Arts education provides students with valuable opportunities to experience and build knowledge and skills in self-expression, imagination, creative and collaborative problem solving, communication, creation of shared meanings and respect for self and others (Klopper and Power 2011). Engagement in quality arts education has also been said to positively affect overall academic achievement, engagement in learning and development of empathy towards others (Power and Klopper 2011). Eisner (2002) postulates that learning in and through the arts can develop complex and subtle aspects of the mind. He promotes the value of the arts experience as a cognitive tool in transformative learning (Eisner 2002). Building on Dewey's view of art and meaning, Eisner (2002: 10) suggests that 'art is a mode of human experience that in principle can be secured whenever an individual interacts with the world'. This form of experience encourages 'complex and subtle forms of thinking to take place when students have an opportunity either to work meaningfully on the creation of images – visual, choreographic, musical, literary or poetic – or to scrutinize them appreciatively' (Eisner 2002: xii). Subsequently, the arts can transform consciousness (Eisner 2004: 10):

[t]he modes of thinking...recognise the unity of form and content, they require one to think within the affordances and constraints of the medium one elects to use and they emphasize the importance of aesthetic satisfactions as motives for work.

To Eisner (2002), arts experiences refine our sensory system and cultivate our imaginative abilities. Through such enriching experiences, learning includes basic ideas that:

- There can be more than one answer to a question, where variability of outcome is okay.
- The way something is formed matters.
- The capacity of an art form depends on the relationships that are composed by the artist.
- Intrinsic satisfactions matter.
- Literal language and quantification are not the only means through which human understanding is secured and represented.
- The importance of taking one's time to relish the experience that one seeks (Eisner 2002).

Moreover, 'the arts provide a kind of permission to pursue qualitative experience in a particularly focussed way and to engage in the constructive exploration of what the imaginative process may engender' (Eisner 2002: 4). It is this form of experience that Eisner believes promotes consciousness by providing models through which we can experience the world in new ways and providing the materials and occasions for learning to grapple with problems that depend on art-related forms of thinking.

Eisner (2002) asserts a direct link between curriculum and thinking skills. Each subject area has an effect on the type of thinking skills students develop, which shapes the ways that students experience, organize and understand the world. Eisner maintains that the current curriculum in schools delineates the types of thinking endorsed by schools, consequently determining the cognitive abilities of students. He suggests that, at present, mainstream educational systems do not focus on promoting cognitive development and thinking skills associated with the arts. It is for these reasons that Eisner contends that the arts be part of the curriculum. He urges that the arts receive recognition and be included as a discipline in their own right, receiving as much attention as other subjects. If not, the full benefits of arts education will not be achieved.

Arts education has been claimed to promote extrinsic outcomes in the school curriculum. Arts education has also been linked to improved student motivation, with Mussoline (1993: 83) concluding that:

Art can be a powerful motivational tool to those who are successful. It can provide the impetus to succeed in other areas of school work. Participating in an art activity is generally a joyful experience for a child, regardless of his academic achievement level [...] Peer group acceptance through art work builds self-esteem in the child who feels accepted and important.

Arts education may act as a motivator for school attendance and retention. In an evaluation of school-based arts education programmes in Australian schools (Bryce, Mendelvits, Beavis,

McQueen and Adams 2004), students from Indigenous communities that were engaged in arts programmes had improved school attendance rates. Similarly, in an American study investigating the impact of arts education on dropout rates, 22 of 36 'at-risk' students answered 'yes' when asked whether something about the arts had kept them at school (Barry, Taylor and Walls 1990). In 2005, Bryant also found that arts programmes raised student attendance, reduced student dropout rates, fostered a love of learning in students and developed students who were better team players. This suggests that engagement with arts education also extends to increased student participation within school.

Improved student learning has also been noted in the *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning* project (Fiske 1999). Researchers found that arts education was significant to the development of student learning by reaching students who were not otherwise being reached, connecting students to themselves and each other, transforming the environment for learning, providing new challenges for those students already considered successful and connecting learning experiences to the world of real work. Moreover, it suggested that involvement in the arts increased academic success for all students in the middle years, including children from low-socio-economic backgrounds (Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanga 1999). In 2002, the National Arts Education Consortium confirmed the findings, described in the *Champions of Change* (Fiske 1999) report, that involvement in arts education increased students' fluency, motivation, ability to connect subjects and ability to think critically to ask better questions.

In the school curriculum, another means of promoting extrinsic outcomes is through the integration of arts experience with other curriculum areas. Research has found that arts integration:

- increases multi-cultural understandings (Goldberg 1997)
- deepens understandings of text (Cecil and Lauritzen 1994)
- increases self-esteem and confidence (Harland, Kinder and Hartley 1995)
- furthers comprehension of mathematical and scientific concepts (Goldberg 1997)
- may be used as a valuable entry point for educating under-achieving students (Arnold 2001)
- has a positive impact on reading and critical thinking skills (DuPont 1992).

Recent studies on the extrinsic benefits of arts education in Australia are mixed. Hunter (2005) provided an overview of six recent Australian studies as a tool for evidence-based decision making by Government agencies. Findings suggested that the arts provided enhancement of students' enjoyment and valuing of the arts through the promotion of student-centred learning and further encouraged family involvement in their child's learning process. In a 2007 Australian study, research studies claiming arts education provided extrinsic benefits were examined. Oakley (2007) proposed that the consensus view was not proven as to whether the arts boosted academic achievement. Rather, arts education was characterized by a lack of baseline data and of replication studies, inconsistent measures,

vague definitions, imprecise methodology and over-reliance on anecdotal evidence. Oakley also suggested there was a lack of evaluations, surveys and studies, with the added challenge of translating evidence into improved practices and deeper engagement. Further research into arts education is necessary to provide support for arts education within Australian schools, especially to contribute to the 'lack of baseline data' (Oakley 2007).

Arts education may also contribute to increased cognitive functioning of the brain. Recent neuroscience findings from Ashbury and Rich (2008) suggest strong correlations between arts training and several cognitive functions. For example:

- There was evidence that attention may be the common factor that accounted for improved cognitive test scores in children, suggesting classroom exposure to various art forms may provide an important way to strengthen children's abilities to focus attention in general (Gazzaniga 2008; Neville et al. 2008).
- Music training correlated with reading acquisition, phonological awareness and the mathematical skill of geometric reasoning (Spelke 2008).
- Music training directly correlated with the amount of improvement in reading fluency in children (ranging in age from seven to twelve) over a three-year study (Wandall et al. 2008).
- There were correlations between drama and memory, with acting students able to effectively extract the general gist from an experience, which is a cognitive strategy that is transferable to various verbal cognitive skills (Jonides 2008).
- There was evidence that learning to dance through effective observation is closely related to learning by physical practice (Grafton and Cross 2008).

Findings on brain research suggest strong correlations between arts engagement and several cognitive functions (Jensen 2001; Zatore 2005). Brain-based arts education research, however, is still within its infancy, and findings cannot be claimed to indicate a causal relationship between arts training and improved cognitive function. Strengthened correlations, however, provide an important step forward in research about learning. As Gazzaniga (2008: vi-vii) points out:

It is important to realize that neuroscience often begins with correlations – usually the discovery that a certain kind of brain activity works in concert with a certain kind of behaviour [...] a life-affirming dimension is opening up in neuroscience; to discover how the performance and appreciation of the arts enlarge cognitive capacities will be a long step forward in learning how better to learn and more enjoyably and productively to live.

From this perspective, neuroscience is in the beginning stages of development, and with more research leading to cause-and-effect evidence, educators can take note of the importance of arts for all students.

Case 8: Smarts Grammar School

In the first case study, we visited the Smarts Grammar School. The school is located in the inner city of a large town that services many rural communities. The school has approximately 1000 students in grades from Kindergarten to Year Twelve, with boarding facilities readily available for students who require them.

This school is recognized for its provision of a well-rounded education for all its students. They are encouraged in all areas of their development, and there is a strong emphasis on promoting students to develop a sense of social justice. Each year, all students are encouraged to be involved in charity and fund-raising events for the local community. Furthermore, each year-level sponsors a number of children in a developing country.

Smarts Grammar School has a long history of arts education as a part of its curriculum. All students from Kindergarten to Year Ten have access to individual music, art and drama specialists. The school also boasts various choirs, orchestras, instrumental ensembles and drama troops in which all students have the opportunity to participate. Students in Year Four learn a string instrument with group lessons as part of the curriculum, and, in Year Five, they have the option to learn a wind instrument.

The school website states:

An avenue of creativity and self-expression, the arts offers students the opportunity to acquire new skills including academic competencies and interpersonal skills. Through involvement in the artistic process, the arts at Smarts Grammar School provides students with new ways of experiencing and understanding the world around them.

The school is also set up for arts activities, especially with technology. All students from Year Seven to Twelve have a laptop and, consequently, technology is incorporated into all areas of the arts. Students are able to use specific programmes for composing, art work, film editing and choreography.

There is a performing centre that provides facilities for students, with specialist studios for music and dance tuition and rehearsal. Students are provided with access to quality spaces and resources, such as twelve individual practice rooms for instrumental lessons and boarder practice, as well as two visual arts studios and a drama classroom.

In the early childhood and junior school sectors, all classrooms are supplied with percussive instruments. A piano is available in some classrooms so children can sing to morning songs. The principal highlights the importance of ensuring musical tools and resources are readily available so as to foster student learning and enjoyment:

It is important that the children learn arts skills and techniques alongside musical enjoyment. In the early years we encourage active arts making to help build a strong foundation for future arts learning. For example, in music, the children in the early years

learn to understand differences in beat and rhythm. They learn about crotchets and quavers through 'tas' and 'ti-tis'. The students also learn about basic pitch.

Daily routines within the school are embedded with the principles and concepts of music and dance. For example, hymns are sung at assembly and choirs, ensembles and dance troops perform at both public and private celebratory events.

Additionally, students are provided with opportunities to individually perform at lunchtime concerts as well as an arts carnival (similar to a sports carnival in a school) whereby individuals compete in the arts against one another to earn points for their team. One parent commented:

Here the students learn it is the same as other subject areas and even sport. They learn that some students are better than others at each art discipline. The arts require the development of skills and talent; it is not just about something you go and do. The children are taught a strong foundation of arts skills to later draw upon and develop. Here children learn arts education requires hard work with many rehearsals. That is what I love about the arts carnival. It provides the same ranking for the arts as sport in the school. Children who are good at the arts can also excel and receive recognition from others.

The annual sports carnival also incorporates elements of the arts. Each year, the competing teams must create their own theme, uniforms and props to perform in a march. In conjunction with this, each team will rehearse and present a dance and drama production to the school, and a prize is awarded to the winning march.

If students would like to pursue a career in music, they can study music extension in senior school alongside music; however, they must audition to be accepted/enrolled. The select group of students who are accepted is encouraged to take part in a music school over the summer holidays based at a local university. The students can gain credits towards a certificate in a special music education technique.

The principal believes it is important to support all children within the arts discipline and to ensure that those children who show specific talent are nurtured and guided accordingly. The principal notes that talent identification first takes place in Year Four, when children learn a stringed instrument. While all children will learn an instrument, different students will be selected for different instruments based on their skills and grouped with like-minded peers. For example, all children who are demonstrating skills in early strings learning will join the same orchestra. Similarly, musical groups in the middle and senior school are based on the level of skill. This means that some musical groups are considered elite and require entry via an audition. These specific groups also require students to be available for more rehearsals through the week, encouraging dedication, time management and teamwork skills.

The principal further notes the importance of the arts in benefiting other curriculum areas. She states:

[t]he arts really help students in their other areas. We are a top-performing school academically and I think this is because the students have access to a rounded education where they can see how academics, arts and sports combine and benefit one another.

I really think there is a link between early arts learning and language and communication. Children learn how to sing and pronounce words in music. They also learn fine motor and gross motor [skills] with associated movement with the songs. I know there is research out there to support this.

I also think there are links between music exposure and numeracy learning. We find that since the children have such a strong introduction in music in the early years, the children are able to easily grasp mathematical concepts.

A teacher in the early years' classroom spoke of the importance of arts integration for the learning of the children:

We teach everything with and through the arts in the early years. The arts act as a developmental tool to support the children as they engage in their own meaning-making. It allows us to teach the key areas of literacy, numeracy, history and geography, even science in the early years. We ask children to mix colours and to also build their own musical instruments with string to experiment with vibration. We also use songs to help the children remember everyday tasks and routines that we do such as packing up, getting ready to go to the library and transitions in the classroom. We try and have as much arts as possible until the children are in Year Four when we can start to look at talent identification.

Professional education for the arts for all teachers is encouraged in the school. Teachers will have regular workshops on new arts practices to implement with the students. In the early years and junior school, the arts specialist teachers would work closely with generalist teachers to ensure children's learning was cross-disciplinary and thus aligned across learning domains. Both parties engage in teaching each other skills to enhance the professional learning within the school.

Professional learning for school staff also stemmed from regular visiting academics and artists-in-residence. Academics often provide professional development to the school every six months. Every year, an artist-in-residence works with staff and students to encourage skill development and create a performance or exhibition to share with the community the learning that has taken place.

The principal encouraged his staff to engage in further academic study. For the arts specialist teachers, three are currently enrolled in a Master of Education to pursue research in arts education and are currently engaged in action-research projects within the school. Literature reviews from these teachers have been published on the school website for parents and the community to read. One teacher commented:

I really like working in this school because I am supported in my own education. I am encouraged to keep up to date with current ideas in the field and also share this with the

school community. The school community supports the research projects that I want to undertake with my teaching. I feel like I can align my practice with theory.

Case 9: John's College

John's College is a state school that prides itself on providing a high quality of public education. The school has 1500 students from Year Eight to Twelve. Each year, the students perform well in standardized tests and university admission exams. Admission into the school is usually reserved for the catchment area of the school. A small number of places are reserved for students outside the catchment area who can pass entrance exams.

There are specific programmes for German immersion and music extension from Year Eight to Ten. Generally, the students who are involved in the music extension programme are also involved in the German immersion programme. Both these programmes require auditions and interviews in order to select the highest performing students.

There are currently two classes of 25 students for the music extension class in Year Eight, Nine and Ten. These students engage in more music classes throughout the week compared to those students in the generalist studies programme. The school website states that this programme is:

specifically designed to extend students who have already developed sound music reading and performing skills throughout the primary years of education. This exciting two[-] year program allows students to develop advanced skills, in a challenging atmosphere with other like[-]minded musicians. Students enroll for a full two[-]year course and [are] also expected to participate in a school extra-curricular music ensemble. Music Extension involves creative performance opportunities that involve full class performances, small group and solo performances. Students develop skills in a variety of instruments (including guitar and keyboard), as well as voice. Students participate in a singing based aural program (Kodaly) to develop advanced musicianship skills. An e-learning website is also used to develop aural skills. Students visually and aurally analyse music by deconstructing musical elements, and making connections with style, context and genre.

There are countless opportunities for students to join performing ensembles, including three concert bands (Symphonic Band, Concert Band Two and Concert Band Three), the Big Band, the Percussion Ensemble, two String Orchestras (Sinfonia Strings and Philharmonic Strings), the Show Choir, the Concert Choir and the Male Voice Choir. The school encourages membership in more than one ensemble. State government funding of the arts programmes provides students with free tuition at all levels in woodwind, brass, strings and percussion. The music extension group has rallied a strong parent support group. Regular fundraisers are held to provide and maintain musical resources in the school, including school performing-arts uniforms for celebratory occasions, competitions and school functions.

A parent commented on the programme:

We didn't live in the catchment area of the school but our daughter was able to get in for German immersion and music extension after passing entrance exams. She plays the violin. I really like that she can be extended in her musical learning. In primary school she was a high achiever but she wasn't really extended in her music ability. My daughter was also at a state school and they had group lessons when learning the violin. While her group might be on page three of the violin book, my daughter would often come home and be at least 20 pages ahead. She would teach herself and practice to her level even if it was above the rest of the group that she was learning in.

The other thing I really like is that she gets to experience playing in a prized orchestra where entry is by audition. The quality of what the students are able to achieve from having to be auditioned is incredible. In primary school all children who learned a musical instrument were expected to play in the orchestra. It was not compulsory for the children to practice as it was a very non-competitive environment. Now my daughter is able to be in a community where quality and excellence is encouraged.

Her daughter agreed with her mother and added:

It was a nice feeling to be identified as having musical talent because now I know the teachers will want to challenge me. The other students in my class are also talented musicians so we can really help each other. I'm not the most talented in the class for once but I want to be. I really want to try again to achieve in music because I am being challenged.

The music teachers in the school are still actively performing musicians. They perform in ensembles and bands and also teach instrumental students privately. Additionally, teachers attended professional development sessions organized for Kodaly teaching. Attracting around two hundred Kodaly teachers, this professional learning opportunity enables staff to learn new songs and explore, experience and familiarize themselves with a variety of ways to teach music skills and concepts.

The two case studies presented thus far indicate the potential educational impact of arts education within the boundaries of a formal school setting. While most formal school settings strive to offer arts education learning experiences to all students, limited curriculum time restricts the potential for deep learning that results from children's engagement in instrumental tuition, dramatic classes, specific dance genre instruction or even training in visual art techniques such as pottery or sculpture. Many children are afforded opportunities to extend their formal school curriculum arts education by engaging in private tuition in non-formal settings. Educational impact in these environments is seemingly beneficial and allows for greater skill development and refinement, complementing the foundation offered at school. Let us take a closer look at two case studies that illustrate arts education learning experiences in non-formal settings.

Case 10: Evelyn Regional Conservatorium of Music

Regional conservatoriums of music in New South Wales (NSW), Australia are unique in that they are not associated with a tertiary institution and receive proportion funding from the State Government of NSW Department of Education and Training. No other Australian state or territory funds or part-funds non-tertiary conservatoriums located in regional areas. NSW regional conservatoriums are most often the principal provider of music education services for their region, servicing schools, individuals and the wider community through specialist instrumental and vocal training with emphasis on school-aged students and curriculum support for schools. The regional conservatoriums, in most cases, teach across wide geographical areas requiring specialist teachers to travel vast distances in order to provide students in outlying communities, villages and cities with access to them. The majority of these outreach programmes work solely with NSW public schools. Klopper (2009) highlighted the fundamental aim of regional conservatoriums as: 'attempting to provide equity for students in remote areas having the same access to music education opportunities, as do their city counterparts' (36). Klopper and Power (2012a) maintained that preparing students for musical life beyond the private studio by offering fundamental guidance on instrumental teaching and opportunities for ensemble music making was a strong bearing of the regional conservatoriums.

Evelyn Regional Conservatorium of Music is situated in a regional city of New South Wales. It is housed in a former faith temple and appears somewhat daunting due to the large austere external façade. After stepping inside the building you are transported to a sonic cacophony of melodious and rhythmic patterns resounding through the hexagonal building. In the centre of the building is the large performance auditorium surrounded by private music studios, where peripatetic staff passionately shared their love of music and technical mastery of their instrument.

In order to appreciate the potential educational impact of arts education, knowledge of the educational context and landscape is important. When discussing this with the director of the Evelyn Regional Conservatorium, it was apparent that dialogue at state government was ongoing and that this required continued attendance demonstrating repeatedly the quality education being offered to many students:

We still have not convinced the government of the essential place that we play in the educational landscape. We're getting closer but I'm personally not convinced that we've done that. And the essential place that we hold, even though we don't have a curriculum, is we teach to the highest standard that we can, employ tutors who exhibit a high level of music, musicality, musicianship and on the whole are motivated. The Department of Education and Training does not provide regional areas with equitable services to metropolitan areas – they simply can't. But we haven't yet convinced government and the way we need to respond to that particular danger [is] by being like the planters that water the educational world.

Drawing on sustained conversation between the researcher and the director about the perceived educational opportunity and subsequent impact:

[...] the first and foremost is instrumental one-to-one tuition, I would say that is the largest one particular thing that we offer and that's an enormous thing and it's also of a very high standard given how removed we are from a much larger centre – Sydney. Yes, one-to-one tuition but I think within that context of the one-to-one tuition we have so many different instruments being offered within the one building that creates its own energy so I think what happens there is not only are staff drawn to it rather than teaching privately at their house or something, they're drawn to teaching here because they're able to work with like[-]minded people and because we have a large variety of different instruments on offer with the tuition. I think what we have there is the energy, whether it be with the staff being given greater opportunity to get together and play together or whether it's a more general drawing on the student population of the area because they know they can come here. That's certainly a big part of what we offer. [There are] [m]any performance opportunities for both staff and students and that's an enormous part of what we do. Probably academically, there's the musicianship class, but it's not like we offer academic classes in the same way that you would at a tertiary level conservatorium which I don't think would be appropriate at this point in time because we're not a tertiary institution as such.

The rhizomatic offshoot suggested by the director provides students access to music education in both the formal and non-formal environments. A consequence of enacting this rhizomatic response is:

[...] we go into schools and do little tutorials with the schools each week which is different from what I'm used to because a lot of those kids don't get one on-one-lesson[s] so it's sort of a fun introductory class and they're with their peers and with their friends and they can play, it's inexpensive, it's getting them involved and giving them access to music.

The pedagogical activities offered by the conservatorium are essentially student centred. It was expressed that while the student is central to the activities planned, the direction followed is negotiated between the student's needs and the teacher's experience. This dialogic negotiation is crucial in the maintenance of the student-teacher relationship (Klopper and Power 2012b).

Student expectations are centred on their consideration of their teacher as a person, performer and musician. Students are seen to value observing their teacher as a performer, as well as the opportunity to perform alongside them during various performances. Students also expressed the importance of 'keeping it fun' during lessons.

During school vacation periods, many two-income families struggle to effectively manage the parental and professional balancing act. One community's response to this balancing act

has been the introduction of council-run vacation care programmes. This next case study details an example of a local council delivering a vacation care programme.

Case 11: Tenderville city

Tenderville city is located in the Central West of New South Wales, Australia. The closest metropolitan city is four hours' drive away or four-and-a-half hours' travel by train and bus. The city has most services that are commonly found in cities around the globe, just on a small scale, and at times limited by the availability of specialist expertise. The local council had for a number of years offered ad hoc vacation care activities. In 2009, it was planned to offer something old, something different, maybe something blue, but definitely something new. The council was offering a week-long vacation care programme for two-income families. Council staff had been tasked with planning the programme and sought assistance from the teacher education faculty housed in the locally situated regional university. The assistance brief sought arts-type activities. Resources were limited, with the exception of enthusiasm. Undergraduate students studying teacher education were called to volunteer, and the team of ten students was formed. The lecturer from the university worked with the group of students to design a connected week-long arts programme. The connected programme allowed for integrated arts activities to be implemented and then connected with the non-arts activities. The design of the programme culminated with a performance of highlights from the week, which parents and caregivers were invited to attend at the time they would usually have collected their children.

Each morning began with students engaging with a djembe drumming session. The windows vibrated and shook; the 34 students were sonically charged for a day filled with activities and opportunities. The programme was presented from council facilities, which meant that the administrative staff working in other areas of the facility could hear and, most times, feel the pulse of activity emanating from the vacation care programme. At the beginning of the week, the staff were not amused by the sonic vibrations, but within a couple of days, the drumming session had grown to include the administrative staff.

After each rousing morning of musical activity, the programme participants would be divided into four groups. Each group had a designated leader in one of the teacher education university students who would present, in workshop style, a range of activities previously prepared for small groups. The activities were broadly categorized by art form domain: dance, drama and visual art. Media technology was one domain that could not be offered due to a lack of access to technology for this programme. Nevertheless, the rotation of students through each workshop provided a connected arts approach to the programme. After the mid-day meal and rest, the children were able to engage in a range of non-arts activities, such as movie lounge, readers' corner, building blocks or 'surprise me!'

At the conclusion of each day, the university students and lecturer met to debrief and decide on any required changes or augmentations to the programme for the following day.

It was apparent that what was planned for each day was being covered substantially faster than initially intended. This was partly due to the inexperience of the student teachers. Adaptations and extension activities were then included to provide opportunities for the participants to extend their learning. As the students attending the vacation care programme were from a range of local primary schools, there was a noticeable range of previous experiential foundations.

On day three, the teacher education students offered to present the 'surprise me!' activity corner. They decided that this would be an arts activity corner and would provide the children with activities other than those covered during the more structured workshops. It was during this day that the stage set for the performance was designed, and construction work began immediately. The performance was to have a nautical theme, and the best way to exhibit this was by building an almost life-size vessel complete with flagpole. During the following morning's musical interlude with djembe, the rhythms soon became representative of rowing meter, together with accompanying work-song singing. Once the children had transported themselves away at sea in their own built vessel, their imagination and sense of creative spirit held no boundaries. The dress-up corner became a valuable source for the wardrobe; subsequent days saw children bringing in articles from home that became adornments and necessary attachments for the sailing vessel. 'What shall we do with a drunken sailor?' was adapted to 'What shall we do with an inland sailor?' and narrated the plight of a young child living in inland Australia longing to be a sailor out at sea.

What we all witnessed was the children's natural ability to harness learning opportunities in many of the planned activities with which they are presented. Learning knows no boundaries, and whether at school, at home, in the community or at the local council offices, affording children with the opportunity to learn will have a profound impact upon all involved. And, yes, the performance for parents and caregivers was a resounding success, and the local newspaper ran a feature on the programme. The inclusion of arts activities provided by teacher education students has become a regular feature of the vacation care programme.

What does this mean?

The case studies have provided us with insights into the development of knowledge and skills, talent identification, professional learning and community learning. Furthermore, they have provided evidence of the educational impact of the arts in each of the sites and described the way in which the arts is used as a teaching tool to aid other curriculum areas. It has also shown how the arts can be used as a motivational tool for student learning.

The case studies showed the opportunities provided in schools for talent identification in the arts. In the Smarts Grammar School, students could audition for certain arts ensembles, they could participate in music extension courses in secondary school and those with exceptional arts talent were also identified in primary school. Likewise at John's College,

students could audition for certain arts ensembles. There was also a music extension course for early secondary school to enhance the knowledge and skills of music students beyond the current expected level of understanding for mainstream students. Comparable to extension classes provided for disciplines such as science or maths at school, music extension classes were used for high-achieving students. Similarly, Evelyn Regional Conservatorium of Music offered audition opportunities for aspiring students by connecting with local schools. This provided the opportunity for students to identify their passion and/or potential within the discipline of the arts, specifically music, in the hopes of expanding upon their knowledge and understanding in a safe and supportive environment.

Talent identification is an important process in schools to support children who display exemplary talent in the arts. Just as sporting ability and academic ability are nurtured in school programmes, an aptitude for the arts can also be accommodated. It is interesting to note that both the Smarts Grammar School and John's College also have talent identification programmes for sports, academics and language. At each school, it is accepted that children excel at different activities, and it is important that they can be catered for regardless of the activity. Each institution celebrates the successes of students by recognizing their achievements and acknowledging that each child is an individual.

In the school case studies, the arts were taught for 'art's sake'. At both schools, individual arts are taught to develop specific arts skills and knowledge. At the Smarts Grammar School, arts are seen as an important area of the curriculum for all children in primary school. There are individual instrumental music lessons and a number of specialist arts teachers. At John's College, all children have access to music in Year Eight and instrumental lessons are free. At both schools, there are also numerous arts ensemble groups that students can join.

The arts at both schools were also used as a tool to help enhance other learning areas. Smarts Grammar School used the arts to enhance literacy, language and numeracy. In the early years, all curriculum areas were taught through the arts to assist young children in becoming active meaning makers regarding the world around them. At John's College, many children who completed music extension also completed German immersion. These students found many connections between both subjects that helped enhance each subject. This showed the educational benefit of having an arts education programme in a school to also aid the levels of understanding in other curriculum areas. It aligns with most of the findings described above of the extrinsic benefits associated with arts education. In these case studies, the arts appeared to make connections for students across the curriculum and provided a strong foundation for other subject areas.

The professional learning of teachers was also evident in the case studies. In each of the scenarios, it appeared important to teachers to improve their own educational understanding of teaching the arts; they would regularly attend workshops to improve their own skills and knowledge. The teachers would then implement many new ideas into their classrooms. They appeared dedicated to professional learning as part of being a teacher of arts education. Teachers' flexibility and openness to teaching of the arts is crucial, and their willingness to learn, understand and attempt to practise concepts that are foreign to them demonstrates

their dedication to improving their teaching and learning pedagogies, which in turn benefits their students.

The teachers also recognized the importance of educating the community about the arts. In order to aid community understanding, they would regularly present on the school's website information about the benefits of engaging in the arts. This approach was important to help raise the community understanding of the school's curriculum regarding arts education and the role the arts can play in life.

The two non-formal education case studies have demonstrated that educational impact is not restricted to formal education settings. In many instances, the opportunities and challenges faced at the Evelyn Regional Conservatorium of Music were not dissimilar to those at the case-study schools. The Tenderville city vacation care programme exhibits the rich tapestry that can be woven when formal and non-formal education settings merge and offer educational opportunities that afford deep learning outcomes for all students involved.

The performance occasions in both case study sites were a success for a number of reasons, including that:

- parents were given the opportunity to see the children perform in a professionally programmed event
- multiple aspects of the arts were incorporated into the performance
- students were given the opportunity to demonstrate material they had been preparing over time.

The students extended basic arts education knowledge and were offered the opportunity to develop skills in areas in which they possibly had not had opportunity before.

Conclusion

These case studies have explored educational impact in four Australian case sites through interviews with employees. They have shown how some arts education programmes can identify talent of children in the arts. Arts education can also have the power to generate new knowledge about skill development and conceptual development in a variety of ways. The arts are also used as a transformational and motivational teaching tool to aid other areas of the curriculum. In the case studies, we see the importance of professional education at each of the schools where the teachers are based and the education of the community. The case studies indicate that educational impact extends beyond children to also include the educational learning of teachers and the community.

It is important that when schools are examining their arts education programmes and funding that arts programmes receive, they consider the educational impact for students, teachers and the community. Specific classes in skill development in particular arts are also

important to help the student improve their craft. It appears in all of these sites that students would not be reaching their education potential without access to a quality arts education programme.

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