

Extending the Classroom: Investigating the long-term influence of a co-curricular theatre-arts program on secondary school participants.

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Extending the Classroom

Investigating the long-term influence of a co-curricular theatre-arts program on secondary school participants.

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Arts Education, Co-curricular, Extra-curricular, Drama, Theatre

Abstract

This descriptive case study aims to understand the long-term influence of participation in a theatre-arts co-curricular program on secondary school students. The Theatre-Arts Program (TAP) incorporated a range of co-curricular activities designed for one school context. By examining student, parent and personal reflections, critical experiences from within the TAP program emerged as influencing participation and students' lives beyond school.

The study is retrospective in nature, drawing on data sources, including focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews with former student participants and parents. Interview data provided insight into individual participants' perceptions of the ongoing influence of TAP in their lives, professionally and personally, for five- to ten-years post-school. Documents used to confirm participant involvement and recollections and also used to stimulate discussion and memories of events include school publications and memorabilia. The researcher also drew on personal reflections and memories to reflexively interpret the interview transcripts. An understanding of the benefits identified by individual students has emerged through analysis and evaluation of this data.

McCarthy et al.'s (2004) framework for understanding the benefits of the arts provides a field to map the benefits. Furthermore, the data analysis has identified aspects of the program with the greatest influence on post-school pathways and personal attributes.

There is limited reference to theatre-in-education, school theatre societies, productions, and the annual school musical within the research literature. This research focuses on students involved in theatre-making and aims to add to existing research to influence policy and practice relating to co-curricular offerings in drama.

Statement of originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.



Kelly Redhead-Adelt. 21.01.2021

Dedication

For all the teachers in my life who have left imprints on my heart and head:

Stella and Derek Redhead

‘Tussy’ Noel Toussaint

Peter Smith

Judith McLean

In memory of

Jennifer Haynes whose visionary leadership allowed this program to flourish.

For all the teachers who were a part of this program -

your contribution to ‘something bigger’ than any one of us is gratefully acknowledged.

For the students who gave every bit of their youthful energy to every single project.

Special thanks to:

the interview participants: past students and parents

my vigilant, patient supervisors, Madonna Stinson and Ben Williams

and my ever-supportive family, David, Charlotte and Georgia.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis examines the long-term influence of secondary school participation in a particular Theatre Arts Program (TAP) offered to secondary students at a P – 12 independent girls' school in suburban Brisbane. The study's focus is the retrospective examination of participants' memories of the program and their insight into what influences have flowed into the next chapter of their lives.

The research has spanned a timeframe of change, as the whole world adjusts to new norms associated with a global pandemic. In the face of such changes, including remote learning and theatres' closure, I have questioned the research's relevance. However, the inability to attend live theatre and to watch students prepare and perform in the absence of authentic audience response has solidified my belief in the importance of theatre and student involvement in all aspects of theatre: as maker, interpreter, audience and critic.

In this chapter I explain the research's impetus and outline the school context, which enabled the TAP to evolve, details of the TAP and its purpose, and research questions.

Background

The impetus for the research project emerged as a result of reflecting on student engagement, participation and outcomes in the TAP in which I fulfilled many roles, including teacher, co-artist and director from 2008-2017. Throughout this period the program evolved in response to student outcomes, engagement, and abilities. As the director of the program, I was integrally and centrally involved in its design and implementation. My reflections on the consistently high student results in both Drama

and Dance and students' career pathways precipitated my investigation into the program's influence on past students, mainly whether the co-curricular opportunities had any influence on students' lives beyond school. Through the project, I will examine past student participants' recollections of their experiences in the program and any ongoing impact they perceive on their lives post-secondary school.

School Context

The context in which the TAP evolved is an independent girls' P- 12 school with a firm foundation in arts education. The century-old school has an ongoing affiliation with church organisations. The founders handed the school governance to the Methodist church, which gave it to the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools' Association (PMSA) to administer in the 1940s. Eventually, the Uniting Church of Australia assumed responsibility for college governance in 1975. This association underpins the Christian ethos of the school. Since its foundation in 1901, the school has embraced music, visual art and spoken arts. Of the five 'seeds' that underpin the school's ethos and culture since foundation, two refer to arts: 'Visual Arts' and 'Performing and Spoken Arts'. Music and Visual Art have continued to be privileged in the curriculum, led by specialist teachers from Prep to Year 12. The school's valuing of arts education is further evident by the variety of co-curricular opportunities, including plays, art exhibitions, debating, musicals, choral and instrumental music programs offered to students from Prep to year 12 and documented in annual school magazines.

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of the school is 1128 (OECD, 2012). This figure sits considerably above the ICSEA set point of 1000, indicating that the students attending the school experience significant educational advantage based on the parent body's employment and education qualifications.

Theatre-arts Program

Under my leadership of the curricular and co-curricular Drama and Dance program, the TAP evolved from a pre-existing range of co-curricular offering into a scaffolded program. In this instance, scaffolded refers to various activities and roles that increase in complexity of content and skill requirements, allowing a student to progressively build on learning experiences towards a high level of competence. The TAP, designed as a combination of co-curricular activities to support dance and drama curriculum subjects, provided students with high standard performance opportunities. The program involved all drama and dance teachers and enabled them to share their artistry with students in the co-curricular environment. As program director, I continuously analysed the participation, student feedback and curriculum-related results in an iterative process aimed at maximising student participation and outcomes. Program opportunities increased as students moved from the middle to senior years, where senior students were encouraged to take leadership and creative responsibility when working with their younger peers. The program introduced younger students to roles in the ensemble or chorus where they could observe and learn from older students; build performance skills, and experience theatre production and intricate processes. Senior performing arts students were generally cast in lead roles in major productions. The smaller one-act play selection enabled students' performance skills to develop in increasingly complex styles as students' skills and understanding matured.

The plays enabled students to develop their skills and experiences in live theatre to increase their success in auditioning for major productions. The opportunity for the casts of the one-act plays to compete at Drama festivals across south-east Queensland added to their experience by receiving external adjudication, viewing other short plays and performing in various venues. The TAP included two dance troupes with

participation determined by age and skills through the audition process. The junior dance troupe required less skill and aimed to extend students' experience in live performance, teamwork and skills to facilitate successful audition for the senior troupe and major productions. Dance troupes competed at large dance eisteddfods across south-east Queensland benefitting from viewing other schools' work and receiving expert adjudicators' feedback. Additional opportunities extended to senior students included directing and choreographing in these environments, and this transferred directly into their curriculum work in the Drama and Dance classrooms. The TAP encompassed co-curricular opportunities such as annual college productions (alternating between musical theatre and other theatre styles), one-act plays, interstate industry and training tours, dance troupes and a performance program. Other performance events included:

- Service-learning: sharing performances with the broader community, including the Mater children's Hospital school and Retirement Homes.
- An Evening of Plays: a public showing of one-act plays, some student directed.
- Solo-Duo Evening: a public performance of student choreographic work.
- Dance Showcase: a full-scale production featuring dance troupes, curriculum dance and student choreography from year 7 – 12.

The TAP extended the classroom into the rehearsal room and the performance space; subsequently the TAP experiences transferred to the classroom. A key program enabler was the interaction between the classroom and co-curricular environments, facilitated by classroom teachers who worked outside the classroom directing dance troupes and plays and contributing to annual productions and attending the interstate Industry and Training tour. Other teaching staff supported the program through

volunteering to paint sets, sew costumes or supervise students backstage. The repetitive scheduling of co-curricular activities in the TAP spanned a two-year cycle. See Table 1.

Table 1 - *Components of the Theatre-Arts Program (TAP) 2008 - 2017*

Component	Year 8	Year 9 & 10	Year 11 & 12	Other Events/ Opportunities
One-act play	Open to all students to audition	Open to Drama Students	Open to Drama Students Opportunities to direct younger students	Evening of Plays Drama Festivals
Bi-annual Children's Theatre	College venue	Restricted to Drama & Dance students		Performing and Spoken Arts Awards evening
Bi-annual Musical Theatre		Open to the whole school		
External professional venue				Drama and Dance Dinner
Dance Troupe	Junior Dance Troupe		Senior Dance Troupe Opportunities to choreograph junior students	Brisbane and Gold Coast Eisteddfods Dance showcase
Bi-annual Interstate Industry and Training Tour			Open to senior Drama & Dance students. Sydney and Melbourne. Workshops & tours at NIDA, VCA, Malthouse, MTC, SDC, Brent St., Australian Ballet, Belvoir Theatre, STC, Opera House, VAC & live performances every night.	

This study

The interest in student outcomes in Drama and Dance and participants' post-school destinations prompted this investigation into the long-term influence of the TAP. I sought to discover specific aspects of the program, which contributed to the influences in individual lives. By doing so, I aim to contribute to the broader policy discussion relating to co-curricular drama offerings and give voice to the students and their experiences in a theatre-arts program.

Research questions

1. What, if any, have been the long-term impacts on secondary students as a result of participation in a co-curricular theatre-arts program?
2. What aspects of the theatre-arts experiences did participants identify as most influential in their lives beyond school?

This chapter has introduced the study's genesis and context and provided some necessary details relating to the school context and the TAP. The following chapter critically analyses the informing literature. Explanation and justification of methodological decisions, the research design, including the data collection processes and the means of analysis, are outlined in Chapter three. Chapter four shares the analysis and provides connections to emerging findings. The final chapter offers specific findings from this study and considers its implications within the broader field of co-curricular drama. The conclusion acknowledges the limitations of this project and makes suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review has five sections. At first, I examine literature which falls under the broad term 'Arts Education', which refers to arts' classes in school as a part of the curriculum, arts as pedagogy, and arts activities taken outside school hours, referred to as co-curricular or extra-curricular activities. The second section relates to arts education advocacy, followed by an overview of the literature relating to the interchangeable use of co-curricular and extra-curricular terms. The fourth section examines literature specifically focussed on the benefits of participation in arts education and is structured according to the Framework for Understanding the Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004). Finally, I examine literature that speaks to essential aspects of arts participation, supporting the accrual of the identified benefits.

Arts Education

The research literature into arts education suggests that involvement in arts education can influence students across a spectrum of areas including personal development in communication and self-confidence (McCammon et al., 2012); social development in collaboration and negotiation (Catterall, 2007) and cognitive skills in critical and creative thinking (Gibson & Anderson, 2008; Mansour et al., 2018). However, as Catterall (2002b) points out, further research is required to determine precisely how the arts influence student development and to what extent. McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras and Brooks (2004) outline four types of arts experiences that research has shown to benefit students: i) an arts-rich environment; ii) arts pedagogy; iii) arts integrated into non-arts courses and; iv) direct instruction in the arts. They define "an arts-rich school environment" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 22) as one which includes curriculum and extra-

curricular activities; and arts pedagogy as a tool to help students learn. The term ‘arts integrated in non-arts courses’, refers to using the arts to deliver non-arts subjects such as history (McCarthy et al., 2004) and direct instruction in the arts refers to approaches that aim to develop appreciation and skills in a specific art form (p. 22). Similarly, Bamford (2006) has reinforced the importance of an arts-rich environment. Their UNESCO funded study surveyed arts education programs across 35 countries, to identify the "extent and impact of arts-rich programs on children and young people" (Bamford, 2006, p. 9). In Bamford’s survey, the term 'arts-rich program' is defined as one that "involves the arts in a significant and substantial way and has a direct impact on the education of children" (Bamford, 2006, p. 22). Their discussion of arts-rich programs distinguished between curriculum-based and extra-curricular arts offerings, reporting variation in goals between programs. According to Bamford (2006), those programs run outside of school hours are more artistically focussed, while the goals of programs within school hours are more frequently culturally and socially focussed. The TAP at the centre of this case study existed in an environment where curriculum and co-curricular arts activities were embedded in the school's culture as evidenced by the school's founding seeds (see school context p. 8), therefore the school environment aligns with McCarthy et al.’s (2004), definition of an arts-rich environment. Moreover, I would assert that the TAP, with its substantial arts offerings had “direct impact on the education of children” (Bamford, 2006, p. 22) and closely aligns with Bamford’s (2006) arts-rich program. Thus, the arts-rich program (TAP) flourished in an arts-rich environment.

Arts Education - Advocacy

From the beginning of the 21st century, arts educators have been both motivated and constrained by the need to “build a case for the value of arts” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 1) in the face of greater accountability and marginalisation within the curriculum (See

& Kokotsaki, 2016). The expectation for educational outcomes to conform to standardised testing privileges those subject areas that are easily assessed and reported upon (Ewing, 2010). This trend has prompted researchers to highlight the benefits of arts education and advocate for its inclusion in the curriculum. The long-standing debate is centred around whether the value of the arts' intrinsic benefits is sufficient to justify their inclusion in the curriculum, or alternatively, whether the attribution of broader (instrumental) benefits would provide policymakers better justification for the arts to be included in the curriculum (Catterall, 1998; Eisner, 1998). This debate sets up a binary argument between one camp, who argue that 'arts for art's sake' is sufficient reason for their inclusion in the curriculum (Greene, 2013) while the other camp argues that participation in the arts benefits other areas of education either through integration (Aprill, 2010) or transfer (Catterall, 2005). The McCarthy et al., (2004) Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts provides a field upon which it is possible to map benefits and avoid this debate's reductive binary positioning.

Terminology: Co-curricular and Extra-curricular Activities

Within the Australian context, the term co-curricular activities generally refer to students' activities in connection with or representing the school (Wellham, 2011), such as in the case of representative sport, orchestra, choir, school musicals and plays. By contrast, the term extra-curricular activities typically refer to activities facilitated by outside organisations and require payment, not directly associated with schools (Owens, 2018). Relevant examples include private drama, dance tutoring and gymnastics training. American researchers, Bartkus, Nemelka, B., Nemelka, M., and Gardner (2012), define co-curricular as “student’s participation outside of normal classroom time as a condition for meeting a curricular requirement” (p. 699) and consider extra-curricular activities from the view of a continuum ranging from direct to indirect, dependent on the activity’s

approximation to an individual's major study. According to Bartkus et al., (2012) direct extra-curricular activities are those that are “more closely associated with the student's major or curriculum,” whereas indirect activities are those that are “relatively unrelated to the student's major or curriculum” (p. 699). Another usage of the term 'extra-curricular' appears in Swedish researchers' work (Behtoui, 2019) who use the term 'extra-curricular' similarly to the Australian definition of 'co-curricular'. Within this study, all references to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities will refer to optional activities undertaken by students, outside curriculum time under the school staff's direction, which do not involve assessment.

Arts co-curricular activities (CCA) are often seen as 'fun' optional extras. Indeed, some scholars refer to them as existing in 'the garden' in relation to the 'house' of the curriculum (O'Toole et al., 2009). To date, there has been limited research into Australian theatre-arts, drama and dance co-curricular activities, including the long-term impact of theatre-arts participation. In 2002, and referring to the USA, Catterall acknowledged that “we know very little on the basis of research about the influences of dramatic presentations to audiences generally, or about impacts on either the performers or the audiences in the case of school productions” (p. 73). More recently, the Australian *TheatreSpace* project examined the influence of young people attending live theatre. This study acknowledged that when students either studied drama or engaged in developing their own performances, that the quality and nature of the theatregoing experience was different to those young people who had neither participated in nor studied theatre while at school (Bundy et al., 2015; Stinson & Burton, 2016). With the exception of McCammon, Saldaña, Hines and Omasta's (2012) study into the impact of speech and theatre on student's post-school lives, there is limited research into the long-term impact of theatre-arts co-curricular programs on student participants and their lives beyond

school or research which points to the most influential aspects of such a program. Deasy (2002) summarises the concerns of researchers who had contributed to the Critical Links compendium, stating that they “long for more research that reveals the unique and precise aspects of the arts teaching and learning” (p. 7) that positively influences academic and social outcomes for students. This study seeks to add to the arts education discussion by examining the long-term influences on participants involved in a wide range of theatre-arts co-curricular activities during their secondary schooling.

Investigation of current co-curricular offerings across many education systems – government, independent and Catholic – indicates that within the co-curricular environment, there is a hierarchy that mirrors the Review of the Australian curriculum which “recommends that drama, dance and media arts be "elective subjects" with much of their content reduced or absorbed into other areas of the curriculum” (Anderson, 2014). Stinson (2017) asserts that, of the five arts subjects included within the Australian curriculum, music and visual arts are privileged in the recommendation to be taught as discrete subjects and therefore maintain a higher status than other art forms, such as Drama, Dance and Media Arts. Evidence of the co-curricular arts hierarchy exists in the fully-funded Education Queensland Instrumental Music program implemented across all Queensland government schools, offering free instrumental music tuition to students from year four to year twelve (Department of Education and Training, 2017). This program is “a compatible and complementary curriculum to that of primary and secondary classroom music and music extension programs, Instrumental Music provides opportunities for greater participation in music education” (Department of Education and Training, 2017, p. 4). There is no comparable program for students to build specific arts techniques or literacies across any other art form either through curricular or co-curricular environments.

Benefits

Each researcher frames benefits differently though there are many common threads. Harland's (2000) work suggest a range of outcomes from 'intrinsic' and their related influences on creative development and divergent thinking, to the 'extrinsic' transfer to other curriculum areas. Dividing the benefits into two distinct categories separates the creative thinking skills from other skills that benefit the students' learning across the broader curriculum. Stinson (2008), referencing Eisner (2005) points to the historical positions of arts education curriculum theorists as either "essentialist" and "contextualist". The justification for arts education from an essentialist perspective is in their unique contributions to an individual's experience (labelled intrinsic benefits by others (Harland, 2000)) while the contextualist perspective, closely aligns with instrumental benefits, which justify the arts because of what the arts contribute more broadly to society. Martin, Mansour, Anderson, Gibson, and Liem, (2013) propose a variation on this categorisation with benefits placed on a continuum between 'Academic' and 'Non-academic' (Martin et al., 2013). The study identifies academic benefits as motivation and engagement, while non-academic benefits include self-esteem and life satisfaction (Martin et al., 2013).

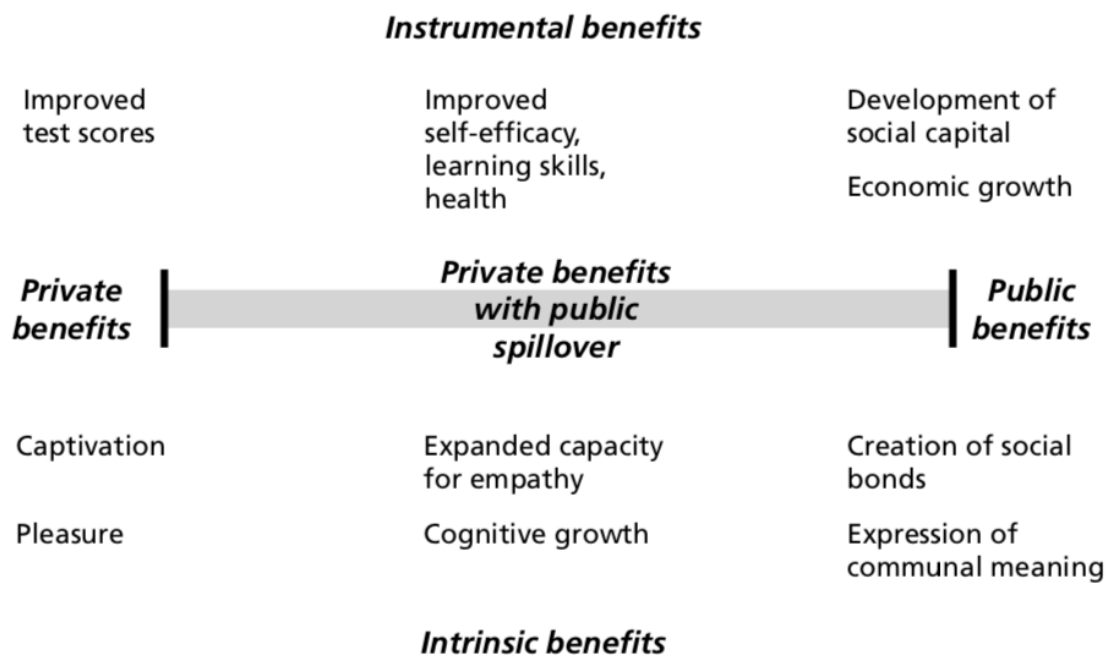
The over-emphasis on the instrumental benefits at the expense of intrinsic benefits is a recurring concern because justifying the arts by their usefulness in improving student outcomes in non-arts subjects diminishes the arts experience's uniqueness and suggests that other subjects are of greater educational value (Gibson & Anderson, 2008). Heath (2014) warns that we "must not put the arts at the service of some other field or branch of learning" (p. 358). In contrast, McCarthy et al., (2004) suggest that those individuals most able to reverse the marginalisation of the arts in education, such as policymakers and funding bodies are more likely to respond if they can see benefits beyond the intrinsic

value of the arts. Therefore, to have this research project speak to policymakers, it is advantageous to map the student participants' responses using the field of benefits designed by McCarthy et al., (2004) which highlights both intrinsic and instrumental, private and public benefits.

McCarthy et al., (2004) reported four areas of research into arts participation: instrumental benefits of the arts; conceptual theories; intrinsic influences of the arts and arts participation. They developed a theoretical framework which discriminates between benefits across two directions: 'Instrumental to Intrinsic' on one axis and 'Public to Private' on the other. The framework provides a multi-directional field on which benefits may be mapped rather than limited to the previous binary models. See Figure 1.

Figure 1 - *Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts* (McCarthy et al., 2004, p4)

Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts



Instrumental benefits are defined as “indirect outcomes of arts experiences” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 3) and intrinsic benefits as those “inherent in the arts experience

itself and are valued for themselves” (p. 3). The second dimension is a continuum between public benefits and private benefits, attributed with “enhancing individual lives” (p. 3). The second continuum allows identification of benefits for individuals with “spillover influences that benefit the public sphere” (p. 3). In this way, they acknowledge that the benefits of the arts can effectively influence student development in the broader curriculum and personal development and that each of these domains can benefit both the individual and the collective.

In the study that follows, this framework is utilised to map participant responses throughout the research. By utilising this field to map responses to the TAP, as opposed to plotting them along a single continuum, a greater depth of understanding of the full range of accrued benefits for these participants will be identified.

Improved Test scores

McCarthy et al., (2004) identified three categories of cognitive benefits. Firstly, improved academic performance, including grades and test scores. Secondly, improved basic skills including reading, maths and capacity for creative thinking. Thirdly, improved attitudes and skills, including learning how to learn, self-discipline and engagement in school (McCarthy et al., 2004). There are frequent assertions from arts advocates and researchers alike regarding the transferable benefits of arts experiences to students' academic work across the curriculum (Mansour et al., 2016). The term ‘transfer’ “denotes instances where learning in one context assists learning in a different context” (Catterall, 2002a, p. 162). Catterall (1998; 2002c; 2005, 2007) supports the concept of transfer of knowledge and skills from the arts curriculum to the broader curriculum and states that this happens both directly and indirectly. They confirm that the direct transfer is evident as “arts-involved students do better on many measures, their performance advantages grow over

time” (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1998, p. 23) and indirectly through “motivation and engagement in school, attitudes that contribute to academic achievement” (p. 19). In responding to Catterall’s 1994 study of cognition and curriculum, Eisner (1998) calls into question the legitimacy of his approach, explaining that Catterall has shifted the focus of research from the “relationship between experience in the arts and academic achievement to the contributions of the arts on cognitive development” (p. 12). Catterall (2002a) identified the narrow focus of much of the research in this field, in its failure to question the degree to which arts learning experiences prepare students for future learning or create long term effects.

Arts co-curricular activities have been credited with the transference of skills and knowledge, thus impacting student outcomes, particularly concerning academic achievement (Boyes, 2003; Butterworth, 2013; Corby, 2008; Tan, 2017; Wellham, 2011). Bransford (2000) asserts that all learning experiences impact future experiences and that schools' goal is ultimately to enable students to take what is learned in school and transfer it to real-life contexts.

Winner and Hetland (2008) and Heath (2014), suggest that there is limited evidence to support the claims of improved test scores used to justify the arts in the curriculum. However, Winner and Hetland’s (2008) criticisms relate to the methodologies and reporting of research rather than claims' authenticities. They acknowledge that learning in the arts may directly impact examination results across the board, as Catterall and Deasy have asserted, but suggest that the research processes have not been sufficiently reported to support such claims. Heath (2014) proposes that the academic improvement comes as a result of an increase in student engagement and motivation, which Catterall (2002a) has labelled ‘affective transfer’ and which McCarthy et al., (2004) include in the third category of cognitive benefits.

In an attempt to negate research findings that found academic advantage as a result of the study in arts curriculum, some researchers have suggested that students who are naturally high achieving were either drawn to the arts or encouraged into the arts (Corby, 2008; See & Kokotsaki, 2016; Winner & Hetland, 2000). This suggestion has been countered by several researchers working with students 'at risk'; from low-socio economic and diverse cultural backgrounds (Akron, 2007; Catterall, 2007; Heath, 1998).

Improved self-efficacy, learning skills and health

McCarthy et al., (2004) suggest that instrumental benefits which have public spillover include improved self-efficacy, learning skills and health. They identify the positive influence of skill development and attitudes towards school, on both the individual and community.

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) refers to self-efficacy as the practice of human activity due to an individual's belief in their capacity to produce desired consequences by their actions. Self-efficacy is said to increase an individual's ability to learn through increased confidence to problem solve and build capacity to manage "stresses and frustration inherent in the learning process" (McCarthy, Ondaatje, et al., 2004, p24). According to Bandura (1997), an individual's self-efficacy can have a broad range of effects that influence the choices, effort, and perseverance towards their chosen pursuits. Self-efficacy is closely tied to the difficulties, perceived failures or accomplishments an individual encounters (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, an individual's perceived ability to be successful in given situations can depend on their previous experience.

Many researchers have pointed to the positive benefit of developing self-efficacy due to arts participation (Catterall, 2007; McCarthy et al., 2004; Wong, 2018). Wong (2018) considers that self-efficacy is determined by individual's "expectation of how successful a situation may turn out to be, and how a task may be completed..." (p. 24). She explains how young people make decisions about their future based on their self-belief in their capabilities and determined by their projected success. Bandura (1997) highlights that "social validation of personal efficacy produced large benefits" (p. 81) in an individual's self-efficacy. Also, Bandura (1997) suggests that observing peers performing a task successfully can affect an individual's belief that they can similarly master comparable tasks. Wong (2018) reflects that peers are not the only sources of influence in self-efficacy, but that young people tend to be attracted to "peers who share similar values and life choices" (p. 38). Self-efficacy can be further strengthened by verbal persuasion as individuals are more likely to put in and sustain more effort than those plagued with self-doubt (Bandura, 1997). The process of observing peers at work in either drama or theatre combined with the social validation of family and peers who form the audience would suggest that these art forms have the potential to enhance an individual's self-efficacy.

Learning skills

According to McCammon's (2012) survey respondents, theatre experiences empowered them to think and function in dynamic, ever-changing contexts. Learning skills, such as creative thinking, can develop in response to the contrasting and multifaceted theatre context, as students face challenges of artistry, self-evaluation, problem-solving and the abstract versus the practical (McCammon et al., 2012). Unlike other subject areas where problem-solving results in predetermined answers brought

about by a series of proven formulas, arts students encounter problems where no prior answers existed (Fleming et al., 2016).

McCarthy et al., (2004) confirm that “many of these studies conclude that hands-on participation – especially in the form of public performance or presenting – is particularly beneficial” (p. 11). Performances for family, friends, and the wider community were consistently identified as motivators leading to commitment, resilience, and CCA engagement. With extended performance opportunities diminished in the arts curriculum, students look to the opportunities within CCA to apply their artistic learnings and reap the benefits of live performances which provide opportunities to demonstrate “skills to an audience” (Catterall, 2002a, p. 166) and a “sense of completion... [followed by] significant learning based on reflection and critique” (Fleming et al., 2016, p. 447).

Literacy

Literacy is the focus of much research literature and identified as a benefit of arts education. (Eisner, 2002; Fleming et al., 2016; Livermore, 1998). This study is firmly situated in drama and theatre education; the following section will consider how drama literacy and theatre literacy are defined. Corby's (2008) mixed methods study identified instrumental benefits with public spillover such as learning skills of motivation; stronger communication and reading analysis skills utilised across the curriculum in English and History. Stronger communication and reading analysis skills are likely to affect individuals improved test scores.

In the preface to a collection of papers on arts literacies published by the Australian Centre for arts Education, Livermore (1998), acknowledges the “complexities of the perceptual, cognitive and emotional processing that occurs in the production and interpretation of meaning in artistic modes of expression.” (p. 1) Further they state that

the intrinsic nature of arts literacy is “embedded in the mode of expression of each art form.... [which] may not readily be transferable to verbal language.” (Livermore, 1998, p. 5) Eisner (2002) reframes the notion of literacy, explaining that literacy isn’t restricted to what can be spoken, but rather what can be understood. In this way, the notion of literacy becomes more broadly a way to make and share meaning. Livermore’s (1998) collection of papers, provides insight into a range of arts literacies, including drama literacy. Arts Literacy, as defined by Robin Pascoe (1998) has two dimensions; the first refers to understanding and applying arts languages in creating and reacting to artworks and secondly to understanding and using spoken and written language in creating and reacting to works of art. Similarly, Burton, Bundy and Ewing (2014) confirm that theatre literacy is evident through an individual’s ability to “respond critically to a play, [as they are] deconstructing both the text and the performance in depth” (p146). Pascoe (1998) highlights drama and media as being "language-rich" (p. 44) where the language is pivotal to the experience, used to express their experience and the meaning they have derived.

Arts can be considered languages in their own right; therefore, arts literacy is evident in students’ competent use of the “symbol system” (Pascoe, 1998, p. 44) constructed for the express aim of connecting concepts, emotions and meaning. The nature of arts literacies according to Livermore (1998) is determined by each artforms’ mode of expression. This explanation of arts literacy is supported by Stinson’s (2018) definition of drama literacy: “capacity to ‘read’ and ‘write’ in the symbolic languages of ‘drama’ and to know how to make and communicate meaning...” (p. 92). Stinson (2018) establishes that to be language literate, one must be able to “function in, contribute to and shape the world” (p. 90) and suggests that this definition could also apply to drama literacy. Drama students can read, interpret and take meaning from the symbolic elements, conventions and technologies that shape drama. Stinson (2018) explains that

Drama literate students can understand and empathise due to the essential experience of stepping into another's shoes. The connection between drama literacy and an individual's capacity for empathy provides further alignment with the Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004). Pascoe (1998) advocates embracing arts literacy and for arts educators to make connections between arts literacy and other literacies.

Researchers in the *TheatreSpace* project found that students needed to not only study theatre and attend theatre as audience members but also make theatre themselves to understand theatre and humanity (Burton, 2014; Stinson & Burton, 2016). The study found that these aspects impacted the student's responses to theatre and constituted theatre literacy (Burton, 2014). O'Toole and Stinson (2015) make the distinction between drama and theatre clear when they define theatre as "the public expression of drama for an audience of others" (O'Toole, 2015, p. 159). The research into the arts, drama and theatre literacy supports the assertion that arts education can support and enhance students' learning skills.

Health

McCarthy et al., (2004) identify several health-related benefits, though most of the studies they refer to were conducted on the elderly. Among the benefits are improved quality of life, mental and physical health, and reduced stress and anxiety. The two types of arts involvement, described as arts therapies, are hands-on, creative activity (predominantly dance and theatre) and appreciation (mostly music and visual arts) (McCarthy et al., 2004).

Development of Social Capital

The Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts (2004) identifies the development of social capital as aligning with the Public end of the private-public continuum and as providing instrumental benefits. At the base level, the arts benefit the community by bringing people together through attending performances, classes and festivals (McCarthy et al., 2004). Regular attendance can then build communities and opportunities to grow social capital. In her study into drama as a means of building social capital in 'at risk' students, Akrong (2007) asserts that drama and the arts are pivotal in a child's healthy development, specifically in the areas of "developing friendships, communication skills, understanding relationships and personal development" (p. 1).

Catterall's (2007) study into peer conflict resolution skills, the 'School Project' was undertaken at three American schools with diverse ethnic populations and with more than eighty per cent of the participants coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. Involving seventy-one programme students and a comparison group of eighty-four who did not participate in the 'School Project', the study relied primarily on survey responses from student participants before and after completing the 'School Project'. From this study, which drew from several contemporary theorists, Catterall (2007) surmises "that learning involves social processes [and that it is...] mediated by context and culture" (p. 164). The study found a strong connection between the drama workshops and student development on five of seven scales. The most remarkable growth in student development occurred in students' attitudes to acting, metacognition, problem resolution skills and self-efficacy. Further evidence of positive change in pro-social behaviours was attributed to the empowering influence of learning through art forms; specifically gains in creating social bonds through their attitudes and abilities to work with others and learning skills impacted by their attitudes to learning and motivation. This article

revealed that there was agreement amongst theorists, Bruner, Lave and Wenger, concerning the impact of dramatic work on cognition and the importance of social interaction in developing understanding (Catterall, 2007).

Economic Growth

McCarthy et al., (2004) identify an instrumental public benefit in the economic growth that can occur due to sustained arts involvement. There are many ways in which arts participation can impact economic growth. The first is through employment in the arts industries or one of the supporting industries that benefit from providing services to patrons of the arts (McCarthy et al., 2004). Supporting this position on arts' employment and economic growth, the cultural industry is identified as one of Australia's fastest growing employment sectors (Stinson, Raphael, Hunter & Saunders, 2015). A secondary indirect economic benefit occurs when the arts attract people to locations where they are available and considered to strengthen the economy. This economic benefit can include consumer demand for live performances and art exhibitions, stimulating the local economy (McCarthy et al., 2004). They further identify that businesses place importance on sponsoring or supporting arts organisations, promoting indirect benefits for the arts. Finally, they acknowledge a range of 'public-good' benefits associated with knowing the arts exist and are available, even if an individual does not participate.

There is a clear link between arts participation, communication and employability. Superior oral communication skills are considered highly desirable in the workplace (Stinson, 2015) which aligns with the economic benefits identified in the Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004). Secondary school theatre and speech experiences can contribute to developing an individual's verbal and non-verbal communication skills across a variety of presentation styles (McCammon et al.,

2012). Heath (1998) reported that students in theatre activities outside school hours are afforded six times more opportunities to speak than in their English classroom. O'Toole and Stinson (2015) define oracy as "the ability to communicate effectively by speaking and listening" (p. 157) and suggest that oracy is mostly neglected, or actively discouraged in the education system. When connecting the art form Drama with the acquisition of oracy, O'Toole and Stinson (2015) point to the inherent dependency of drama (and theatre) on the spoken word, "Drama is, after all, the art form of spoken word and of gesture and the body." (p. 159). Their research found that working in role, a process that underpins all drama work, provided individuals with the opportunity to 'step into the shoes of someone else', and practice confidently speaking when they would not normally do so as themselves (O'Toole, 2015). This study included parents as informants, who reported that their children's engagement at school had increased, as had their self-confidence and their communications at home (O'Toole, 2015). Stinson (2015) confirms that employers seek employees with high levels of oral communication. The importance of oral communication in the workplace aligns with the economic growth benefits identified in the McCarthy framework (2004).

Captivation and Pleasure

According to McCarthy et al., (2004), captivation is the instinctive response to an enthralling piece of art in which an individual is inspired to feel admiration and wonder. In this moment of captivation, audiences can appreciate and engage intensely in a way which is unusual in everyday life. Additionally, they point to an aspect of captivation, referred to as "imaginative flight" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 46) in which an individual leaves behind their everyday self and enters the imagined reality presented in the work of art. Aesthetic pleasure, they explain, is largely the result of the individual's initial captivation and imaginative flight response to the work. Performance work is

integral to learning in drama and theatre, both in hands-on and appreciation of live performances. McCammon et al., (2012) outline how research participants described their experience of performing as a “magic feeling...[that] immerses them cognitively and emotionally in a new world” (p. 15). These quality performance experiences allowed them to feel connected to the audience and cultivate personal meaning.

Performing is considered important in influencing students' increase in motivation, focus, and perseverance and strengthening students' self-concept (Catterall, 2002c). Fleming et al., (2016) found that the artistic process of performing requires students to anticipate how an audience will view their work and make meaning from it. Through this experience, students developed skills to clarify meaning, contextualise knowledge, synthesise experiences and deepen empathy for others (Fleming et al., 2016). Similarly, Tan's (2017) findings highlighted the power of performance to “facilitate the development of 21CC [Century Competencies]” (p. 17). A further aspect of drama participation in determining the work's aesthetic is the quality of the experience (O'Neill, 1985). Captivation and pleasure are the “direct effects of aesthetic experiences.” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 47)

Expanded capacity for empathy

Quality aesthetic experiences provide the individual with new perspectives to view the world and people around them. Through the experience of being drawn into a fictional world, audiences and artists alike can "become more receptive to unfamiliar people, attitudes and cultures" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 48) thus, enabling individuals to cultivate their capacity to understand and share feelings with others. The ability to empathise with others subsequently contributes to an individuals' understanding and accepting of perspectives and motivations that surround them (McCammon et al., 2012).

Taking on a role or character within a drama or theatre production encourages students to engage their imagination and develop their knowledge and understanding of contexts beyond their experiences. Stepping into another's shoes can result in expanded capacity for empathy (Ewing, 2010; Stinson, 2018) and is "essential in understanding diversity and the need to be inclusive" (Ewing, 2010, p. 34). Cecily O'Neill (1985) points to the common ground between drama education and theatre, in participants' ability to imagine a fictional world while remaining aware of reality. This state of simultaneously holding both the fictional world and real-world in mind is called *metaxis* (Bolton, 2009). Taking on a role is fundamental to both the drama classroom experience and work of actors in bringing their characters to the stage. Jonothan Neelands (2002) states that role-taking "is the opportunity for self-other imagining through the processes of role-taking; imagining oneself as the other; trying to find and finding oneself in the other, and in so doing to recognise the other in oneself" (p. 7). Neelands (2002) asserts that role-taking is at the core of every dramatic and theatrical form (p. 7). Incorporated in working in role, analysing and evaluating text for a character's motivation, relationships, and exploring their world view further broadens students' perspective and ability to empathise with them (Heath, 2014).

Creation of Social Bonds

Intrinsic social benefits are said to occur when "works of art ...create bonds among people... [or a] voice for entire communities." (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 50). McCammon et al., (2012) state that secondary students can develop new social groups in the rehearsal room's structured environment, where there is support from their peers, they learn from each other and share goals.

An investigation into the relationship between curriculum and co-curriculum environments was the focus of Boyes' (2003) study of students' participation in a school musical. Boyes' (2003) participatory case study collected data from twenty-four volunteer cast members through rehearsal logs and two volunteer student focus groups. The study sought to determine if the students' participation in a school musical provided any benefits, socially and intellectually, through integrating experiences in the classroom and the rehearsal room. The findings confirmed that intrinsic benefits were evident in social bonds for the students and points to the supportive, non-competitive atmosphere and high level of commitment from the whole cast as main factors contributing to the results.

The findings from Corby's (2008) mixed methods study into a co-curricular drama program utilised an informal survey of forty-seven cast and crew members, from which three students were selected for interviews about their experience. Finally, the researcher drew on school data about student grade point average and attendance to cross-reference interview data. The study confirmed that students benefitted from a wide range of transferable skills. Intrinsic benefits included the creation of social bonds which were evident in "an increased sense of social identity and self-confidence" (Corby, 2008, p. 38).

Expression of communal meaning.

The arts are widely recognised for their power to express personal emotions communally, mark important events, convey religious views and capture stories valued by the community (McCarthy et al., 2004). Arts also commemorate national traumas, victories and heroes; they can introduce new voices that inspire a shift in cultural direction. The shared values and meanings derived through the arts enable individuals to

benefit both personally and together as a community. Prentki and Stinson (2016) assert that drama processes of creating imagined worlds through roleplay, discovery and collaboration facilitate an interdependence among the participants (students and teachers) and the content and context. They describe drama as a relational pedagogy in its ability to prompt discourse and shared understandings among the whole community.

McCammon et al., (2012) acknowledge the importance of text selection for student performance work. Given the nature of theatre to challenge the status quo and inform audiences, selecting texts within the school context is pivotal to student development and artistry. Public performances allow the whole school community to engage with student work and require consideration of the audience. However, ideally, such performance should avoid, according to McCammon et al., (2012), upholding the mainstream views which may inhibit teenagers' awareness of social and cultural issues.

Aspects

McCarthy et al.'s (2004) framework is useful in mapping the benefits of arts education; it focuses on the benefits. This study project also seeks to understand the aspects of learning in the arts, such as quality of experience and participation levels, contributing to long-term impacts. The Rand report (2004) also reviews literature that delves into other areas of concern to arts education, such as the frequency, quantity and continuation of participation and whether the benefits of participation in arts learning experiences relate to the quality of those experiences. The next section briefly discusses the issues of participation and quality.

Arts Participation

Beyond the benefits of the arts, McCarthy et al., (2004) investigated the literature to establish how such benefits can be derived. They found that many of the benefits derived from the arts require sustained participation. In their review of literature, they examine how the intrinsic benefit of pleasure and captivation motivates an individual's desire to participate and assert that this motivation needs to come as a result of an initial or 'gateway' experience with the arts (McCarthy et al., 2004). Heath (2014) proposes that students need to be engaged in arts learning from an early age and for a sustained time. Deasy et al., (2002) align with this position. Their comprehensive study followed twenty thousand students from all art forms for two years and found that when students' arts' learning experiences were regular and ongoing, there was a direct correlation to improved test scores in non-arts subjects.

A six-month Singaporean study involving 88 members of a secondary school band points to positive benefits of participation in such endeavours. The research team observed participants in rehearsal and conducted a range of interviews and focus discussion groups. The data collection focused on the impact of co-curricular participation on the students' development of twenty-first-century competencies. This study identified three key contributing factors to students' development of such skills: performance, peers and patience (Tan, 2017). The findings highlighted students' need for perseverance, the importance of being part of a team and playing their part, collaborating and communicating with their peers, growing confidence through performances and developing awareness of different cultures through the range of repertoire. The program provided opportunities for students across year levels to bond and breakthrough traditional peer groups. Some individuals took on leadership responsibility to guide sectionals, again providing opportunities to engage and develop skills, collaboratively

working towards a common goal (Tan, 2017). In a similar vein, Hancock (2012) investigated the influence of co-curricular activities on student leadership. The research involved collecting survey data from 720 participants in 26 classes across three schools in Kentucky, USA. The results established that through co-curricular activities, students were given greater opportunities to develop leadership capacities, either through a captaincy role or peer mentoring and through the mentoring culture provided by their teachers, coaches and other adult supervisors (Hancock et al., 2012). Thus, this private benefit of leadership responsibility spills over to benefit for the whole community.

McCammon et al., (2012) found that theatre helps students develop a strong sense of identity in a safe environment (McCammon et al., 2012) and encourages self-expression. Cowart (2013) confirmed this finding, illustrating how one interviewee struggled to find a place in the school community due to their ethnic background; however, found acceptance and a place for their artistic outlet once they joined the theatre program (Cowart, 2013). Additionally, Cowart's (2013) work identifies the natural differentiation that occurs in the theatre context, enabling students of all ability levels to find a place, whether in a lead role, the ensemble, painting sets, and making costumes or operating the lights. This natural inclusiveness enhances individuals' sense of success and feeds self-efficacy.

Co-curricular arts participation

Whether co-curricular activities (CCA) improve educational outcomes or, somewhat, detracts from academic pursuits was the focus of a study of year twelve students from independent schools in the south-eastern Queensland region (Wellham, 2011). What is intriguing is that this study claims a different order of findings for female students at variance with their male counterparts: "The more co-curricular hours females

are engaged within school, the higher on average is their overall OP (Overall Position) result."(Wellham, 2011, p. 27) Wellham's (2011) findings are particularly pertinent to this study as his research encompasses students from similar independent school contexts and confirms the academic advantage for female students due to their co-curricular engagement.

Studying the influences of Singaporean students' extra-curricular participation on their academic performance, researchers investigated the benefits within three distinct classifications (Seow & Pan, 2014). The first classification, which the authors call 'Zero-Sum', takes the perspective that a student's world is finite, meaning that where a student gives more attention to an aspect of their lives, they do so at the detriment of the other areas of their lives. Therefore, participation in CCA had a negative impact on other aspects of students' lives (Seow & Pan, 2014). In support of this supposition, Corby's (2008) findings confirmed that some students experience difficulty managing workload and admit that homework suffers at times. The second classification, 'Developmental', is considered the prevailing theoretical framework in this field and posits that students' academic performance is positively impacted indirectly through the non-academic and social benefits associated with CCA participation (Seow & Pan, 2014). The final classification, 'Threshold', suggests that CCA participation is beneficial up to a certain point; that at the highest level of CCA participation, students' academic improvement "levels off"; and, that it also impacts students' interaction with their peers, negating previous positive findings (Seow & Pan, 2014). This classification may hold weight when examining the students who, for example, are training in swimming, gymnastics, diving or dance, which can result in up to 30 hours training a week, as competitors on the world stage are often children or teenagers. Research into the benefits of co-curricular arts programs fell short of identifying any long-term benefits for participants. Shulruf's 2011

investigation into whether extra-curricular activities improve educational outcomes, acknowledged that there is limited understanding about the “casual effect between participation in such activities and educational outcomes” (Shulruf, 2011, p 594). They further note that there is a lack of understanding regarding the contextual stimuluses that impact the connection between participation and outcomes.

McCarthy et al., (2004) found that the level of benefits of arts involvement are modest at a low level of participation but can increase rapidly at the point where an individual understands how to engage and make meaning from the experience; “the rewards of the experience are both immediate and cumulative” (p. 64). Discussion concerning students' ability to balance their academic and co-curricular activities was the focus of a recent radio broadcast on ABC Radio National. Dr Helen Street and Professor Tim McKenny discussed parents' social pressure to provide opportunities for their children. Street and McKenny (2018) held to the threshold model, acknowledging the benefits of co-curricular activities, but emphasised the need to balance scheduled, adult-directed activities and free playtime (Owens, 2018).

In an analysis of young people's engagement with theatre attendance, Anderson, Ewing and Fleming (2014) sought to determine how students chose to engage or not engage with theatre. Young people's early introduction to live theatre attendance was a decision by either a parent, caregiver or teacher (Anderson et al., 2014, p. 61) and impacted individuals' theatregoing habits.

Quality

Arts experiences need to be “fully engaging – emotionally, cognitively, socially” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 70) if they are to be considered quality experiences. Subsequently, it is the quality of the experience that determines an individual's future

participation by increasing knowledge and competence and stimulating expectations about specific art forms (McCarthy et al., 2004). In their study of visual arts classes in two Boston schools, Winner and Hetland (2008), spent an academic year focusing on what they termed, “high-quality programs” (p. 30) to evaluate achievement through the study of visual art, with the appropriate time and resources. Their findings suggested that learning skills such as “reflection, self-criticism and the willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes” were developed alongside the technical skills of drawing and painting (Winner & Hetland, 2008, p. 29).

The Wow Factor (Bamford, 2006), which reported global perspectives into the impact of arts in education, found that quality arts education was often evident where there was a partnership between schools and outside arts organisations. More specifically, the collaboration of teachers, artists, and communities was responsible for developing quality arts programs. In this report, “Quality” is defined as arts experiences which are considered “high value and worth in terms of the skills, attitudes and performativity engendered.” (Bamford, 2006, p. 86). The report details that quality may include outcomes, but goes beyond that to include learning journeys, and pathways; however, there is no agreed set of standards that apply to arts education (Bamford, 2006).

Teachers

Many researchers have investigated quality arts experiences and sought to identify teachers' importance to the quality experience. Quality arts experiences are said to require stakeholders' involvement at all levels of the educational institution (Seidel et al., 2009). The vital role of “passionate and committed teachers in ensuring quality art-rich education” (Bamford, 2006, p. 77) is the single most influential factor in effecting quality. Stinson and Burton (2016) reiterate the importance of teacher quality. Their research

found that teachers were instrumental in influencing students' informed attendance at live theatre, and by providing opportunities for students to attend and participate in a range of theatre styles and diverse venues, teachers were able to "enrich and extend their students' experiences" (Stinson & Burton, 2016, p. 70). The *TheatreSpace* project highlighted the importance of the teachers who enabled the students' attendance, oversaw their participation and supported their response as audience members (Stinson & Burton, 2016). Furthermore, the study found that for students to commit to theatre attendance, they needed to make theatre, study theatre, and watch theatre.

Teachers are critical in establishing relationships where authority is shared in an environment of mutual respect and trust, enabling experimentation, risk-taking and problem-solving without fear of retribution or ridicule (Lazarus, 2012; McCarthy et al., 2004; Prentki & Stinson, 2016). Additionally, the teacher-as-artist role is fundamental in guiding and inspiring student work (Dunn & Stinson, 2011; Heath, 2014). Teacher artistry (Dunn & Stinson, 2011) and collaborations with industry partners (Bamford, 2006) also contributed to quality arts experiences.

Dunn and Stinson (2011) refer to 'teacher-artists' and their ability to work with "artistry, manage form and content skilfully and purposefully" (p. 619), while often working simultaneously as an actor, director, playwright and teacher. They suggest that the teachers' understanding of the art form is crucial to the quality of student responses and outcomes. The teacher-student relationship's importance is a crucial element in the theatre program's success, where the teacher does not take the authoritative approach, but rather, that of facilitator and co-artist. Similarly, the teacher's input is a critical component in maintaining flexibility and applying intuitive strategies to meet the needs of individuals and groups (Fleming et al., 2016).

Summary

The literature review shows evidence from a range of research that supports the benefits of participation in arts education. Benefits outlined in this chapter are categorised according to the McCarthy et al., (2004) framework. These benefits include Instrumental benefits of improved test scores; self-efficacy, learning skills and health; social capital and economic growth. Intrinsic benefits include captivation, pleasure, expanded capacity for empathy, cognitive growth, creation of social bonds and expression of communal meaning. Additionally, there is a review of literature that identifies aspects of arts experience which enable individuals to benefit, specifically arts participation (McCarthy et al., 2004), quality arts experiences (Bamford, 2006) and teacher-artistry (Dunn & Stinson, 2011). The analysis of data will follow the same pattern. The research is extensive, and though there is disparity on what benefits the arts may bring, there is a consensus that the arts do indeed provide multiple benefits for the individual and the community.

Identifying the gaps

The literature provides considerable evidence of the wide range of benefits from arts education. What is unclear, is what the long-term benefits may be, if any, of student participation in performing in plays or musicals which extend on students learning in the classroom. The co-curricular theatre-arts experience provides a place to apply and experiment with skills and knowledge in an authentic context, (Lazarus, 2012), in the form of live performances. Furthermore, I have not found research literature which points to specific aspects of such programs that have affected long-term outcomes. In the next chapter, the methodology for this study will illustrate how this research was designed and implemented.

Chapter Three: Research Design

Methodology

Introduction

As stated earlier, this research project seeks to understand the influences of a theatre-arts co-curricular program (TAP) and the key aspects that impacted student participants' benefits. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What, if any, have been the long-term impacts on secondary students due to participation in a co-curricular theatre-arts program?
2. What aspects of the theatre-arts experiences did participants identify as most influential in their lives beyond school?

This section will address the methodological framework that guided this research, data sets, methods, the researcher's role, methods, analysis, and reporting.

Qualitative research

This research is situated within the qualitative paradigm as that approach was considered the most suitable for the questions and context.

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10).

Qualitative research does not seek to uncover a single, quantifiable truth; instead, it aims to describe and explain multiple interpretations of events experienced by participants as they interact with others. It recognises and values the impact of context on interpretation

and understanding. In this context-bound study I was the primary instrument of data collection and interpretation, having been both teacher and developer of the TAP program. Additional layers within the story of this program become evident as my role within the school and my relationship with the participants, when they were students and now after some time has passed, is considered as a contributory factor to the data collection and interpretation. The situational constraints offer opportunities for clarity around the socio-economic and gendered aspects of the school context, and the curriculum orientations within the Queensland drama syllabuses that were enacted in schools during the timeframe of the study. When looking for data that will help answer the questions of the study, the aim was to "prioritize people's subjective understandings and multiple meanings" (Leavy, 2017, p. 129) as the participants engaged with memories of their time in the TAP program, and shared stories and memories of this.

Case Study

A case study is defined by Stake (2005) as "a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 443) where there is an "interest in an individual case" (p. 443). There are many types of case study, of which the three most noted are, the descriptive case study that privileges narrative accounts; the exploratory case study used to "generate hypotheses to test in larger-scale surveys..." (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 377) and the explanatory case study that seeks to test theories (Cohen et al., 2018). This research was undertaken as a descriptive case study as it enabled the investigation of the events and experiences of the TAP program and allowed for a detailed description and multiple realities of individuals to be understood (Stake, 2005). As I am interested in both the program's uniqueness and commonality and seek to understand them through hearing students' and parents' stories (Stake & Walker, 1996), the descriptive case study serves the research project's purpose. Collectively the stories collected from participants have allowed patterns to be identified,

from which interpretations have been drawn (Stake & Walker, 1996). In this instance, the study choice was a theatre-arts co-curricular program at one all-girls school between 2008 and 2015. Stake's (2005) concept of case study, includes 'boundedness' and 'activity pattern' in determining if the research fits into this model. This case study is bound by the time frame of the participants' involvement in the arts program (2008 – 2015); organisation and place – an independent girls' school in Brisbane; the Program activities; participants in the program including past students, parents of past students, and myself as director of the program. Thus, the case is bound by time, location and context. The program operated over a two-year cycle and this repetition of activities illustrate the 'activity pattern'. By enacting the research retrospectively, participants recalled their TAP experiences to reflect on whether they influenced their lives long-term. Understanding these influences may guide future approaches to the design and scope of theatre-arts co-curricular programs.

By seeking to understand the participants' knowledge and lived experience, the phenomenological aspect is evident, in the value placed on individuals' direct experiences. The students' experiences within the context are illustrated through description and explanation (Cohen et al., 2018). The school principal influenced the context and provided support and encouragement for the program as did the school's founders who established the performing and spoken arts as a foundation seed of the school. These influences provide a deeper understanding of the “historical circumstances that shape a phenomenon” (Mohammed et al., 2015, p. 99). This study sits within an interpretive paradigm, which “examines how people engage in processes of constructing and reconstructing meanings through daily interactions...” and draws attention to “people’s patterns of interaction and the interpretive processes by which they assign meanings to events, situations...” (Leavy, 2017, p. 129). The meaning and

reconstructions of meanings related to the TAP are dependent on each individual's involvement. Only through hearing and analysing the stories of other participants can I make meaning from a broader perspective. The self-reports of individual experiences indicate interaction patterns, which can further be interpreted in relation to the program objectives.

Data

Additional to the primary data source of student and parent participant interviews, my memories have augmented student participants' memories, pivotal to providing multiple perspectives of the events as co-curricular director, and tour leader. Data sets include transcriptions of four focus group interviews and six one-on-one interviews; notes and memos of my responses. Further reference documents include – memorabilia (programs, props); visual materials (posters, photos); documents (tour itinerary, program calendar). These documents served to identify past students who met the selection criteria and corroborate individual memories of the program's events. They did not provide any insight into the study's primary focus, which sought to identify long-term benefits. The use of documents and memorabilia to prompt memories and cross-reference transcripts strengthened interviewee data's reliability derived from memories. An example of how the documents served the substantiation of participant's memories, is when the participants could recall having performed *Scattered Lives* in several venues. Documentation confirmed that there were four performances, one at school, two at eisteddfods, however, I was not at one, and I deputised to a parent participant who was able to corroborate details. The fourth performance took place at the local Rotary club's invitation at the president's dinner in a local restaurant.

Focus Group Interviews

The purposeful sampling allowed me to select participants considered best placed to provide insight into the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013) of the case. Initially, I invited past students and parents to participate in small focus group interviews of approximately one hour. To make this manageable, given the scale of the research project and time constraints, participants were assigned to one of four focus group interviews, each involving two to four interviewees. This size group allowed all participants an opportunity to talk and allow for transcriptions to be made from audio recordings (Creswell, 2013). Due to participant availability, it was necessary to split the past students from 2011 – 2012 into two focus group interviews; past students from 2013 - 2015 comprised the third and parents of past student participants attended the fourth. These groupings allowed for familiarity and commonality of experiences shared to yield the best information for the period of their involvement in the program. Separating the parents from the students in the focus groups allowed the data from each participant group to maintain different perspectives and triangulate the interview data. The interviews provided data on what aspects of the program had had long-term influence on students in the timeframe of between five to ten years post-secondary school. Parents' perspective added an independent viewpoint on their child's experiences and any influence that may continue to affect their lives. Past parent selection included those who were heavily involved in supporting the TAP, through their voluntary work as set builders, painters, costume makers, caterers, and assistants in front of house and backstage duties during productions. In doing so, these parents had knowledge of and involvement with the TAP in context and observations of their own child's participation, to allow them to contribute to a meaningful discussion of the program and student engagement and learning. Their observations confirmed participants' memories. Yin (2010) suggests that participants'

words require corroboration to determine whether behaviour supports the participants' self-reports (p. 20). Focus Group discussions were guided by a set of discussion points supplied to the participants. The discussion points differed for student and parent participants to accommodate distinctive involvement and perspectives (see Appendix A). There were no contradictions between my own and the participant's recollection of events. I had my own understanding of each participants' involvement, based on show programs and yearbook entries, this also gave me insight into their commitment, frequency of participation and to some degree their skill level, based on casting decisions and inclusions in some activities. The interview data revealed a great deal more insight into their experiences, motivation to participate, and what they identified as long-term benefits of their involvement. As such, there was no tension between the participants, parents and myself, given the questions focussed on influences in their post-school lives, in which I was not involved.

Focus discussion group interviews took place in a meeting room at the university. The use of a neutral space for the interview, together with the distance of time since I have had any interaction with these students, helped me understand the "unfamiliar and taken-for-granted aspects of social life" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 34). Conducting interviews distanced in time and place from the familiar context of the TAP, allowed participants the opportunity to reflect on their involvement and shared experiences, something that they had perhaps not thought about for some time, and may, as teenagers at the time, taken for granted. Focus discussion group interviewees had the opportunity to view and peruse photos, documents and memorabilia from the program to prompt discussion. According to Creswell (2013), photo elicitation allows for "rich data about real life as people visualise it". This approach intended to jog memories and evoke emotions associated with this period of their lives and stimulate participant dialogue (Saldaña, 2011). Additionally,

participants were invited to bring memorabilia of importance to them to help prepare and focus their thoughts and reduce the researcher's influence through the exclusive selection of photographs and memorabilia. Saldaña (2011) indicates that this tactic can "tend to stimulate rich response and can sometimes be more influential than questions alone" (2011, p. 38). Only one participant brought any memorabilia; in this instance, it was her dog-eared and highlighted script from the production in which she took the lead role in her senior year. She discussed its value to her as it embodied the positive memories and feelings associated with the experience it symbolised.

Interviews

From the initial analysis of the focus group discussion transcripts, I was able to identify six individuals who demonstrated a unique or interesting post-school pathway, experience or story. Confirming these individuals' suitability with my supervisory team, I invited each of the six individuals to attend a one-on-one interview, allowing them to express their perspectives, feelings and description of experiences in their own words (Saldaña, 2011). To ensure representation across the year levels, selection for one-on-one interviews included one participant from each cohort 2011 – 2015. An additional participant who had revealed a fascinating insight into her experience and post-school influence was also selected to provide a range of viewpoints. By utilising the interview technique, each participant has the freedom to respond without consideration to, or influence from other participants, as may have been the case in the small focus group interviews. Anonymity is also assured. Balancing the practical constraints of the research study's time and scope with the desire for rich-descriptive data, I facilitated six interviews each of approximately thirty minutes in length. The interviews were conducted as an open-ended discussion and enable a relaxed, conversational manner. I provided the participants with discussion points (see Appendix B), to guide the interview, in order that

the interviewee would know what was coming and not be surprised by the direction of the discussion and ensure depth of discussion by allowing all participants to respond to similar discussion points. By maintaining a conversational tone, participants were free to raise unforeseen topics. The interview venues, meeting rooms in local public libraries, minimised any imbalance of power and ensured both parties' safety.

Further data came from interpretive commentary on the interview that I recorded as soon as possible after the interviews (Stake & Walker, 1996). This commentary captured notes and annotations of the interview transcripts enabling me to record what was meant not just through the interviewees' words, but through their non-verbal communication and vocal tone, as opposed to the transcription which reflects the actual speech with all its imperfect sentences (Stake & Walker, 1996). Additionally, enacting reflexivity, allowed me to attend to power issues, through neutral meeting places, acknowledge my dual roles in the research as a TAP participant and researcher, finally I aimed to include my "emotions as a valuable part of the process" (Leavy, 2017, p. 49). Writing memo notes during the data collection and analysis enabled me to record the process (Leavy, 2017). These memos range from keywords or phrases that the participants used to personal notes and reflections, highlighting the common themes or differences in perspectives. While I hoped that past students, willing to attend interviews about their past high school TAP experiences, would report positive outcomes, I had also expected to receive critical commentary of the TAP, given my role as director of the program dealing at times, with dis-satisfied parents and students. I intentionally included discussion points to allow participants to be critical; however, their responses were dismissive and entirely overshadowed by their enthusiasm and excitement to recall their experiences and relate them to their current situations. Perhaps this response reflects the

participants' maturity given their experience since school to value their high school experiences.

Participants

In this qualitative research, I have utilised purposeful sampling in order that selected individuals were able to best help me understand the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). More explicitly, this research incorporated a maximal variation sampling strategy by drawing participants from several year groups, who have had different co-curricular opportunities and experiences in the TAP. The selection process involved two stages. Firstly, I devised criteria for the level and breadth of participation in the TAP to ensure that I interviewed past students with a varied and ongoing involvement in the program. Confirmation of individual participation was available in yearbooks, show programs and school magazines. The criteria included 1) participation in three or more annual productions, 2) participation in one or more one-act plays 3) participation in the interstate industry and training tour. The criteria enabled the study to draw from participants who represent a range of year levels, and sufficient program elements to provide rich data for analysis. During the analysis of program documents, it became apparent that the 2011 cohort did not have the opportunity to participate in a one-act play, an anomaly that I noted during the interviews. Volunteer parent participants were selected from those parents of students who met the criteria, as this ensured they also had sufficient knowledge of the program and subsequently, students' post-school lives. This initial information acted as a means of determining which participants were most appropriate to the research's objective and avoided perceptions of bias as a result of hand-picking participants. A brief outline of the interview participants' involvement in the program, post-school education and employment are outlined in Appendix C and shared with permission. Secondly, individuals participated in small focus discussion groups to select

individual in-depth one-on-one interviews. As mentioned earlier, analysis of the group interview transcriptions enabled six interviewees to be identified as expressing a representative range of responses to theatre-arts activities. The selection of participants was confirmed by my supervisory team following review of transcripts. See Table 2 for details of focus group discussions and individual interviews.

Table 2 - Participant attendance at focus group and individual interviews

Date	Participants	Interview Type	Length
9 December 2019	3 Past parents of student participants	Focus group interview	43 mins
10 December 2019	3 past students: 2011 - 2012	Focus group interview	44 mins
11 December 2019	2 past students: 2011 - 2012	Focus group interview	1:13 mins
12 December 2019	4 past students: 2013 - 2015	Focus group interview	57 mins
25 January 2020	Past student 2013	Individual interview	37 mins
30 January 2020	Past student 2014	Individual interview	30 mins
8 February 2020	Past student 2015	Individual interview	34 mins
9 February 2020	Past student 2012	Individual interview	24 mins
15 February 2020	Past student 2012	Individual interview	38 mins
26 February 2020	Past student 2011	Individual interview	21 mins

Initial Contact and Formal Recruitment

The sample population were initially contacted via Facebook™ 'Messenger' to gauge interest. In this initial contact, an overview of the project, outline of activity (small focus group interviews followed by possible individual interview), the timeline for small focus group interviews and selection criteria were provided.

Further details, including an information letter outlining privacy, voluntary status, means of capturing data, and an indication of how the results would be made available to them was emailed to positive respondents. Determining which of the volunteer participants were selected was purely practical, with the first four to six respondents who volunteered from each group (2011 – 2012; 2013 – 2015; parents) creating each of the focus group interviews. Negotiating mutually convenient times was problematic and did impact the final number of attendees at the focus discussion group interviews. Even on the day of the focus discussion groups, some potential participants were unable to attend due to personal circumstances, which limited some of the numbers expected. In subsequent transcripts and reports, participants have been de-identified through the use of pseudonyms of their choosing.

Researcher positioning

Role of the Researcher

Due to my dual role as a key participant in the program and as an “insider” researcher, the study reflects an emic approach, with its aim to capture the subjective meanings placed on events and experiences by participants (Cohen et al., 2018). In this way, I sought to understand the subtleties of the participant's responses and the meaning they attached to their memories and assertions regarding long-term influence. As part of

the study, it was necessary to maintain an awareness of my involvement and investment in the program by applying a "reflexive approach focused on my subjective understandings and ontological assumptions that I may take for granted" (Harland, 2014, p. 1115). As the director of, and teacher within, the program, my inclusion in the study is consistent with Stake's (2005) assertion that a case study researcher spends "extended time-on-site, personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting and revising descriptions and meanings of what is going on" (p. 450). Additionally, as a staff member, privy to structural and financial constraints and strategic and operational college goals, I represented an alternate perspective to the student and parent participants concerning the contexts surrounding the case.

Relationship with participants

I have had the privilege of seeing each of the participants grow from teenagers into young women throughout their high school years. I played many roles within the program: teacher, mentor, director and co-artist. These roles operated concurrently, overlapping as I responded daily to work, students, and context. As such, in my new role as researcher, I needed to consider "reflexively how the boundaries between these positions became blurred and what this blurring..." (Mohammed et al., 2015, p. 110) meant for the study. Therefore, I have reflexively reviewed my assumptions of student engagement and outcomes to identify how it influenced the data's interpretation. In doing so, I have had to reflect on my understanding of events and relationship tensions such as Tracey's friendship challenges in year 12. I can remember vaguely that the two students were at odds; however, I was unaware of the extent or long-term outcome of this rivalry. The students' ability to maintain their focus and commitment to the production speaks to their resilience and work ethic in the rehearsal room and on stage. Similarly, Rebecca's recollection of working closely with a senior student and its influence on her confidence

was another instance where in my role as the director I was unacquainted with the extent of the inter-year interactions, challenges and friendships.

At the commencement of each focus discussion group and one-on-one interview, I reiterated the importance for interviewees to respond honestly about their TAP experiences and any long-term impacts they believe have continued. I clarified that there was no need to avoid topics to save personal feelings. In the researcher's role, it was necessary to note that the previous power imbalance may influence attitudes and behaviours and impact the research (Leavy, 2017). As the researcher and former teacher of the participants, a power imbalance inevitably remains. For this reason, co-researchers were privy to transcripts and data analysis processes. The time-lapse, since I have had any interaction with the students and the use of an unfamiliar place, helped establish a sense of neutrality.

Ethics

Due consideration was given to the ethics guidelines provided by Griffith University. The university ethics committee has granted ethics approval. As participants were over eighteen, and involvement was voluntary, no gate-keeper approval was required. Volunteer participants signed an informed consent form (see Appendix D) and were free to withdraw, without penalty or explanation, at any time.

Confidentiality, Reliability and Validity

In order to ensure the findings and interpretations were accurate, I utilised the process of member checking. This process allowed participants to check the accuracy of transcriptions and notes relevant to their interview if descriptions are complete and interpretations are representative (Creswell, 2013). Due to the small population pool even

after de-identifying participants, it may be possible for other school community members to extrapolate the identity of individual participants and the school. The research does not focus on sensitive material; however, participants were open and honest about their experiences and relationships with others in the TAP. I have aimed to reflect these experiences accurately, limiting details that would allow the identification of individuals. Transmission of sensitive information such as research reports for member checking occurred through secured electronic communication, thereby protecting participants identity (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007 (Updated 2018)).

Data collection, storage, security and disposal

The interviews took place over ten weeks from December 2019 - February 2020. The focus group interviews took place at a meeting room at the university where the photos and memorabilia were on display as participants entered the room. The individual interviews took place at meeting rooms at local public libraries to fit in with the interview participants' time availability. An audio recording of all interviews was taken on a digital device and later transcribed verbatim, by uploading to a reliable transcription company. Following transcription, I replayed the audio to check and correct transcripts as necessary. I also referred to notes taken in the interview to add information about the interaction between participants, gestures and facial expressions where these were required to understand the pauses and sometimes inaudible sections of the interview. The audio files are stored on a password-protected hard drive, secured in my home. Data is regularly backed up to the hard drive and the secure Griffith University server. It will be held for five years and then destroyed per Chapter 3.1 Element 4 of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007 (Updated 2018)).

Triangulation

Triangulation of data considered to increase confidence in the findings and clarify meaning (Stake & Walker, 1996) refers to "the use of at least three different viewpoints" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 76). Triangulation is considered necessary in projects such as this to validate individual perspectives and provide full descriptive accounts of events. Primary data included interview transcripts from focus groups and one-on-one interviews of past program participants. These transcripts were cross-referenced and compared with interview transcripts of parents, other participants and program documentation. In making meaning from multiple perspectives, I first made sense of individual perspectives and subsequently assessed them for consistency with other individual perspectives and documentation (Yin, 2010, p. 20) including looking for alternate perspectives. Yin (2013) suggests that of the four triangulation types (data source, data analyst, theory/perspective and methods), data sources and data methods are most likely to add weight to a case study evaluation. Stake (1996) explains that data source triangulation requires the researcher to examine if what is described or reported in one interview is the same in others. I triangulated the data by assessing the participant's transcripts with parents' perspectives and my viewpoint as a past staff member and participant of the program. Therefore, the range of participants provided multiple perspectives to allow for triangulation through data sources.

Analysis

In approaching the analysis of data, I began by listening to the audio recordings of the interviews several times and expanding on initial notes which detailed non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, gesture, or vocal cues, such as laughter, vocal tone and pace to enhance my understanding of the intended meaning. Subsequent re-reading of the interview transcripts allowed me to get a general feel for the whole interview and the details before pulling them apart (Saldaña, J. 2011). The coding process then began, working systematically through each focus group and one-on-one interview transcription. Initially I used key words or phrases taken from both the literature and terms repeated by the participants to code the interview transcripts, and this allowed me to respond directly to the data.

Figure 2 - Coding to key words and phrases

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface, which is used for qualitative data analysis. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Left Panel (Navigation):** Contains a sidebar with options for 'Data', 'Files', 'Group Interviews', 'Individual Interviews', 'Literature', 'File Classifications', and 'Externals'. Below this are sections for 'ORGANIZE' (Coding, Cases, Notes, Sets) and 'EXPLORE' (Queries, Visualizations).
- Top Panel (Tools):** Includes tabs for 'Home', 'Edit', 'Import', 'Create', 'Explore', 'Share', and 'Modules'. Below these are icons for various functions: Clipboard, Item, Organize, Visualize, Code, Autocode, Uncode, Code In Vivo, Spread Coding, Case Classification, File Classification, and Workspace.
- Central Panel (Data Table):** A table listing interview files with columns for 'Name', 'Codes', 'Refer...', and 'Created on'. The table shows four entries:

Name	Codes	Refer...	Created on
2011 - 2012 Group Interview #2 11.12.19	30	322	14/1/20, 5:58 am
2011 - 2012 Group Interview #1 11.12.19	28	295	13/1/20, 4:45 pm
2013 - 2015 Group Interview #1 11.12.19	31	274	13/1/20, 12:49 pm
Past Parent Interview 9.12.19	34	299	12/1/20, 8:59 pm
- Right Panel (Code Stripes):** A vertical list of codes and phrases, including 'Cognitive growth', 'Challenges', 'Challenges', 'Pleasure', 'Passion Emotion', 'Sustained Participation', 'Pathways', 'Self-discipline', 'Gratitude', 'Empathy', 'Confidence', 'Perform', 'Teamwork', 'Chester', 'Kelly', 'Taylor', 'Quality', 'Social Bonds', 'Instrumental benefits', and 'Self-efficacy'.
- Bottom Panel (Text View):** A large text area displaying the content of the selected interview file. It shows a list of interview transcripts with timestamps and text excerpts. For example, Phoebe's transcript includes: "And I think that is something you learn in the performing arts because y it's a survival thing. If you're too nervous, you're not make it. You have to learn to control it, and realize t okay to be nervous, but don't let it overtake you and you, use it in a positive way."

Figure 2 shows a screen shot of initial coding of an interview where the data has been coded to ‘quality’ which gave insight into aspects of the program which had the most impact in determining participation or long-term benefits. Other key words such as ‘confidence’ were noted and coded as these were repeated throughout the interviews. Data were then analysed to identify aspects of the informing framework: Field of Benefits (McCarthy et al., 2004) specifically – Instrumental, intrinsic, public and private benefits, and data was organised under each of these thematic categories. In addition, consideration of influencing aspects such as participation levels, quality experiences and teachers were given. This process required the accumulation and sorting of data until some meaning could be taken from them as a group (Stake & Walker, 1996).

Figure 3 - Aligning codes to McCarthy *et al.*'s Framework (2004, p4)

Name	File	Refs.	Created on	Deleted	Modified on	Modified by	Color
Transfer	1	3	4/5/20, 12:14 pm	KRA	4/5/20, 2:19 pm	KRA	
Theatre Literacy	1	4	28/6/20, 8:54 am	KA	28/6/20, 8:58 am	KA	
social capital	1	1	15/12/20, 8:52 pm	KA	15/12/20, 8:52 pm	KA	
Reality of Industry	1	1	24/5/20, 9:45 am	KRA	24/5/20, 9:48 am	KRA	
Public benefits	2	2	10/1/20, 9:11 pm	KRA	28/6/20, 2:49 pm	KRA	Yellow
Private benefits	1	1	10/1/20, 9:11 pm	KRA	28/6/20, 2:47 pm	KRA	Blue
Melinda—05—13—All thes...	1	1	1/10/20, 1:45 pm	KA	1/10/20, 1:45 pm	KA	
Limitations of Study	1	1	21/6/20, 10:27 am	KA	21/6/20, 10:27 am	KA	
Law	1	8	24/5/20, 8:38 am	KRA	24/5/20, 8:51 am	KRA	
Introduction	9	10	28/6/20, 10:25 am	KA	30/6/20, 10:01 am	KA	
Intrinsic benefits	4	8	12/1/20, 9:16 pm	KRA	4/5/20, 1:00 pm	KRA	Red
Instrumental benefits	8	14	12/1/20, 9:09 am	KRA	22/12/20, 6:34 am	KA	Green
Gratitude	8	13	14/1/20, 8:42 pm	KRA	22/12/20, 6:34 am	KA	
Gaps in research	8	18	16/4/20, 2:12 pm	KRA	4/5/20, 2:35 pm	KRA	
Emotional intelligence	1	3	1/10/20, 12:58 pm	KA	1/10/20, 12:58 pm	KA	
Contributing aspects	8	21	14/1/20, 6:01 am	KRA	15/12/20, 8:55 pm	KA	Purple
Teachers	8	12	8/2/20, 8:58 am	KRA	1/10/20, 2:01 pm	KA	
Sustained Participation	7	30	18/6/20, 3:43 pm	KRA	22/12/20, 6:34 am	KA	
Safe environment	11	18	14/1/20, 6:01 am	KRA	22/12/20, 6:34 am	KA	Red
Range of Opportunities	11	30	16/1/20, 11:22 am	KRA	16/12/20, 8:55 pm	KA	Green
Quality	13	60	14/1/20, 6:01 am	KRA	22/12/20, 6:34 am	KA	Purple
Processes	7	11	16/4/20, 11:37 am	KRA	28/6/20, 10:41 am	KA	
Passion/Emotion	9	19	15/1/20, 3:47 pm	KRA	22/12/20, 6:34 am	KA	
Extra-curricular or Pli...	3	5	16/3/20, 7:41 am	KRA	28/6/20, 3:52 pm	KRA	
confidence	1	1	1/10/20, 2:50 pm	KA	1/10/20, 2:50 pm	KA	
Conclusion	4	8	28/6/20, 10:46 am	KA	1/10/20, 12:58 pm	KA	
Communicate experience	1	1	18/4/20, 4:22 pm	KRA	18/4/20, 4:22 pm	KRA	
communal meaning	1	1	15/12/20, 8:55 pm	KA	15/12/20, 8:55 pm	KA	
Classroom connection	1	1	6/8/20, 7:28 am	KA	6/8/20, 7:28 am	KA	
Challenges	8	30	14/1/20, 1:43 pm	KRA	22/12/20, 6:34 am	KA	Purple
captivation	1	3	13/12/20, 12:27 pm	KA	15/12/20, 8:58 pm	KA	
Attributes	1	5	21/5/20, 10:53 am	KRA	23/5/20, 10:46 am	KRA	
anxiety	1	1	12/12/20, 12:37 pm	KA	12/12/20, 12:37 pm	KA	

Figure 3 is a screen shot of the codes and subcodes used during this process. Sifting through the transcripts, using a process of open coding (Cohen et al., 2018), allowed me to assign labels to the text which aligned with predetermined categories derived from McCarthy et al.'s (2004) framework, for example, social capital and social bonds, improved test scores, cognitive growth, improved self-efficacy, learning skills, expression of communal meaning.

Figure 4 - Adding codes and arranging under top level codes

The screenshot displays the NVivo 12 software interface, which is used for qualitative data analysis. The interface is divided into several main sections:

- Left Panel (Navigation):** Contains tabs for 'Data', 'Coding', 'Cases', 'Notes', and 'Sets'. The 'Coding' tab is currently selected, showing a list of codes and their associated files and references.
- Central Panel (Code List):** A table listing various codes and their associated files and references. The codes are organized into a hierarchy, with top-level codes like 'Reality of Industry', 'Public benefits', 'Private benefits', 'Melinda - 00-13 - All thes...', 'Limitations of Study', 'Law', 'Introduction', 'Intrinsic benefits', 'Perform', 'Making meaning', 'Pathways', 'Improvisation', 'Empathy', 'Cognitive growth', 'Instrumental benefits', 'Teamwork', 'Self-efficacy', 'Self-image, accepta...', 'Perseverance', 'Self-discipline', 'Time management', 'Resilience Risk Taking', 'Motivation', 'Improved test scores', 'Confidence', 'Communication', 'Gratitude', 'Data in research', 'Emotional intelligence', 'Contributing agents', 'Teachers', 'Sustained Participation', 'Safe environment', 'Range of Opportunities', 'Quality', 'Processes', 'Passion Emotion', 'Extra-curricular or Ph...', 'Confidence', 'Conclusion', and 'Communicate experience'.
- Right Panel (Text View):** Displays a text excerpt from a file, with a red line indicating the current position. The text is organized into sections, with the first section titled '2 references coded, 1.19% coverage'. The text includes a paragraph about the author's experience with the 'Making meaning' code, followed by a section titled '2 references coded, 2.25% coverage' and another section titled '2 references coded, 6.44% coverage'.
- Bottom Panel (Summary):** Provides a summary of the coding process, including the number of references coded and the coverage percentage for each code.

Figure 4 shows the addition of secondary codes derived from the McCarty et al framework. Other categories derived from the research included, teachers (Stinson & Burton, 2016), quality arts experiences (Bamford, 2006) and participation (McCarthy et al., 2004). Through the coding process, I directly interpreted the data in order to assign quotes to codes. After assigning quotes to codes, the codes were then aligned with the top codes of the framework (McCarthy et al., 2004) and for the clarity in reporting have subsequently been termed zones. NVivo was helpful in identifying the codes with the most quotes, hence giving me some indication of where there was substantial data and revealing key benefits. I worked through each set of coded data to find how the quotes either confirmed or contradicted each other and consulting research literature. I frequently returned to transcripts to ensure that data collection was comprehensive, and that the interpretation (evident in the assigned code) was accurate to the participants' intent.

During the analysis of the extensive interview transcripts, I found it beneficial to place the data into a diagram, utilising McCarthy et al.'s framework (2004). This diagram aided my understanding of how critical aspects of the program contributed to participation and the benefits derived.

Figure 5 - Visualisation of benefits in relation to key program aspects



Figure 5 is a screen shot of one attempt to understand the interrelatedness of the benefits and the key aspect of the program (quality performances) and layering this roughly across the two continuums of the McCarthy et al. framework. Using the diagram, I was able to look for overlap of codes and redundancy (Saldaña, J. 2011). This then allowed me to refine, modify, add, or amalgamate, codes dependent on the data to identify the benefits, and critical aspects of the program acknowledged by participants. Throughout this iterative process, I used computer software, NVivo to record memos and annotate the transcriptions, which enabled me to record my earliest analysis of the data and these provided useful in connecting coding to interpretation (Leavy, 2017) and in relating the data to McCarthy et al.'s (2004) framework. The top-level codes reflected the research questions and McCarthy et al.'s (2004) framework; each of these codes had sub-codes outlined above. These codes allowed me to connect similar concepts into larger categories (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 672). If there was a disparity in the data between participant recollections, it was cross-referenced with the program's events derived from publicly available school documents. This cross-referencing proved valuable in substantiating participants' recollections of events, individual involvement, and time frames. Key benefits were then related to and contrasted with the existing research literature. Using the literature to determine which codes fit together, and what data contrasted with the literature, allowed me to resolve how the pieces fit together. Further review of research literature determined reports on similar data. Interview participants were additionally requested to provide details of their post-school training/education and employment to support the data and analysis.

In the next chapter, the benefits are analysed and mapped against McCarthy et al.'s (2004) field of benefits. The experiences, analysed in terms of other contributing aspects identified in the literature, include teachers, public performances, and participation levels. Saldaña (2011) offers several styles of qualitative research writing, and Wolcott (2002) suggests that a variety of styles may be used on a "when-and-as-needed" (p. 95) basis. Of the many styles that Saldaña (2011) describes, the one that appears to serve the purposes of the study is writing interpretively, which focuses on how the research relates to the researcher's personal experiences and the participants. Saldaña (2011) cites Harry F. Wolcott (2002), who explains it thus:

When you emphasise description, you want your audience to see what you saw.

When you emphasise analysis, you want your audience to know what you know.

And when you emphasise interpretation, you want your audience to understand what you think you yourself understand (p209 – 210).

In the analysis chapter, which follows, I have used extensive quotes taken directly from transcripts of the interviews where the participants shared their stories and interpretations of experiences. Together they reflect multiple perspectives analysed in light of relevant literature to interpret how these experiences may have influenced students' lives beyond school.

Chapter Four: Analysis

In this chapter, I use the Framework for Understanding the Benefits of Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004) to analyse the corpus of data gathered during this study. I have divided the Framework into six zones for ease of discussion. See figure 2. Working from left to right, firstly across the top of the Framework – the Instrumental benefits will be analysed within three zones, Private; Private with public spillover; Public. Secondly, the chapter will work left to right across the lower half of the Framework – Intrinsic benefits again using the three zones of Private; Private with public spillover; and Public. Analysis of the interview transcripts reveals many long-term benefits that align with McCarthy et al.'s (2004) findings. Participants identified both instrumental and intrinsic benefits as a result of their participation in the TAP.

Zone 1: Instrumental Private Benefits

At the top left-hand corner of the field, is one private instrumental benefit, "improved test scores" (2004, p. 4). More specifically "improved academic performance such as grades" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 8). A key objective of the TAP program was to enhance students' learning across Drama and Dance curriculum. Drama and Dance students were offered additional TAP activities such as one-act plays and the Interstate Industry and Training tour to facilitate this objective. The consistently high academic results in Drama and Dance at the school, when compared to the female state average (QCAA, 2015), could be attributed to several factors including socioeconomic background; however, they may also have been influenced, at least in part, by the intensive involvement in the TAP of the majority of Drama and Dance students.

Many participants credit their TAP experiences as contributing to the development of their academic skills of memorisation, oral communication, and critical and creative thinking. McCarthy et al., (2004) identify cognitive benefits as “improved basic skills such as reading, mathematical skills and the capacity for creative thinking.” (p. 8). All participants spoke of the influence of the program on their enhanced creative thinking skills. Abbey, who went on to study acting at university, identified she had developed critical and creative thinking skills within the TAP, and she believed, these had directly contributed to her improved test results. Abbey commented that it was the process of bringing to life complex texts such as *Scattered Lives* that helped develop critical and creative thinking, stating, “I think anyone who did that play would have had to think outside their little box.”

A dialogic classroom, according to Stinson's (2015) study, (drawing on the work of Alexander) involves “teachers and children in partnership”; “reciprocal, involving talking and listening and sharing ideas and viewpoints”; “supportive, without fear of wrong answers”; “cumulative, building on each other’s ideas” and “purposeful, holding education goals in mind” (pp. 308 -310). The TAP rehearsal room embraced these qualities, with teachers and students working in partnership to shape the productions. Students' enjoyed numerous opportunities to contribute creatively to choreography, staging, and interpretation of text and characters. I recall that while directing *Children of the Black Skirt* (Betzien, 2005), the ensemble cast was involved fundamentally in the creative staging of this play. The minimal staging consisted of three single bed frames, manoeuvred by the ensemble to transform the space and reflect each episode's place and time. Roxanne recalled the TAP environment as encouraging student's experimentation and risk-taking: "the teachers like you guys...constantly encouraging and it was a consistent thing. Like you wouldn't judge the students if they tried something new. You

just encourage it more so." Fleming et al., (2016) found a positive connection between imagination and learning environments which encourages experimentation and risk-taking. The supportive and interactive environment of the TAP rehearsal rooms encouraged students to think creatively, experiment, take risks, work collaboratively and problem solve, attributes considered to contribute to students' academic performance.

The theatre-making process, which facilitates students' opportunities to experiment, imagine and problem-solve their way through creative processes, requires students to practice their resilience and take risks. Abbey compared the need for risk-taking and openness necessary in the TAP to her time in sports training:

you have to open up yourself in these environments and be a bit more of a risk-taker or... compared to maybe just running around the track. Not that running around the track is bad, because I did that as well.

Many participants identified several specific aspects of the TAP that aided their academic achievement both at school and in post-school education. Rhiannon, who after leaving school studied a Bachelor of Science (Zoology), linked her academic success with the memorisation skills she had developed when learning lines for productions and reflected on her ability to recall information in comparison to her sporty twin brother:

the ability to memorise stuff unbelievably quickly and well. And I know that helped me in uni... I have a twin brother and comparative to him, my ability to memorise stuff is 20 times better than he is. And he grew up sporting, and I grew up performing, and I truly believe that had a big impact in that because you're constantly memorising new lines and things like that.

Similarly, Phoebe, who has returned to study at university, commented:

I think one thing I know now is that I have an excellent memory, and I think the reason I have that is because, I had to learn so many songs, so many dances, so many scripts...So when I'm studying for an exam now, I know that I can do a lot better at retaining the information than my friends can...So I think in a practical sense, there is that skill.

Both these participants made direct links between their well-developed memory skills, and learning scripts, songs and dances during the TAP and their academic success.

Oral communication is another area where several participants identified a connection between their involvement in the TAP, positive academic outcomes, and success in their professional careers.

I know in English I really struggled with a lot of the assignments, but if it was ever an oral, I knew I was going to be fine because I would have that skill from drama that I could use and...Yeah. I never worried too much about not passing if it was an oral or some kind of presentation...

Grace recalls how her oral communication skills contributed to her academic success in English during high school. Heath (1998) points to the limited time that young people spend listening to adults and using forms of language, essential for academic performance. Furthermore, they note that students involved in school extra-curricular activities gain an average of fifteen to twenty minutes per week of discussion with adults. In comparison, students not involved in school extra-curricular activities gained almost no practice in talking about plans, developing ideas or assessing future steps (Heath, 1998). Rhiannon spoke of her ability to confidently converse with strangers and how this has influenced her in the workplace:

I always attribute my confidence to performing arts, and I know, as you said, other people can be confident too, but I think I was kind of put into it from a very early age. And I was a confident kid, but I think it just grew, and therefore my ability to talk to people in all forms is one of my strong suits in terms of customer service and things like that. I am very good at it, and I think half of it's a character. I genuinely think when you're having to be sometimes talking to difficult customers and things like that, you have to be a certain way, and it's not always what you're thinking in your head. But, having to deal with people like that I think is a skill, and being able to change how you're saying things to try and get your point across I think is something that I would have learned from that and having the confidence to do it, too.

Rebecca reflected on how her TAP experience had prepared her, from an early age, to present in front of large crowds; an experience she has encountered in her post-school journey.

... confidence in front of large groups of people. I wouldn't have had that without [TAP]... And I've had to do that so much since leaving school, not just in creative fields but uni, and when I've worked in different fields, being able to present in front of a really large group of people, everyone's like, "How do you do that?" And it's just kinda like second nature once you've done...it since you're 12, 13, it's so much easier than having to learn it once you leave school.

Oral communication is recognised as being highly valued in the post-schooling arena (Stinson, 2015). The opportunities to converse and problem solve considerably increase students' language skills necessary to speak confidently and improvise and cannot develop without such language being modelled (Heath, 2014). The ongoing influence of the TAP on participants oracy positively contributed to their academic performance. Oral communication skills, memory, creative and critical thinking were all identified by participants as having been enhanced by their involvement in the TAP and

subsequently advantaging them academically at school, in tertiary study and their post-school pathways.

Zone 2: Instrumental Private Benefits with Public spillover

Moving along the continuum's upper line are "private benefits with public spillover" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 4). In this second zone are the three areas of improved self-efficacy, learning skills and health.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is described as one's belief in personal capabilities (Bandura, 1997) to accomplish tasks. Both the private and public benefits of self-efficacy are evident in multiple participant responses. All participants' responses included statements relating to self-efficacy and the influence of the TAP such as Tracey's comment that the program gave her: "such a set feeling of success and achievement"; and confidence as Rhiannon states "... I think that creates confidence from an early age that you can... I know that I can...it translates across into confidence, in general, of your ability." Roxanne recalls her final school performance at the annual speech night at City Hall, where she performed a short excerpt from *Dinkum Assorted* with the two Drama Captains.

I remember I don't know if you remember, but I was doing this performance, and it was at the Brisbane City Hall for speech night... And I remember mum was sitting and watching it, and my PDP (Personal Development Program) teacher, I can't remember what her name was, but she said, 'No, that's not Roxanne. She's an introvert. She can't be on stage.'... the same PDP teacher that was shocked behind my parents, I remember we'd be doing personality quizzes, and she said something like, 'Oh no. You couldn't do that because you're too quiet to do that.' Something to do with drama. But I think those kind of 'voices' made me think like, oh, I can't. But having that opportunity to do that

was really scary, and you do doubt yourself and think like, 'No, I'm not that kind of person.' ...So, I think that that ... It was really scary, but it was also really, really good for me I think to see that I could do it. And I did do it. Yeah. In front of everyone. Because it's scary, and I remember that we were talking before or after we went on, and I was like (Holding head in hands) ... the whole time. But that was really comforting as well because I was like, 'She believes in me. She thinks I can do it, so I think I can.' Yeah. And that slowly has become 'I can'. Right, Slowly. We're still having a few 'I thinks', but yeah. Needs to become 'I can', and I think that that was one of those moments where it kind of helps me realise, 'Oh, I can,' rather than, 'I'm not sure.'

Here Roxanne, an extremely introverted student believed she could perform but experienced negative influence from 'others'. In this quote, she explains the influence of external opinions and her previous experience on her self-efficacy to perform on such a big stage. Bandura (1997) links the experience of overcoming difficulties as one means of enhancing self-efficacy.

Most participants spoke about how their confidence grew with experience over many years in the program and how that influenced their ability to converse with a wide range of people in various environments since leaving school as Tracey identified: "And just having the confidence and being able to like hold conversations with people." Abbey confirmed "... especially when you're in the younger years, I was definitely so much more nervous to go on stage... So yeah, that definitely grew my confidence and ability to talk in front of others or that sort of thing." Another example comes from Ava, a rather shy student, who attributed her confidence to talk to acquaintances, to her experiences being on stage in the TAP.

...the main thing I took away was confidence. I feel when I was at school, I was very much the quiet girl. I didn't really put myself out there. I was always very nervous to

have judgment or anything like that. And I guess once I went through uni. And started to find like my group of friends and sort of having patient interactions, the sort of little spell of confidence started coming out and I guess I didn't really know where it came from. But I think just putting myself on stage all those times of just learning how to be confident and be... and speak with all my patients and even just as a common ground, I've had so many dancers and singers and actors come through. And I know for some reason everyone can tell I'm a theatre kid.

Of particular interest to this study is that Ava also sees that this growth in confidence continues to benefit her when interacting with patients in her current work as a physiotherapist. McCammon et al., (2012) state that "theatre and speech experiences" (p. 19) increase an individual's verbal and non-verbal communication skills across a wide range of presentation styles, including public speaking, courtroom testimony and doctor-patient interactions amongst others. Public speaking was a particular skill identified by several participants, including Rhiannon:

So, I guess public speaking skills is 100% you have to attribute to my performing arts background because there's no way that... I mean most people I think find that quite confronting. It's a big fear for a lot of people, and it's just it's not something that worries me at all.

Parent, Michelle attributed her daughter's confidence to speak publicly to her long-standing involvement in the TAP: "being able to go out there and just talk, stand on their feet, think on their feet, and present and do all of that." Trixie concurred stating they were "articulate", and further commenting on "their confidence levels. They can engage in a conversation, and they don't feel that they can't add something to it. And I'm sure it comes from that background." These observations of their daughter's ability to converse,

communicate and speak publicly suggest that the students' increased oracy contributed to improved self-efficacy due to involvement in the TAP.

The importance of the drama classroom being a 'safe space' (McCammon et al., 2012) to encourage students sense of risk-taking and resilience can also enhance improved self-efficacy. Roxanne described the TAP environment as a "special kind of safe place for me to express creativity, and work with different people, and just do something really different". The safe space, opportunity for self-expression, and social bonds development contributed to students' self-efficacy. Sensitive and collaborative approaches to rehearsing challenging scene work were fundamental in maintaining a safe and supportive environment. Tracey's pride at the moment when she stood up for herself, is an example of self-efficacy in action in the rehearsal room: "...there's been a couple of really pivotal moments for me, in that rehearsal period, was the first one when I think I stood up for myself".

All participants reflected on how they developed skills to experiment in the rehearsal room, which required their willingness to take risks and trust their team. An inherent risk of live theatre and therefore the TAP is the risk of being publicly embarrassed due to feeling unsuccessful or judged while executing a performance. Mishaps such as missed lines or entrances, dropping character and other misadventures that plague live theatre can add to this performance pressure. Roxanne recalls the need for continually getting out of her "comfort zone, which is really scary but also really good for you at the same time" and that moving beyond her comfort zone had allowed her to build resilience, "just know that you can take risks in front of people and mess up, but it's okay". Roxanne identifies the risk of performing and how it differs in the TAP environment:

I don't think you can really learn that in other places. A lot of the time I guess you can, but it's not like that kind of hands-on event when you're working with other people as well and you've got people watching you as well because it can be embarrassing to fail, but then you have to just get back up and try again.

Roxanne's resilience was motivated by her determination to succeed in a scary space: the live performance. This resilience and subsequent success can further contribute to students' sense of self-efficacy. The inevitable pressure of having their work 'judged' was followed by the pride in their success evident through the many compliments they undoubtedly received after each performance. All Participants made explicit connections between the quality of the work, the pride they felt, and the confidence that followed:

...our program was so good... it wasn't just a little thing that... Actually, it was very professional, and I think that I guess came off a sense of pride that you were a part of something like that. (Rhiannon)

And Phoebe: "So I think my memories, are really strongly tied to being really proud of the work that we were putting on." She went on:

Particularly I remember with the performances at QPAC and Gardens Point [Theatre], just because obviously they were bigger theatres, with lots of people. But you really feel proud of what you're putting on when you... Not just the applause, but when you hear from people after the performance, or your parents say how proud [they are of] you... And I think that creates confidence from an early age that you can... I know that I can take, I've taken into my afterschool training, and anything really in life, be a job interview for any kind of job really.

Many participant responses confirmed that their pride in quality productions contributed to their sense of self-efficacy.

Perception of success, as seen in others, can influence an individual's sense of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) refers to this as a vicarious experience; when individuals experience a feeling of success compared to others' achievements. The multi-aged environment of the TAP allowed younger students to watch both their peers and senior students' success, allowing them to develop a belief that they also have the skills to achieve because others had modelled the persistence to succeed. Rhiannon fondly remembered the senior students in *The Wiz* (Brown & Smalls, 1974), when she was in year eight: "...just the whole show in general, having role models to look up to, was such a big thing, and I think there's a lot of them in that show". However, viewing peers with comparable ability fail, despite their best efforts, can negatively influence an individual's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Phoebe, who struggled with self-confidence during her secondary school years, pointed to both the positive and negative impacts of comparing oneself to others, particularly in the performing arts.

I think you can't help but compare yourself to others when you're surrounded by other teenagers' bodies all the time in form-fitting clothing and I definitely think, I think there are two ways to look at it. There's a negative side which is that you compare yourself to others and you don't like how you compare to the other students around you, and that makes you want to change yourself, and that can be really damaging and bad for you. Or on the flip side you can see the variety of bodies and shapes around you and that encourages you to be more body positive and accept your shape and your appearance. And realise that everybody has their own individual look and that can be accepted, and it doesn't really stop you from doing everything.

Phoebe's reflection highlights the importance of establishing a safe and supportive environment to ensure positive arts experiences. Since leaving school, Phoebe has studied performing arts in Sydney and continues her journey from a young, self-conscious

student, comparing herself to others, to a self-assured adult, accepting and embracing her unique strengths and qualities. The second area identified in this zone is learning skills.

Learning skills

Many participants spoke of a range of learning skills they believed had been enhanced through their TAP program participation. Learning skills refer to skills which enable a student to “learn how to learn, as well as school attendance, self-discipline, self-efficacy and interest in school” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 8). Many of the learning skills described by participants align with the skills identified as 21st century skills (QCAA, 2017), which are based on national and international research. 21st century skills include critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills and information and communication technologies. Many of these skills are identified by the participants including, teamwork, receiving constructive criticism, problem-solving, self-discipline, and learning how they learn. Roxanne, a primary school teacher, explained how her involvement in the TAP helped her understand herself as a learner and subsequently influenced her university study approach.

... academically, it did help me when I was doing my teaching degree, look at ways that I could learn and apply it through my studies; use visual learning, like watching videos. Just doing things a little bit differently than sitting down and just reading because that's just not how I learn.

As was facilitated in the TAP, hands-on learning allows students to gain practical skills and concepts through an integrated and cumulative process and involve a broad skillset and intelligences that cater to more varied learning styles (McCarthy et al., 2004). Learning to learn was a skill that Roxanne credited to her ‘hands-on’ experience in the TAP and which she acknowledged stayed with her into post-school education.

Self-Discipline

The desire to participate fully in the TAP positively affected participants' self-discipline, motivation and engagement towards school as a whole. Improved attitudes to learning were evident in many participant responses. Describing their motivation to succeed, participants identified their well-developed time management skills. Tracey commented "I think one thing I didn't mention that I should have that's been so important is discipline and going back to that time management and knowing, 'You know what? You're not going out and socialising this weekend.'" In a similar vein, Phoebe articulated what motivated her to manage her time.

...having something in life that I was so happy doing like dancing, singing, acting, any of those, all of them actually, actually made me a more motivated person. Because I knew that if I wanted to keep up with these things that I love so much, I had to continue to study, I had to study well, and I had to perform well in my academics.

Ewing (2010) has argued that students involved in arts-rich programs have "increased interest, motivation and engagement in learning." (p. 31) If, as Phoebe suggests, the need to succeed in their academic studies, was motivated by the participants' desire to participate in the TAP, the TAP had a positive influence in motivating and engaging students in broader school life. Rhiannon similarly discussed how she was motivated to maintain her good school grades while developing excellent time management skills.

...it taught me that the time I had to study, I needed to use it. And like I did pretty well at school. My grades were good, so I wouldn't say that it negatively impacted. If anything, it positively did because I had to learn to manage my time efficiently.

Rebecca who currently splits her time between teaching speech and drama and performing, identified her involvement in the TAP as contributing to her ability to manage her time and how this skill has transferred into her post-school life:

...and it starts to teach you how to curate different parts of your life. You can do two things at once, you can do this while you've got that going, you can be a part of the musical while you're doing this and while you're doing that. And that's what you have to do when you're a working professional; you learn to have your different jobs on the go and balance them all at the same time. And it shows you that you can absolutely do that.

Here Rebecca articulates how her passion for performing has motivated her to manage her time between jobs, just as she needed to balance her academic load with her TAP participation during her secondary years. Positive attitudes and behaviours, including motivation and engagement, can contribute to academic performance. Many researchers have pointed to the link between student motivation and engagement in school with academic achievement (Catterall, 2002c; Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1998; Heath, 2014). More broadly, researchers acknowledge that students involved in arts programs demonstrate higher motivation and engagement in their study, contributing to individual and whole school academic achievement (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1998, p. 19). The participants in this study were adamant that they learned time management skills and self-discipline due to their intense involvement in the TAP and that these skills continue to benefit them beyond their school years.

Problem-solving

Critical and creative thinking enhance an individual's ability to problem solve and maintain flexibility as identified in the way participants spoke about their ability to manage themselves in high-pressure situations, having experienced situations onstage

during the TAP that required them to improvise and think on their feet, as well as remain open to change. A few participants quoted the age-old adage, "The show must go on" (Grace and Rhiannon), a frequently repeated phrase used by many teaching staff, which literally refers to a long-standing belief among theatre-makers, that whatever happens before or during a live performance, the company ensures the show goes on, a commitment to their audience and their producer. Interview participants then reflected on their improvisation skills' lasting impact, as they developed out of necessity during live performances and how this subsequently transferred into their everyday lives. Improvisation was an integral component of the theatre-making process. Students learned to improvise through character development and later when a fellow actor missed an entrance or skipped a few lines during rehearsals. Grace recalled one such incident while performing melodrama in the school theatre:

...when we did it in the auditorium, and the lights went out in the middle of our scene. And everyone's like, 'Oh gosh.' And then I just went, "Why did you turn the lights out?" And then we just kept going, and everyone was laughing, and the lights were still out, but we were still going, and it was fine. It was okay.

Rhiannon, speaking about her role as a presenter at Australia Zoo, commented that the crowd didn't worry her "because I know if I get stuck, I'll pull something out and keep chugging. The show goes on, so you just kind of keep going." Similarly, several participants attributed their ability to manage change and remain flexible in the workplace to their experiences in the TAP, which aligns with Corby's (2008) findings that students experience a sense of increased self-confidence due to co-curricular drama programs. Rhiannon reflected on her ability to adapt to change in her workplace and the TAP experience:

...things like thinking on your feet is a big one...And I think learning to let's say adapt weekly to change, I would say, is something that I think I picked up from performing arts. And I think that is because there were constantly things thrown at you, whether it's directions that you needed to take, blocking that needed to change, improvise if people forget lines... I've been told by a few employers that I do adapt very quickly to changes...

Rhiannon credits her ability to problem-solve to her TAP improvisation experience. Problem-solving is a crucial aspect of working in theatre (McCammon et al., 2012) as each decision has many possible solutions, each with a variety of outcomes which in turn, create another series of considerations. Phoebe compared her more structured school experiences with those in the TAP, which provided students with opportunities to experiment and develop an individual process towards the work.

I'm thinking of math in particular because it's so structured, they really only give you one way in which to solve an equation or something like that. And so, I mean there are probably multiple ways, but they just don't have time to teach you all of the different ways in which you could solve a problem or come to a solution. Whereas I guess, with the performing arts, they do encourage you to instead of just saying, 'Oh just go and read the script over and over and over again until you remember it.' They understand that not everybody learns and retains in the same way. And so they do encourage you to find the way which suits you. And they also, I think there's also a lot of respect for the process...

This example reinforces the need for teaching and learning experiences that give students the freedom to make and defend choices without the concern for arriving at a pre-determined single correct response (Catterall, 2005; McCammon et al., 2012).

Constructive feedback

Learning to receive and respond to feedback was an important benefit identified by many participants who reflected on receiving ‘notes’ and the lasting impact on their attitude to receiving feedback in their current workplace. ‘Notes’ refers to specific feedback given to individuals or groups of performers or crew members intended to polish the overall performance. The process of giving notes involves the creative team (director, choreographer, stage manager, musical director) verbally delivering feedback to the assembled cast and crew. In the case of the TAP, notes were given by teachers and adult mentors in production roles to the whole cast and crew at the end of each rehearsal or ‘run’ of the production. Notes sessions occurred regularly at a phase in the rehearsal process where the need for the company to develop a performance rhythm and flow outweighs the need to stop the action and interject with further direction, as happens in the early stages of the theatre-making process. Now an established presenter on children's television, Tracey identified this aspect of the program as successfully preparing her for television work.

...having that strength to take, not criticism, but when you are doing a show, you're getting notes in front of everyone, things are changing, and it's never in a negative way, but it definitely teaches you how to take constructive criticism. And adapt to that and work with it and work with your director or work with your choreographer and learning how to balance those relationships and establish that mutual respect I think is something that has now carried on in my professional career.

Rhiannon identified that working in the TAP environment enhanced her ability to work with adults and take constructive criticism “...you learn how to kind of handle yourself, I think through those sorts of programs and your ability to work with adults, too, is a big part of that....” Rhiannon’s experience of her time performing at Australia Zoo was that:

There's a lot of pressure on it [the show] ... And so the pressure on us was quite immense, and not necessarily always in a good way. I think being able to have the confidence to go out and do the best show, and then...take criticism [from her employer], the way we got at the zoo was, definitely not in the same format as high school, but being [able] to adapt to that was definitely something that, you're kind of prepped [for].

Rebecca noted how the experience of receiving feedback in her post-school role with Opera Queensland mirrored her experiences of receiving feedback in the TAP:

... being in shows like the calibre of the shows that we did at school, being in that production of *Sound of Music*, and having a principal role and getting those sorts of notes like you would get in a professional production, to be able to have that experience in school makes it so much easier when you get out into the real world, and you're getting those sorts of notes on professional shows.

Many participants credited their ability to receive and respond professionally to constructive criticism in the workplace with their experience of receiving notes from the production team during the TAP. The importance of reflection and constructive feedback is crucial for quality arts education (Ewing, 2010). Heath (1998) highlights performing as providing opportunities for students to work alongside adult mentors and peers in an environment which fosters mutual respect and the opportunity to receive feedback, including constructive criticism.

Teamwork

Teamwork was yet another learning skill identified by participants as developed throughout their involvement in the TAP. Rebecca expressed the importance of attendance and commitment in supporting the team: "You don't do your bit, someone's going to suffer, you're not going to be able to just slide through it, you just had to be

there." Considering her TAP experience and her ability to connect with peers and the broader community, Abbey stated that "I feel like that will... give me an upper hand when it comes to maybe working with other people." Tracey spoke of the critical importance of teamwork in her current workplace: "...teamwork, working professionally now in the arts and in TV, you've just got to be a good person, you've got to be a nice person." She went on to explain how it impacts her current role as a children's television presenter for Network Ten, where she identified similar situations:

You're working with a director, an A.D. like everyone's got things that they need to focus on that they're giving you direction about. So being able to maintain a strong professional manner, but also that teamwork... comradery, and just be having fun I think at the end of the day ...you'll produce good work.

Having gone on to study a diploma in musical theatre and completed a dual degree in Arts and Journalism, Ella reflected on her experiences during the TAP and how it has influenced her attitudes towards teamwork since leaving school.

... from a high school perspective, we all want the show to be amazing. We all want the show to be great, but not one of us can step out of line and say, well this is how we're going to do it. We all have to know our place and work together because otherwise, it's not going to be a good show. It's not going to happen. So, I guess that skill translates into... I guess any situation is, other than shows is just when you're working on a common goal, you have to really think about how to work with everybody else to make that happen.

Many participants identified a range of learning skills as a result of their involvement in the TAP. These included knowing how they learn, self-discipline in particular time-management, problem-solving, receiving constructive feedback and teamwork. The final benefit identified in this zone is health.

Health

The interview data revealed limited reference to indicate specific health benefits as a result of TAP participation. Ella spoke about the importance of programs like the TAP in providing students with a safe place during a tumultuous period of an individual's life.

So I think it's really important to have something, especially like co-curricular theatre-arts, to do while you're going through such a... I guess an emotional time, being a teenager's a really emotional time, and you're going through a lot, and every day is quite hard because so much is expected of you.

Parent, Trixie made the following observation about the TAP benefits on participants' overall well-being during their high school journey. “The ways of this program, theatre, creative arts, influence a student can be in motivation, engagement, self-esteem and life satisfaction. So, you take away all those things and you have a very unhappy-[child].” These observations of the benefits of the program to elicit positive well-being, support the idea that arts education can “improve quality of life, including mental (and physical) health” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 12).

The participant responses indicate that the TAP has influenced several aspects of their post-school lives, specifically self-efficacy and learning skills, including learning how to learn, self-discipline, time management, problem-solving, receiving and responding to constructive criticism and teamwork. Less emphasis was given to health benefits, though some suggest that participants' mental health and well-being benefitted from their involvement.

Zone 3: Instrumental Public Benefits

The third zone on the upper side of the Framework identifies those instrumental benefits impacting the public sphere. These include Social Capital, which Claridge (2004) explains focuses on social relationships with mutually beneficial outcomes. Definitions differ within the literature dependent on context. In this instance, it applies, as McCarthy et al., (2004) identify as developing from the social bonds formed among a community that facilitates trust, which builds a network where reciprocal benefits can arise (p. 14).

Social Capital

Social capital is developed from participation in, subscription to or volunteering in various organisations, including arts-based organisations (McCarthy et al., 2004). A school context allows members from all community sectors to work together on a shared goal and provides students with opportunities to converse with staff, parents and volunteers in this community setting. Many participants reflected how the TAP enabled them to build social capital with students across year levels and that this positively influenced their ability to effectively work with a range of different people in their current employment. The school structure, which encourages inter-year interaction through vertical form groups and house pastoral care systems, was enhanced by students' involvement in the TAP. Rebecca commented that:

...meeting people from other year levels...even though we had house time and there was supposed to be lots of opportunities to mingle with other year levels, I don't think I actually ever did that outside of the musical, that was the only place where you would really...well you'd be forced to work with [students] quite closely from other year levels, that was really nice...

Similarly, Abbey linked her experience of working across age groups in the TAP with her attitude towards group work at university where she encountered working with students of various ages: "...because I've worked with different people from different years and different backgrounds. When I went to Uni. It was like, oh cool, it'll be fine". Grace identified that, even though her peers were not necessarily in her friendship group, the common goal of working on a project enabled closer relationships. "And we were all really together in this. And it was really that awesome relationship of we were all in different groups, but we came together...". Tracey spoke about her wide social circle at school due to her involvement in the TAP and how it allowed her to feel like she belonged even when things were not going well within her circle of friends.

And I never felt alone. You always felt like you had friends, even if there was stuff going on at lunchtime, you knew you always had your dance troupe girls, or you always had your musical girls, you always had someone, which is pretty cool. It's like a big family.

Considering how this social capital has continued to benefit individuals' post-school, Abbey acknowledged that of her school friends, she is still in contact with one, but she has stayed connected to her friends from the TAP who, like her, have pursued an arts pathway.

It's funny, who I'm friends with now, outside of school, I have one friend who didn't do the arts, and then I've got friends who did go on and do the arts, but I probably wasn't close with during school. But I'm now friends with them outside. So I guess that's long-term.

These responses reflect that the practice of working together as a community towards a shared goal enables participants to feel a sense of belonging and connection (McCarthy

et al., 2004). The reciprocal benefits from working towards a production's shared goal facilitated students' social capital during the program and for some, since graduation.

Economic Growth

Secondly, in this zone, the Framework includes Economic Growth as a benefit gained from arts participation. Here, specific benefits fall into three groups: employment in arts industries including industries supplying the arts industry; indirect economic benefits and public good benefits such as the option to participate including patronage. Participants' responses connected directly with two of these areas. McCarthy et al., (2004) highlighted the relationship between an individual's level of participation and engagement in arts in determining future participation, expectations of artists and in turn their future plans and participations. The participants' involvement in the TAP required high levels of involvement across several theatre styles, competitions and industry connections. Participants noted that the work ethic, self-discipline and professional attitude they developed during the TAP prepared them for their work-life and set them up for success in their chosen careers. Tracey spoke about her experience taking on the lead role in the school production of *A Chorus Line* (Hamlisch, Kirkwood, Bennett, Dante, & Kleban, 1975) at the Queensland Performing Arts Complex (QPAC) and how it taught her what it meant to maintain a level of professionalism:

...and then being able to perform at QPAC, seriously that's such a ... be[ing] in year 11 and performing on that stage and then also having the pressure of ... that solo, that I think taught me a lot of professionalism and that's like a memory I'll always have.... And that's what you have to do when you're a working professional; you learn to have your different jobs on the go and balance them all at the same time. And it shows you that you can absolutely do that.

Overwhelmingly, participants felt that their involvement in the TAP had impacted their lives post-school. For some, the program directly impacted their chosen pathways, from training to industry. Abbey had no reservations in attributing her post-school destination to her participation in the TAP: "Yeah, it's had a definite influence. I mean, I went straight into an acting degree straight afterwards, and I think how [I'll] always be somewhat performing in my life.... I think it clicked in my brain when I went to the dance and drama tour. That's when I made my decision of what I wanted to do in terms of dance or drama." During the focus group discussion, Rhiannon observed that: "We all do it [performing arts] to varying degrees now, which is cool, and that I think high school really shaped that and I think that's really cool." When asked if her "involvement in the TAP creative processes and productions influenced [her] to pursue a creative outlet in [her] life since, and if so, in what way? Tracey responded in the affirmative:

Absolutely! I spent my, almost my entire professional career in the arts. So I guess I left school, and I started teaching dancing. And then, while teaching dancing, I was performing in gigs and I was doing children's entertainment. I studied entertainment at uni, and now I work, I've worked for the past four and a half years in TV as a presenter, producer. So I mean, yeah, being able to do that at school is just the biggest bonus in the world, really. Because you get to study your, well, study your passion through the curriculum, but also do it as co-curricular, and I never missed an opportunity to do that, if that was possible. So yeah, I guess it really has influenced my life...

This story was familiar to many of the interview participants, including Phoebe, who was adamant that it charted her future directions:

And how has it influenced my life? Well, it's completely determined what I wanted to do with my life. It kind of set it in stone and made me really sure, and I was like, okay, well, how do I get there? Where do I need to go? What do I need to do? And then when I

eventually got to training, I think it was, it had me with a great toolkit of experiences, but also skills that I wouldn't have otherwise had. The opportunity to do so many productions I think is, a lot of people maybe don't do as many productions, or learn scripts, or do like exercises, and they just go through the motions of training. They go to the dance class, or they learn a monologue, but they don't do the theory behind it, perhaps?

To this same question, Roxanne acknowledged that she continues to seek opportunities to engage in the performing arts activities, and these ranged from singing in a community choir to volunteering, as she explained:

...volunteering [for] the different theatre companies has been really great. Especially the one working with the people who had different kind of range of disabilities. They were young adults participating in the theatre shows... As well as that, I'm slowly trying to find a way. Because I do think that I'd like to do something in the creative world. Just figuring out what.

Furthermore, Rebecca could see how the cumulative effects of intensive participation in the TAP had prepared her for future theatrical encounters:

I think being able to come out and start to work in professional shows, you do have this backlog of a resume, even though it's at school experience and being in venues like QPAC and witnessing tech and witnessing costumes and all those sorts of things, it's not [a] shock when you start to do that in the real world.

Most participants could draw clear links between their experiences performing in the TAP and their post-school training and employment.

The bi-annual Drama and Dance tour was identified by many participants as another aspect of the TAP that influenced their post-school pathways and employment aspirations. The tour gave students an insight into the vast array of employment pathways

in the industry as well as engaging in workshops and tours of tertiary institutions, such as the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) and the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) to gain an understanding of what went on in training beyond school. Interview participants spoke excitedly of their memories of the tour and subsequently pointed out that they had applied for courses at tertiary institutions that we had visited on tour. They indicated that the tour experience had influenced them in broadening their post-school options: "I remember when on dance and drama tour, we toured NIDA? which is great. And I actually applied to do the set and the costumes designer [course] which is really cool." (Roxanne). Likewise, Tracey spoke of the tour: "Oh the tour! ...That was so fun. That was ... I still remember going to VCA touring around and then I applied for VCA at the end of that year to do musical theatre." Other past TAP participants have taken up tertiary study at institutions, and with companies, introduced during the tour, including VCA musical theatre and contemporary dance courses, Sydney Dance Company pre-professional program and Brent Street Studios, in both the 'triple threat' (i.e. performers able to sing, dance and act) and contemporary dance programs. Participant responses revealed that many of them have pursued employment or further training in theatre-arts and attribute the influence of their high school involvement as a critical contributing factor to this decision.

McCarthy et al., (2004) identify a second group of employment that contributes to the public benefit of economic growth in industries that directly supply the arts industry. A number of the interview participants have gone on to work as teachers of either dance, drama or speech and communication and continue to work in these areas, i.e. areas that supply the arts industry. As a dance teacher in Sydney and Brisbane, Phoebe said "...I've engaged in all ends of the spectrum with the dance teaching now and then. So that's interesting, and it's good to compare and to get the experience in both ways."

Roxanne, a qualified primary school teacher, accepted an opportunity to work at a summer camp in the USA:

It's a performing arts camp for young kids, and I'm going to be a teacher and an assistant director for the little theatre shows they put on. I applied for this camp management thing, and they kind of reached out to me because I have that teacher accreditation, and I also have just my volunteer work in theatre. It's a good little mix.

Roxanne's TAP experience inspired her voluntary work for local theatre companies and had a long-term influence on her post-school journey through this employment opportunity. Teaching in extra-curricular or private performing arts programs is a common employment opportunity for young people in an industry typified by casual or contract employment. Parent, Michelle confirmed that both of her daughters involved in the TAP had undertaken further training in their chosen Drama and Dance areas and were both employed teaching their respective art forms. "So she's now a fully qualified dance teacher. Studio dance teacher, not school dance teacher." Teaching speech and drama, Rebecca reflects how her TAP experience influences her as a teacher:

I always think about how I felt when I was at school and how I want my students to feel, I want arts to give them. I wouldn't have the empathy for my students if I hadn't been through it myself...

McCarthy et al., (2004) suggest, as individuals mature, they consider their participation opportunities, which was evident in many interview responses beyond teaching. Ella found herself taking on production roles: "I've done a number of productions with my university club, and I went from being in them to choreographing for them, to directing them, all the other stuff in between."

The second category identified by McCarthy et al., (2004) is 'indirect economic benefits' and refer to the economic benefit to the broader community when arts events, produced in specific locations, attract skilled workers and firms that strengthen local economy and employment. The participants did not identify any benefits that would align with this category.

The third group identified, encompasses art patrons who pay to attend live performances or visit galleries, which effectively injects cash flow into the arts industry and supporting industries (McCarthy et al., 2004). Several participants affirmed that their theatregoing habits continue to be regular. Ava stated, "I see so many new musicals. I think I've already seen three or four this year. Everything that pops up at QPAC, I'm there, and I drag everyone along." As such, Ava plays a significant role as a facilitator of other young people's attendance. This role has been identified as essential to audience development, especially when young people are involved (O'Toole et al., 2014). Theatre attendance extended to local theatre, as Grace explained: "I found myself attending more community theatre productions." A further long-term impact of theatre attendance was identified by parents when they explained they (parents) were motivated by their desire to contribute to the live theatre industry's viability that their daughters aim to work in.

...the programs do have a positive influence on people's lives, in different ways. I think they go to see more theatre. They support it. They go to local theatre, too, because they know how hard it is for young people. We support our local theatre. Why? Because we've two girls who wanted to get into it. So, of course, I'm going to go to Bille Brown, and support these people, because I want there to be money. I support governments that promote theatre and money to the arts. (Trixie)

The *Theatrespace* project, (O'Toole et al., 2014) which aimed to understand why young people do, or do not attend live theatre, found many factors that determined if

young people became engaged audience members (Donelan & Sallis, 2014). One finding of the project was the connections between students' introduction to theatregoing during their secondary school years, and young people's attendance and engagement with live theatre. Parent, Trixie contemplated the relationship between theatregoing and student's introduction to theatre arts during their school years and came to a similar conclusion:

It's more likely that you'll be introduced at school, and think, "Oh, I'll join a local theatre group." It seems to be the first step in the path. So if you don't have it at school, you probably won't have it. I talk to people that have never had anything... like a program in their lives, and they're not theatregoers.

The instrumental benefit of economic growth through a combination of employment in the arts industry and teaching in the arts and theatregoing is evident through many participants' responses.

In response to the question about where they could see the benefits of the TAP on their daughters' post-school lives, all three parents identified that their daughters' skills, attributed at least in part to their TAP experience, had been advantageous in securing employment in the legal fraternity. Reflecting on her daughter's background in the TAP, Trixie, summarised this benefit as follows:

...she hopes to go into the organisational area of drama. So theatre organisation, admin. But she has no admin skills. So she applied, and got a job, at... a law firm. And, once again, it was her drama background that they really liked. She's just gone in as a junior office... It goes towards the influence of what it gives to people. It's that determination. It's stamina. They can do the job. And the willingness to speak. Because a lot of kids don't want to communicate. So it helps them communicate. They become better communicators.

Another parent, Eilish, explained that her daughter has continued her study after school in theatre and has gone onto study law and found employment in a legal firm.

Two years out of her degree in ...theatre. Then she's going to do a law degree. ... I'm sure there's a link... When she's been for an interview with a law firm, and they just love that she's got a theatre background. We thought that might be not in her favour, but it's actually turned out to be in her favour. So they are relishing the idea that she's got something different to offer.

Trixie, whose husband is a barrister, went on to connect the joy of performing with working in a courtroom:

I don't think they ever forget. And that thrill of getting out on stage doesn't leave you. That's why I say lawyers, they have... Well, if you go out to court and you actually litigate, that's that thrill of getting up on stage, talking to the judge. Knowing it's quite important. People are listening to you.

Parents reported that their daughters' skills which they attribute at least in part, to their daughters' involvement in the TAP were subsequently advantageous to them gaining employment in law firms. To further illustrate the connection, Trixie drew parallels between performing on stage and litigating in court. Further research into the transferable skills between theatre-arts and the legal fraternity would be an interesting area for further investigation.

The analysis of interview responses revealed that all participants benefitted from building social capital and contributed to economic growth due to their involvement in the TAP. Participants spoke of their ability to work with people of varying personality types, ages, and backgrounds due to the program's multi-age environment. In particular, they identified that they connected with many people beyond their friendship group and

in some cases, it is those students from the TAP whom they have maintained closest contact. Secondly, the research data analysis confirmed that participants identified economic growth benefits, including direct employment in the arts industry, employment in associated industries through teaching and in their patronage of the theatre industry.

Zone 4: Intrinsic Private Benefits

McCarthy et al., (2004) highlight the Intrinsic benefits of learning in the arts on a continuum across the lower half of the framework. Intrinsic benefits are recognised as valuable in themselves rather than other broader benefits (McCarthy et al., 2004) and are critical motivators for arts participation. McCarthy et al., (2004) point to a lack of research in this area. They critique the absence of empirical data in this field, claiming that published research relies on the arts' effects. Only through examining individual experiences, can the motivations and individual's sustained participation in the arts and the subsequent benefits be understood (McCarthy et al., 2004). The next section of analysis focuses on the private sphere's intrinsic benefits, moving to the private with public spillover sphere and finally, the public sphere. Zone four contains two categories: captivation and pleasure.

Captivation

Captivation, defined as the spontaneous reaction to a piece of art, prompts an individuals' feelings of appreciation and awe. This appreciation for the artwork inspires entry to an imagined reality and departure from the everyday (McCarthy et al., 2004). Performance work is integral to learning in drama and theatre, both in hands-on and appreciation of live performances. Rhiannon explained two moments of captivation from her TAP experiences, the first was watching a fellow cast member dance and sing through an intricate solo in *A Chorus Line* (Hamlisch, Kirkwood, Bennett, Dante, & Kleban, 1975)

and the second was her first experience in the program as a year eight student in *The Wiz* (Brown & Smalls, 1974). The following quotes, taken from a group interview, capture Rhiannon sharing memories with her old cast members:

I remember watching you do that solo, and I remember being like, "Man, I wish I could do that. I remember that truly I remember that was one, and then, *The Wiz* is another one, but where I really felt I knew what inspiration was really like... And watching you dance solo I never got sick of it, and I know we used to get in trouble for being in the wings.

Ella also has vivid memories of her experience during *A Chorus Line* (Hamlisch, Kirkwood, Bennett, Dante, & Kleban, 1975):

I just remember it being like just the best time ever. It was so exciting, and just so much fun, and it just felt like we were doing something really, really great, and really high quality for what was the high school musical essentially.

Further, Ella recalled the captivation she felt in the finale of the final show:

I just had such a good time that I was so sad that it had to be the end, ... But still being so happy that I got the opportunity to do it, and then got to be on stage with all these people that had put in so much work, and then kind of gearing up for like the last number, and really trying to give my all to that last time...and we just knew we were going to do a kick line for the last time, and it was amazing. We all threw our hats up in the air like we graduated, and it was so good...I just really remember being present on stage in that moment, and just like taking everything in for the last time.

Interview participant, Ava noted of her journey through the TAP that is was "Just a good experience, I couldn't get enough of it." Participants expressed their captivation through being a part of something really special, that was exciting and memorable, of being inspired by their peers and being really present in the moment.

Pleasure

Pleasure is often the result of the individual's early captivation and imaginative escape response to an artwork and can refer to "the joy and excitement of the act of creation" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 46). All participants recalled the fun, joy and sense of community they felt during the productions. When asked to recall the most memorable moment, Phoebe described hers as the joy of opening night of her senior year musical, *The Sound of Music*:

But then the actual first performance was really real, and it was an incredible feeling. It was probably my top moment for me; it was just so joyful. And that's what performing should be. It should be joyful, and I was living out a dream.

Ella reflected on the whole experience of her TAP involvement and the value that she took from it.

I think it's amazing to have a place to work on something else, to make something because you want to make something, not because six teachers have told you that you have to, that it's part of the curriculum. To do something artistic and emotional, and freeing, I think that's really important and really valuable.

These participant reflections support McCammon et al.'s (2012) findings that participants described their experience of performing as a "magic feeling...[that] immerses them cognitively and emotionally in a new world" (p. 15). These quality performance experiences allowed them to feel connected to the audience and cultivate personal meaning. According to Bamford (2006), quality arts experiences may include achievements and involve the process, partnerships and recognition. In speaking about the TAP, participants also commented on the whole process, that they "remember it just being the best time ever"; "I loved it, I looked forward to rehearsals, every single rehearsal

we had.” (Rhiannon) Grace recalled her favourite moment, not from the production where she had the lead role, but from an earlier production when she had a supporting role and the process which led to what eventuated on stage:

It is *The BFG*, and I was the chef, and I had literally two or three lines, but we turned it into a five-minute scene just because you were: ‘you should have a cockney accent’. And I had no idea what that was. So you had to teach me how to do that, and then we just kept playing with it, and it just went on and on and on. And Bridget ... and I, just kept doing, throwing lines and it was just the most hilarious time I've ever had. And I know in that show people were like: Oh, that scene's so good. I can't believe they'd script things like that. I'm like: they didn't, we made it up.

With this recollection, Grace acknowledges the quality experience of the whole theatre-making process and not just the performance aspect. She also attributes a quality experience playing a minor role, from which she learnt and grew in confidence, and later enabled her to take on a lead role.

In this next instance, the ongoing intrinsic benefit of pleasure derived from performing was evident in Rhiannon's reflection of her fast promotion to the Roving Entertainment Department at Australia Zoo. Rhiannon's promotion provided her opportunities to present daily animal demonstrations, perform in the Wildlife Warriors show and appear on national television speaking about the zoo and the many animals she worked with. Her pleasure in the opportunity to perform post-school, in this capacity is evident as is the link between the skills she acquired during TAP and her promotion.

...it did impact my earlier jobs. And then, I actually excelled. I became a zookeeper at Australia zoo, and they recognised within the first four months that I had skills talking to people, and showed sort of qualities, and immediately moved me to a different department, so that I could be a part of those big shows that we'd put on, which is really,

really cool. And something that, again, I was so excited to do, because it brought back my passion for performing and my passion for animals, and it kind of combined the two. And in my world, there was nothing better.... So, yeah, I think it definitely helped. I don't know that I had planned to go in that direction, but I mean it helped to have that background for sure. Absolutely.

Rhiannon's story demonstrates how her passion for performing, primarily developed through her TAP participation continued into her post-school career. Participants' responses support research findings that intrinsic benefits of captivation and pleasure were the impetus for their involvement in the Theatre Arts Program and these led to more broad benefits which have influenced their lives professionally and personally in their post-school lives.

Zone 5: Intrinsic Private Benefits with Public spillover

Within the Intrinsic Benefits continuum, McCarthy et al., (2004) identify private benefits with public spillover as “developing citizens who are more empathetic and more discriminating in their perceptions and judgments about the world around them” (p. 47). The first of these is “expanded capacity for empathy” (McCarthy et al., 2004), and the second is cognitive growth.

Expanded capacity for empathy

The arts enable individuals to make meaning by offering opportunities to empathise with and represent characters, contexts and perspectives beyond their own (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga 1998; McCarthy et al., 2004). Many participants discussed their experiences of 'stepping into the shoes of characters' beyond their age, culture and experience. Importantly they identified how those experiences continue to shape their perspectives of the world and people they encounter. Roxanne spoke of the

opportunities to "empathise with people and look at something from different perspectives" and its influence on her work with children.

it's been really interesting, especially working with kids now and working with families. Kids, a lot of the time, have bad behaviour, but that doesn't mean they're a bad kid. Just understanding that they're from a different kind of world, and what you see isn't always everything. There's always something more to it.

Grace connected her current role working with people from diverse backgrounds and the capacity for empathy developed during her TAP.

I guess it was something that I learned that I would use at work is good communication skills, cause I work in the migration and refugee division. A lot of the people that call either don't speak English or know very little and they don't have any idea how the process works. So I guess trying to communicate effectively with them and while being polite and understanding and the skills are like in drama.... And you have to keep going. And so sometimes it makes me think, okay, this person is being really harsh right now, or really frustrating or angry... I don't know what's just happened... Just before they got on this phone call or just before they walked into me or whatever...

Most Participants stated that their capacity for empathy had developed through various characters and contexts they had explored during TAP productions.

Cognitive Growth

The second identified intrinsic, private benefit with public spillover is cognitive growth. McCarthy et al., (2004) acknowledge that all the benefits have cognitive dimensions due to art's inherent nature to engage and encourage audiences to make sense of the experience. The experience of being challenged to make meaning contributes to our intellectual growth. Several participants' recall their process of researching characters and contexts of specific texts, prior to portraying them on stage and how it influenced their view of the world and their place in it. Rhiannon reflected on her preparation to be a cast member in *The Sound of Music*, for which considerable emphasis was placed on the historical events that surrounded the narrative, noting:

I think it definitely influences the way you view the world. And it actually, it inspired me as well to go and see parts of the world like that. We went to Austria at the end of grade 12 and did the *Sound of Music* tour, and that was so fitting because we'd just done that musical that year...And then, we visited Berlin and all the concentration camps and things like that, as well. So I think it definitely changes how you see the world.

Phoebe spoke at length about her role in *Children of the Black Skirt* (Betzien, 2005) where she played an Indigenous character. She reflected that she felt no connection to the character or situation at first and that it was only after research and in-depth text analysis that she came to a greater understanding of the character and her situation. Phoebe's process illustrates Heath's (2014) position that the impact of working with well-written texts allows students to explore and engage in contexts beyond their own and subsequently can inspire deeper engagement and empathy. As a result of her work with this text, Phoebe was able to view Australian history with a critical eye, reflecting that the Australian history as taught throughout her schooling was biased and inadequate:

...that's not really something that at the time I knew who aboriginal people were. I knew that they're being indigenous to Australia, but I didn't really understand the history and the, I guess the oppression. And I think when you get given a character and you don't, from personal experience, understand what it would be like to be that kind of person, if you're a good performing artist, I think you go and research that. And you'll do some reading, or you'll watch a documentary, or you'll talk to people so that you can portray their character in the most authentic way.

Grace reflected on the challenges of taking up roles when performing in *Scattered Lives* (McKenzie, 2002):

...hearing those stories about refugees, asylum seekers, and because as a teenager you learned a little bit of it in school and you can hear about it on the news. But then actually performing someone's true story. It was pretty crazy, and that had people from a variety of places and a variety of stories. And so it was really eye-opening I think to go, wow, people actually went through this, this is insane. And then having to take on those emotions that they had and try and give their story justice, give it as much as you can because you know you would never want to disrespect their story or their journey. You want to perform it to your best and to be as authentic as you possibly can to the real story.

Phoebe acknowledged her privileged and sheltered upbringing and how that affected her after school as she became more aware of world events, but that she believes the emotional connection to learning through theatre and drama served her better than learning facts and figures of events.

...that's why playing a character, I think, builds so much empathy for a certain life situation or type of person, because you are actually getting a full in-depth story of their life, rather than just a death count or years that a war was fought or something like that, that's a bit general and not really emotional I guess....[TAP] led me to have a more global

view on society and understand a variety of people that, if I had sat in a classroom just learning about history, I might not have been as involved in the history of a certain event or a certain type of person.

These reflections of participants' engagement with their characters and situations demonstrate the cognitive growth experienced as a result of performing in a wide variety of productions. Phoebe compared her experience as a performer in the TAP with observations of her peers at a Sydney dance training school. Here she observed that many of them lacked the ability to connect with the work on a deeper level as performers:

I noticed when I was training. Particularly in Sydney, was that a lot of people didn't know why they were doing things, or what the meaning behind something was, or how to be emotive or... Basically, the true depth of performing. And I think that's something that we really did learn during my high school.

Phoebe identified that while many students engage in direct instruction in dance technique, there is a gap between the dance school and the stage where characters come to life. The ability to embody a character or convey emotion through dance is often secondary or absent from dance school training. The TAP provided the opportunity to utilise these skills in a full-length production working through a process that challenged them to understand the dance's purpose and meaning. Dancers in the TAP crossed over between classroom Dance, Dance troupe, musical theatre, physical theatre and children's theatre productions, providing multiple opportunities to utilise technique and build capacity to perform and choreograph in an emotive and meaningful way.

The intrinsic benefits, of expanded capacity for empathy and cognitive growth, are evident through several participants' responses. These private benefits have continued

to impact individual's world views, and interactions in the workplace, where the benefits spillover into the public sphere.

Zone 6: Intrinsic Public Benefits

Finally, the framework identifies Intrinsic public benefits as the creation of social bonds and the expression of communal meaning (McCarthy et al., 2004). The public benefits of social bonds derived from repeated gatherings of groups provide both a place to socialise and the opportunity to engage with and share artwork interpretations. These exchanges can lead to shared understandings and meaning (McCarthy et al., 2004).

Social bonds

Enhanced social bonds were evident in responses relating to friendship groups, peers, teachers and family. The participants highlighted their connection with people beyond their established friendship groups as a result of the TAP. For example, Tracey spoke of her connection with a wide range of girls from all year groups, "I guess the beautiful thing about this program is that you do become friends with people who you don't necessarily interact with in the playground, or at lunchtime and whatever." Here Tracey credits her involvement in the TAP with enhancing her extended circle of friends, beyond the classroom or year level. Alternately, Rhiannon, whose friendship group participated in the TAP had a slightly different reflection on the bonds that she made and the reasoning behind such bonds. "... I think my theatre friends were probably my closest friends at high school, and I think it's for that reason that we spent so much time together." Rhiannon attributes her strong bonds with these friends to their shared time and experiences in the program. Grace reflected on how her involvement in the TAP, helped her break out of her social group and connect with people she wouldn't have generally associated with.

And I think it definitely makes me realise that you can have heaps of different friends and different types of friends. You don't have to be afraid that people that are really different from you can't be your friend. Because I always thought my group was just my group, and that was it. But then in drama and in the shows, you would connect.

The ongoing participation, year to year, allowed students to continue to build relationships across year levels, as they progressed from year eight to year twelve. A few participants reflected that the inter-year connections, encouraged through the pastoral care program, were most fully realised in the TAP environment, due to their shared experiences in creating theatre. Rebecca recalls:

...my person I played opposite with in *As you like it*, was really intimidating. But then to have like those walls break down and have people just in a year above you start to support you. It's such an uplifting feeling.

The social bonds felt by participants confirms Catterall's (2007) finding that students benefit from gains in creating social bonds through learning to work with a diverse group of others. Many of their high school memories were shared with the other TAP students and these social bonds became very important and were evident through the excited sharing of memories when small groups reunited during the focus group interviews.

The TAP was fortunate to have a dedicated parent support group, (PASG), which comprised parents and grandparents who contributed considerably to the program. The advantage of a parent support group is having a constant group of parents willing and able to support rehearsals, production needs and fundraise; moreover, parents and grandparents played an integral role in fostering the family environment and providing

students with opportunities to converse with and be mentored by many adults. Roxanne reflected on the scope of community participation:

And I remember my friend... I'm pretty sure she even did the artwork for *Sound of Music*, and she wasn't even like a drama person, but she really enjoyed getting into that area. Which was really cool, cause then lots of different people who might not have seen themselves drama people were able to be part of it.

Abbey put it simply when she stated:

It definitely was like a family, if I think back, you know you're coming in on a Saturday... So it starts to become, I don't know, more of a family and you got to show a bit more of yourself cause you're not, I don't remember being in school uniform, especially on Saturday. So it was like a... Not camp, but it's a different sort of experience.

Ava agreed "...And I feel all the parents knew who you were even though you didn't hang out with their kid." These sentiments of belonging and bonding as a family result from sharing the experience of collaborating in the creation of a piece of theatre with like-minded people (McCammon et al., 2012). Tracey considered how the interaction with a broad group of students beyond her friendship circle, changed how she felt in the classroom: "It just gave everyone this chance to be so comfortable with your classmates."

McCammon et al., (2012) point out that at times these dynamics will be tested and that learning to navigate such conflicts can "lead to a greater understanding of oneself." (p. 15) Tracey recalled a complicated peer relationship during her final year, which negatively impacted her TAP experience and long-term relationship.

And then there was elements ... of jealousy; I don't know. How did that play long term? Well, long term, I'm no longer friends with the person... But I guess it just, yeah, our

friendship diminished over it, but it definitely puts a bit of a sour taste, I guess you say, over that experience, which is a real shame. But it makes you stronger for being able to manoeuvre it and deal with it.

Tracey overcame the challenges of the complicated relationship and acknowledged that she developed interpersonal skills to manage the problematic relationship, which has subsequently benefitted her in navigating relationships since leaving school.

The TAP positively built social bonds "across social divides" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 29) evident in parent responses, fondly recalling their involvement, whether that be with sewing costumes, painting sets, selling tickets or serving lunches on rehearsal days. Viewing the assorted artifacts of production programs, photos and memorabilia, prompted the parents' recollections of students they remembered and how they felt connected to the community.

Michelle: All these names bring back memories. All these girls you haven't heard of since they've been...

Trixie: Because you see how many rehearsals and costume fittings, and all that goes into each one. You think, 'That's a lot of work.'

Eilish: It's great.

Michelle: It's such a big lot of work when you look at it.

Trixie: Because it was for everyone. The little kids got something out of it too, I think...It's sort of that feeling of, 'Oh, I wish we were doing it again.'

Tracey reflected on her father's involvement in the Performing Arts Support Group (PASG).

...my family have always been really big supporters of me. So I guess it just gave them another avenue. And with Dad, I guess, being a little bit involved, he was part of the

committee and whatnot. So that was kind of cool. It was something else we got to share as a family.

The input from a broad cross-section of the school community enhanced the experience for students, teachers and parents alike and strengthened family bonds, where parents and grandparents could be involved in their daughter's co-curricular pursuit in a hands-on way.

Expression of Communal meaning

The final benefit identified in the framework is 'expression of communal meaning'. McCarthy et al., (2004) explain that 'communal meaning' can occur when works of art communicate what "whole communities of peoples long to express" (p. 50). The variety of texts performed throughout the program contrasted in style, purpose and message. The larger productions were intended to attract audiences from the whole college community and generally reflected the social status quo. These productions fulfilled the purpose of entertaining and to a lesser extent, educating. For example, the primary purpose of musicals, such as *The Sound of Music*, is to entertain, however after research into the Von Trapp family, I wanted to honour their story in as authentic a manner as possible. To this end, the cast was likewise encouraged to research the real story's historical context, rather than just working from the romanticised script. McCammon et al. (2012) confirm that students long to work on texts that challenge the social status quo or are less conventional in style. In contrast, the smaller productions of the TAP comprised of contemporary texts and served to challenge both the participants and audiences' understanding of the social status quo. A cast of senior drama students presented *Scattered Lives* (McKenzie, 2002), a play that brings to life multiple immigrants' stories, at an Evening of Plays and two drama festivals. Following the

performance at school, one audience member was impressed by the performance and inspired by the message it conveyed. They invited the cast to perform the production for the local Rotary club where they were a member. This play's performance conveyed such an important message that they wanted it shared beyond the college community. This same work impacted, cast member, Grace, then in year 11, and her father as she explained:

So my dad went and saw us...And after that, he was driving me home, and he said he cried...that's when he [revealed] the fact that he and his family were refugees from Croatia during the war. And so, some of those stories were so similar to his, and I'd never even knew that I had no idea. So until he saw us perform that, that's when he decided to share that. So doing that play opened up this whole door of history with my family and we went to Croatia recently, and he was able to show us all the places he was talking about...it was a really good moment.

This previously unheard family story was finally revealed due to Grace's participation in this challenging piece of theatre; when Grace's empathy and understanding for the characters she played inspired her father to share his own story.

Resoundingly all participants spoke positively about their TAP experiences and identified a wide range of benefits that they stated had benefitted them in their personal and professional lives since school. Many of them continued to train in the performing arts; some continue to work in the entertainment industry. For others who have followed pathways quite separate to the arts industry, such as zoology and physiotherapy, they were adamant that their experiences in the TAP had continued to influence them positively through their self-efficacy, oral communication and interpersonal skills such as teamwork. All participants acknowledged that they continue to be frequent theatregoers, for some that included mainly musicals, but for others, it encompassed

broader theatre styles, including opera and community theatre. Many participants made connections between their roles, across a range of productions and the influence on their world view and capacity to empathise with others.

McCarthy et al., (2004) acknowledge that “both intrinsic and instrumental benefits contribute to public welfare” (p. 69); and highlight the pivotal function of intrinsic benefits which lead to all benefits. The analysis revealed a strong connection between the many benefits and individuals' passion, which fuelled their motivation to participate in the program. The next section of the analysis deals with the second research question that seeks to identify the program's aspects that have had the greatest influence on participants' lives beyond school.

Aspects

The second research question is “What aspects of the theatre-arts experiences did participants identify as most influential in their lives beyond school?” Analysis of the interview responses determined three main influential aspects that led to the long-term benefits: pride in quality productions; the role of teachers; and breadth of opportunities. Without exception, participants spoke passionately about the pride they felt due to their participation in quality productions and considered that this had a long-term influence on their confidence and aspirations. Secondly, many participants identified the influence of their drama and dance teachers through their constant encouragement and mentoring. Finally, they acknowledged the breadth of opportunities as influential in their post-school pathways, and capacity to empathise.

Pride in Quality Productions

All participants acknowledged that the quality of productions was very high and allowed them to feel great pride in their collective artwork. Phoebe explained "...I think my memories, are really strongly tied to being really proud of the work that we were putting on" and Ella: "but also just being so proud of everything that we had created". While pride, doesn't appear within the framework, it could be argued that it fits alongside 'pleasure' in its private and intrinsic nature to drive further participation. Pride derived from performing in quality productions, fed the students passion and pleasure. Heath (1998) makes note of some critical aspects of performing arts learning that influence benefits, including an "immovable deadline of performance" and "knowing that ... work will be judged by an outside authentic audience of friends and family, ... convinced only by the merits of the work of art" (p. 40). The combination of an impending deadline and apprehension of judgement represents inherent risks of live theatre (and therefore the TAP) of which participants spoke enthusiastically. Reflecting on the central aspect of the TAP, live performances, Tracey and Rhiannon agreed that the immediacy of the audience response [was] "just something else." Rhiannon went on to explain "I like performing in front of a large group of people and the energy that they give you" with Tracey adding, "You're getting that response instantly." Parent Trixie observed that the sense of accomplishment also added to the student's determination to succeed, which in the TAP differed greatly from other parts of school life, where there was no obvious shared outcome. "Unless you're doing experiments, you don't really have an end result too much. It's not that sense of achievement, 'Look what I've done.'" Rhiannon spoke of how the school community response to performances led to such feelings of pride. "And there was a real sense of pride when you did a show, you'd come to school after the show week or you know you're going to rehearsals and like, 'We did that, we were that cast'." Rebecca

articulated the sense of pride, not only in the quality of the productions and experience but due to the ownership they felt toward the work:

And also having ownership over a really big project, which you don't really get that in school, but it's kind of likened to when you're on outside coordinating big events and being a part of big events. We don't get taught that in any other subject.

Tracey articulated how she felt pride due to understanding that she was a part of something special "...when I was at school, I was proud of what I was doing, and I was happy and yeah... always just feeling like you're part of something bigger, which is pretty special." Beyond productions, Phoebe acknowledged the quality of experiences:

...we've mentioned the word quality a few times, and I want to address that, because I think we were lucky to go to a school that had such a good performing arts program, with great teachers, and facilities and abilities.

The quality of the experience is as essential, as the quality of the end product, according to Bamford (2006) who goes on state that it may include achievements but also extends to the "learning journey, pathways, partnerships and recognition." (p. 23) Phoebe explained that she came to the TAP with prior learning and noted the difference in her experiences:

I think I started dancing when I was about three, and then I sung through primary school and everything. So, for me, it wasn't like a new area to be coming into, but it was just a natural progression from primary school to high school training. And the difference, I'll have to say, one thing I know for sure is, the difference was surreal, and the quality of the productions.

Similarly, Ella recalled:

I mean I think for me it was just definitely the quality of the musical that we produced. To take something as well-known as *Chorus Line*, and then put it for high school students, which was a hard task to begin with. But then, come out with this show that we were so proud of, that really felt strong and successful. It was like the hard work had paid off, without question...with *Chorus Line* we were just so happy, and joyously performing.

These young women seem to recognise, as Bamford (2006) does, the importance of quality arts experiences. Bamford (2006) and others suggest that quality arts experience are more likely to occur in a school context with high achieving students from well-resourced schools (2006, p. 39). However, other research (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1998) situated in schools in low socio-economic contexts has countered this suggestion. Quality experiences of the TAP, as identified by many participants, were produced with a minimal budget, with students wearing theatre blacks, augmented by a hat or coat and utilising minimal staging. The quality of experience for students was not dependent on budget, but rather on the process of working towards a piece that they felt connected to and proud to share.

McCarthy et al., (2004) state that "high-quality arts experiences are characterised by enjoyment, a heightened sense of life, and imaginative departure. Individuals who have such experiences seek more of them" (p. 57). The participants' resounding perspective was that the opportunities afforded to them through the TAP were of a very high calibre.

I'm constantly reflecting on the sheer luck and privilege it was to create such high-quality performances from such an early age but to continue with that consistency all throughout. And a lot of school-aged children, in particular, wouldn't get that opportunity. And like I said, even a lot of working professionals don't get that opportunity until they're around my age now. (Phoebe).

McCarthy et al., (2004) found that the second most influential factor in determining participation and frequency of participation in the arts was the experience's quality. "Individuals pursue continued involvement in the arts if their arts experiences are fully engaging—emotionally, cognitively, socially" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 70). Participants' pride in the quality productions of the TAP influenced their career pathways. A quality arts program, according to Ewing (2010), is "high in value and worth in terms of skills, attitudes and performativity" (p. 18). The lasting influence of their pride as a result of quality arts experiences and quality productions has inspired continued participation through employment in the arts industry and supporting industries or as patrons of the theatre industry.

Teachers

The TAP benefitted considerably from the artistry and commitment of the teachers who led the various activities and connected the classroom and the rehearsal rooms. Multiple participants commented on their teachers' critical role in the TAP and the rapport and support they enjoyed as a result. Phoebe reflected on the relationships developed with her peers and teachers during her engagement in the TAP.

And I think because being in the arts, I guess, it's such a tight-knit thing and you get really friendly with people because of the nature of it, you become a lot friendlier with people that you're doing say a drama production with, or a musical with, or dance troupe with, than you would say in a maths class. I just think that's just the nature of performing arts. You just have to create closer relationships because I think the whole thing's built on trust and connection, and that's how you create successful performances, I suppose. And the same with teachers. You have to trust and connect with the teachers so that you can properly develop and trust that you're going to take care of each other and that you're going to do your best work. And so I think that the people that I've interacted with in the

performing arts area, as far as peers, friends and teachers go, I'm a lot closer with, than say those in other areas, just because of the nature of it.

Similarly, Tracey spoke about the unique rapport with the drama and dance teachers involved in the program, and the mentorship she gained from their professionalism in this capacity.

I think it also, being in that program, helps to foster relationships with your teachers, because you get to see them outside of school, in rehearsals, or on the weekends, when you're rehearsing, and stuff. And you definitely form a closer bond to [them], say, [than] your maths teacher, who you only spend three hours a week with, in a classroom of twenty-eight people...So you get to be mentored by these professionals, who instil their wisdom on you...Which is pretty special.

Passionate teachers who serve as role models and mentors in reinforcing students' attitudes and behaviours towards the arts and subsequently the school institution have been the most critical factor in effecting quality arts experiences (Bamford, 2006; McCarthy et al., 2004). Bandura (1997) suggests that students learn more from teachers who exude a sense of efficacy than those filled with self-doubt.

As part of the *TheatreSpace* report, Stinson and Burton (2016) examined teachers' influence on introducing students to live theatre experience. They found that students were able to be actively engaged audience members, as a result of their own participation in live theatre performance which gave them a "shared reference point" (Bundy et al., 2012, p. 71) from which to respond and assess productions. The influence of good rapport and mutual respect between teachers and students is considered crucial in allowing students opportunities to take risks, imagine and experiment (Fleming et al., 2016). Rhiannon supported this position of the influence of and connection with the teachers of the TAP: "And I felt like I had a very different relationship with my drama [and] dance

teachers than I did with any of my other teachers. And again, potentially that's because we spent so much time out of class time...". Parent, Trixie speaking of her daughter's aspirations commented that "I think she looks at you as a mentor, and I think she'd like to be a drama teacher. I do think that she thinks that every now and then. 'I might go back and do my teaching.' And I think so. I think she just wants to have life a little bit, and then she'll go off and do that." The influence of the passionate teachers involved in the TAP continue to influence TAP participants' aspirations.

Breadth of opportunities

Analysis of the TAP through examination of school documents, (show and event programs, yearbooks and magazines) highlighted the breadth of opportunities. Many participants recall the opportunities of the program as having enhanced their experience. Phoebe recalled, "... the program was so good and the diversity of the productions we did is so good." Grace elaborated on the range of opportunities:

I remember there was lots of opportunities, those heaps of different things that you could do, which was really great. I know, the tour was an awesome thing. I really enjoyed that. I think it was really good that we did alternate musical and then it was children's theatre at one point, but it was physical theatre before that. So there's a real variety, I think. And having a dance troupe and then at one point those musical theatre troupe. That was cool.

Most participants acknowledged the scope and range of performance genres as they could try many theatre styles. The texts, chosen by a team of teachers and student directors, were selected based on diversity, challenge and appropriateness for the cohort of students. The productions varied in style and content from physical theatre adaptations of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, to Children's Theatre productions of Roahl Dahl's *The BFG*, musical theatre productions, and contemporary and classic plays. Abbey considered

how the breadth of opportunities allowed individuals to find their strengths as she explains:

I feel everyone had their own particular one...Cause I mean, I did a musical, but I'm probably not into musicals. But the one-act plays and the physical theatre performances... I always look forward to those ones. Does that make sense? Yeah, everyone had their own sort of jam.

And Phoebe:

I was just thinking about *As You Like It* the other day and I was like, "Wow. I did a Shakespeare production that was flipped around and made into ... " Basically it wasn't a typical Shakespeare production. It was made to be a lot more dynamic and a lot different to how it's just written in the script. And I don't think that's an opportunity that many students or even working professionals would get.

The mixture of classic and contemporary, comedy and drama, musical and melodrama enhanced students' knowledge and understanding of styles and contexts. The variety challenged and extended students emotionally, intellectually and creatively. For many participants, the program enhanced their prior learning in dance and drama training.

Most participants acknowledged that they came to the TAP with some prior learning in either dance or drama, mainly through their primary years. For example, Rhiannon had a variety of performing arts training before coming to the school in year eight, where she successfully auditioned to be in the chorus of *The Wiz* (Brown & Smalls, 1974). When asked what her most memorable moment was, she responded: "For me I think it would probably be *The Wiz*, just because it was so early and it was my introduction to school, like performing arts." Involvement in the TAP also had a substantial impact on Ella, who had pursued dance training outside of school, and at the end of year 10,

convinced her parents to let her audition for the school musical. She recalls the experience and how this has impacted her since leaving school:

I decided in 2010 that *Chorus Line* was my last chance to be in a school musical and that I would audition and just see if I could get in.... I guess, the way that it's had a lasting influence on my life is that I had such a positive experience doing my high school musicals, that I seeked out, seek out? More opportunities like that.... But when I went to university, I had a friend ask me if I wanted to audition for school... The drama club, university musical production. And I wasn't really sure about it, but because I had known what school productions or team productions can turn into, I was more encouraged to try something new, and I ended up getting into that show and being with that drama club for six years...but the positive memories and experiences from high school encouraged me to jump into new social situations that I might not have done otherwise.

Grace was able to look back and compare her experience of the TAP with what her husband experienced:

I'd say definitely this experience and then comparing it to my husband's high school experience, how he didn't even get those opportunities. It made me feel so lucky to have that experience and to have those opportunities, and I definitely treasured them and seeing all these [memorabilia]... it's reminding me all so much of all those things. I'm like: Oh, I forgot about this and that. How awesome that was. I'm honestly so grateful for the opportunities that we had...

Phoebe acknowledged the many aspects of the school environment, which enabled the TAP to flourish.

And it's obviously not just the teaching cohort of performing arts. It's the people above that as well, that control the money involved, and the time, and admin involved, and the facilities, and all of that stuff.

This observation is evident in Roxanne's earlier story of performing a drama piece at the school's annual speech night at city hall. Few schools embrace all the performing arts at such prestigious events, relying instead on the traditional music component for performance items. The pro-arts principal understood the power and value of showcasing all performing arts disciplines at such events. Such examples support the findings of Seidel et al., (2009) who acknowledge that quality of arts experiences is affected by decision-makers, both inside and outside the classroom, including administrators, program staff, parents and students.

The long-term benefits of student's involvement in the TAP are wide-ranging. The pride that they felt in their involvement in quality performances motivated their frequent participation and had a lasting influence on their post-school training, career pathways, work ethic, self-efficacy, oracy and professionalism.

Summary

This chapter has brought together data from the four focus discussion groups and six individual interviews. The chapter has been divided into six zones to enable data analysis in relation to the Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004). Additionally, the data revealed important contributing aspects of the TAP, which have influenced the identified benefits. All participants reported several learning skills that they felt had led to improved test results both at school and in subsequent tertiary study, including memorisation, critical and creative thinking; skills developed as a result of immersion in complex texts such as *Scattered Lives* (McKenzie, 2002) and *Children of the black skirt* (Betzien, 2005).

Participants reported further positive Instrumental benefits, including increased motivation and self-discipline resulting from wanting to be fully involved in the TAP

experiences. The happiness they felt during the co-curricular activities motivated them to become successful at time management to succeed in their academic pursuits while maintaining their involvement in the program. Most notably, students spoke of their confidence and self-efficacy, which they explain developed due to the many successful experiences performing in the program. Other factors in building self-efficacy included the multi-aged program, where they could look up to senior students and aspire to achieve similar success, and the safe, supportive and encouraging environment facilitated by the teaching staff who oversaw the program. Economic growth was a public instrumental benefit easily identifiable through the participants' continued training, teaching and working within the entertainment industry. Their continued patronage of the arts as regular theatregoers was another economic benefit to the public sphere. In the form of public speaking and performing, oracy was another learning skill that has benefitted individuals in their employment and continues to benefit participants in their post-school lives, skills they attribute to their TAP experience.

Intrinsic benefits of captivation and pleasure were evident in the participants joy of, and pride in performing in quality productions. They shared stories of family history being revealed and family holiday destinations being affected by the influence of specific shows. Moreover, they expressed gratitude for the chance to participate in a program which provided such a breadth of opportunities. They spoke of moments during the program that influenced their appreciation and understanding of the world. Experiences of stepping into others' shoes led to their expanded empathy, and this was a considerable benefit that participants identified as having a long-term influence on their post-school lives. Finally, participants spoke about the social bonds that had developed with their family, friends, peers, and teachers due to their involvement in the program. The involvement of the whole school community in bringing major productions to the stage

facilitated a shared experience to discuss and respond to the artwork itself. Many of these social bonds have continued into participants' post-school lives.

Three main aspects of the TAP emerged as having the most influence on participants' post-school journeys. These include the quality productions, in which they felt immense pride and took great pleasure and subsequently these emotions fuelled their intense involvement and many of their post-school destinations. Secondly, participants recognised the safe, supportive environment created by their drama and dance teachers, in which they felt free to experiment, take risks, and create, which led to their creativity and sense of self-efficacy. Finally, participants identified that the broad range of opportunities provided students with something for everyone to find success. That the range of performance styles and diversity of texts enhanced their capacity for empathy and the industry and training connections showed them the scope and pathways into the industry. The next chapter will discuss the key findings from this analysis and suggest how it contributes to existing arts education research.

Chapter Five: Findings

This chapter summarises the long-term benefits of participation in the TAP described by interview participants and how they relate to the Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004). Of note is the value of the framework in providing a tool for analysis. The field of benefits allowed me to undertake detailed and robust analysis of the interviews. Having such tools affords researchers who are interesting in understanding interrelated and overlapping aspects of learning in the arts to avoid the reductive binaries proposed by the discourse surrounding ‘art for arts’ sake’ (Greene, 2013; Heath, 2014) or ‘how arts contribute to other subject areas’ (Catterall, 2005). Rather the framework allows for analysis and discussion about instrumental and intrinsic benefits instead of ‘or’. Future researchers may wish to utilise the framework to assess its efficacy in their context. Secondly, this chapter will report on the program's aspects that participants identified as having the most influence long-term. I will then discuss the limitations and challenges of the research to suggest what further research may be valuable in this area, before identifying what this research may contribute to current literature in the field.

Consideration of the first research question: *What, if any, have been the long-term impacts on secondary students due to participation in a co-curricular theatre-arts program?* has led to the identification of specific benefits suggested by participants. The four most discussed benefits are:

- Improved Self-Efficacy (Zone 2)
- Economic Growth (Zone 3)
- Pleasure and Captivation (Zone 4)
- Expanded capacity for empathy and Cognitive growth (Zone 5)

I will now discuss each of these in turn, situating them within the Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004).

Improved Self-efficacy

Most participants reported their enhanced self-efficacy as a critical benefit from the program that continues to influence their lives post-school. They spoke about the self-belief that they took away from their positive experiences in the TAP. The supportive and encouraging environment of the TAP facilitated students risk-taking and experimenting without fear of judgement. This environment allowed them to build skills leading to successful performances and a sense of self-efficacy. Several participants also spoke about their teenage years (when they were involved in the TAP) as being emotional and a time of self-discovery and reflection, and that the TAP allowed them a safe place to express themselves, learn to appreciate their unique qualities and an escape from academic pressure. Numerous participants pointed to their self-belief in problem-solving, managing change, and improvising in high-pressure situations as benefits of their TAP involvement. Neelands (2002) confirms that "through role taking students may discover a more complex range of selfs that now includes, as the result of their role taking, a confident self, a powerful self, a risk-taking self, a compassionate self." (p. 7)

Economic Growth

Most participants drew direct connection between their experience in the TAP and their post-school pathways. Tracey, Rhiannon, Phoebe, Rebecca, and Abbey either pursued further performing arts training or worked as teachers in after-school performing arts programs or both. Others, such as Grace and Ella, pursued university, church, and amateur theatre companies' performance opportunities. Roxanne, who works as a volunteer at Nash and CPL (Choice Passion and Life) theatre companies, contributes to

the public and economic benefit of theatre within the arts industry. All participants acknowledged their continued theatregoing, to both professional and community theatre productions and thus contribute to the economy of the industry.

Personal economic growth has emerged from the participants' excellent communication skills, which have helped them in their professional lives. Participants and parents spoke at length about the ability to speak publicly and to "think and function improvisationally" (McCammon et al., 2012, p. 19). The link between drama, theatre and oracy has been the subject of research initiatives (Stinson, 2015). Rhiannon acknowledged that her ability to 'perform' and 'speak confidently' fast-tracked her promotion to a mainstage presenter at Australia zoo; Ava, who now works as a physiotherapist, reported that as a 'shy' person her confidence to speak with patients developed due to her experiences in the TAP; Tracey's career as a television host relies heavily on her oral communication skills, honed through her TAP experiences. Two parents reported that their daughters had secured employment in legal firms, due to the advantage of their theatre background. They recounted their surprise that their daughters had secured employment in law firms and that in both instances, the employer had seen their theatre background as an advantage in the legal field. Two participants had either studied law or were about to take up a law degree. The connection between the TAP participants and either study or employment in law would be an interesting research area to investigate.

Pleasure

While participants' memories of details of the program had faded, their feelings about the program and the benefits they have taken had not. Phoebe described her experience of performing in *The Sound of Music*: "...it was just so joyful. And that's what

performing should be.” Other participants spoke about the enjoyment of the whole process: “I loved it, I looked forward to rehearsals, every single rehearsal we had.” (Rhiannon). Without exception, participants reported the immense pride they felt for the quality of performance work they were a part of. They felt pride in being a part of something bigger than themselves, the ownership they felt towards creating performances and being identified as part of the cast by their school friends and acknowledged by family. These feelings were palpable in the interviews, particularly the focus discussion groups, where the participants bounced thoughts and memories off one another as Tracey exclaimed: “...catching up with you guys, I haven't seen you in how many years? It's just like, “Oh, this memory and that memory.” From both the process and the performing, the pleasure they recalled fuelled their pride and passion for the performing arts and subsequently their continued participation.

Captivation

Several of the participants shared stories of their captivation, either in the moment of creating or performing, such as Ella, who nostalgically recalled her final moments as a cast member of *A Chorus Line* (Hamlisch, Kirkwood, Bennett, Dante, & Kleban, 1975) as “just being really present in the moment” and the celebration that followed. Rhiannon recalled two critical moments where she felt awe and inspiration. Firstly, she spoke about her first TAP experience as a year eight student and the impact of the whole process and the seniors who she looked up to as being an inspirational experience. Secondly, she recalled the awe she felt in watching a fellow cast member perform a complex solo song and dance routine in *A Chorus Line* (Hamlisch, Kirkwood, Bennett, Dante, & Kleban, 1975) and how it too left a lasting impression on her. These instances speak of what McCarthy et al., (2004) refer to as captivation, where individuals can encounter a work of art with an appreciation that is much deeper and more engaging than is needed to

perform. As is documented in the literature, these feelings of captivation and pleasure are private intrinsic benefits; they are the motivation for our interaction with works of art (McCarthy et al., 2004).

Capacity for Empathy

Almost without exception, participants spoke about how their TAP experience had impacted their ability to empathise with others. In particular, participants reflected on the many varied roles they played throughout their years in the program and how the experience of playing the varied characters had influenced and nurtured their ability to empathise. Phoebe compared these experiences with the less emotive history classroom, where dates and statistics were emphasised, instead of a play where students got to embrace and inhabit a character's story and the empathy that this brought. Grace spoke about how her expanded empathy translated into her current workplace, where she worked with people from many walks of life. Others spoke of how their experience portraying characters had enabled them to manage and work with difficult people in the workplace and how it had helped inform their inclusive world view.

Cognitive Growth

A few participants provided examples where productions had left lasting impact on their understanding of their world, including Grace who learned of her father's escape from Croatia as a refugee, prompted by her performance of similar characters in *Scattered Lives*, and Rhiannon's travel destinations, inspired by her role in *The Sound of Music* that went beyond the romanticised story to include the sobering destinations of concentration camps. Phoebe made an astute observation of comparison between herself and her peers at her Sydney dance school, where so many of her peers were unable to connect with the

meaning of their movement, a quality of her own performance that Phoebe attributes to her opportunities to perform in the TAP.

Given the time elapsed between the program and the interviews, it was impressive to discover the participants could recall their teenage experiences vividly, and make explicit connections relating to how these experiences had influenced their current situations, career paths and personal attributes.

In response to the second research question: *What aspects of the theatre-arts experiences participants identified as most influential in their lives beyond school?*” the analysis of data revealed three noteworthy influential program aspects. These were:

- Quality Productions
- Teachers
- Breadth of opportunities

Each of these will be discussed in relation to the framework and literature.

Quality Productions

By far, quality productions were the aspect of the program that participants spoke about in having the most influence on them both at school and motivating them to participate and pursue similar experiences since school. McCarthy et al., (2004) confirm that for arts experiences to be considered quality they need to engage participants “emotionally, cognitively, socially” (p70). Participants’ strong recollections of the emotions that the program affected, as well as their cognitive and social development attest to the quality experience that they enjoyed and that determined a lasting influence through seeking to pursue arts experiences post-school. It is the quality of the experience that determines an individual's future participation by increasing knowledge and

competence and stimulating expectations about specific art forms (McCarthy et al., 2004). All participants expressed their feelings of pleasure and pride due to their involvement in quality productions of the TAP. They reported that their self-efficacy came in part as a result of successfully performing in large scale productions and in professional venues. They asserted that productions, facilitated in a safe and supportive learning environment allowed risk-taking and experimentation, encouraging a sense of ownership and pride.

Teachers

Passionate and committed teacher-artists are highly influential in effecting quality arts experiences (Bamford, 2006; Stinson & Burton, 2016) and critical in developing a 'safe haven' for students to experiment, take risks and build resilience (Lazarus, 2012; McCammon et al., 2012). Numerous participants spoke fondly of their drama and dance teachers and the rapport and mutual respect they felt typified the relationships. They explained this by comparing their relationship with other teachers, whom they interacted with, perhaps three hours a week, with the mentorship, support and encouragement received from their drama and dance teachers. Tracey expressed her relationship with the drama and dance teachers: "being in that program, helps to foster relationships with your teachers. Because you get to see them outside of school, in rehearsals, or on the weekends, when you're rehearsing, and stuff. And you definitely form a closer bond to [them], say, [than] your math's teacher...". The feeling of support and encouragement students felt, enabled them to take risks and inevitably contributed to their sense of self-efficacy. Roxanne recalled how she had relied on her teacher's encouragement and belief in her to take the risk of performing at City Hall in front of the whole school community and that even as she did so, her parents heard comments from other teachers that it 'surely couldn't be Roxanne', as she was known for her introverted nature.

Breadth of Opportunities

The breadth of opportunities on offer during the TAP was another critical aspect in influencing individuals post-school lives and pathways. Participants conveyed their gratitude in being able to participate in a comprehensive and quality arts program which they understood required stakeholders' support at all levels of the school (Seidel et al., 2009). Most participants acknowledged that they came to the TAP with some prior training either in dance or speech and drama but felt that the opportunity to use these skills in a meaningful way in full-scale productions across a range of theatrical styles was pivotal in their development. Text selection is considered crucial in engaging student participation and challenging their perception of the cultural status quo (McCammon et al., 2012). While the high-quality performances of which they were proud motivated their continued involvement, the breadth of opportunities also influenced post-school training and career pathways. The interstate industry and training tour was a turning point for at least two of the interview participants who acknowledged that during the tour, they were able to focus on what they wanted to do and what training they would need to achieve it. Varied opportunities contributed to their skillset and aspirations. Following attendance on tours, students were able to identify ways into the entertainment industry and a greater understanding of the breadth of employment opportunities that existed. Phoebe completed two years training at Brent Street Studios, Sydney, in the triple threat program, Roxanne applied for the Design course at NIDA and Tracey applied for the musical theatre course at VCA. Abbey, who was both a talented actor and dancer, recalled that it was on tour that she made her decision in terms of dance or drama. Arts industry connections were found to contribute to quality arts programs (Bamford, 2006).

Challenges and Limitations

The time elapsed between participants' involvement in the TAP and the research project (5 - 10 years) added some challenge to this case study. The period revealed the natural fading of memories, while feelings remained vivid and real. The use of program documents and memorabilia was helpful in jogging memories as was the inclusion of focus discussion groups. Participants recalled in great detail how the experiences made them feel and how these experiences have prepared them for life post-school. This emotional connection to their experience was a finding of McCammon et al., (2012) in their study into the life-long impact of high school speech and theatre participation, who reported that these experiences “deepened an individual’s integrated emotional and social intelligences” (p. 19). Abbey commented that the program was “... more of an emotional experience. I can definitely tell who's had a creative background compared to maybe people who haven't had that sort of upbringing...” Similarly, Tracey reflected that she was “very high in emotional intelligence and reading that between people and reading situations...” which she attributed to her extensive time training and performing in the arts. While the participants attribute a wide range of benefits due to their experience in the TAP; McCarthy et al., (2004) frequently reminds us that these benefits can be gained from other activities outside of the arts.

The pool of participants represents pro-arts students and parents, who continue to be frequent arts consumers and enthusiasts. Inclusion of other perspectives, including other drama and dance teachers, staff and school leadership, students with less participation in the TAP may have provided a fuller picture of the program and its immediate impact. However, this research focuses on long-term influence; therefore, the participants themselves are best positioned to answer the research questions.

The continued expectation for educational outcomes to fit standardised testing, privileges subjects that are most easily assessed and reported upon (Ewing, 2010). Subsequently, this has put increased pressure on arts education advocates to justify the arts in the curriculum and further marginalised the value of arts co-curricular in terms of time and resources. Furthermore, the lack of research and value placed on theatre-arts co-curricular activities is evident in the very limited research which has been undertaken in this field. Any further research into theatre-arts co-curricular programs and long-term benefits would add to this limited research area. Given the high number of schools that already engage in producing a musical or play, there is a great need for research into this field which can reveal the benefits for students and the school community. Furthermore, the trend towards outsourcing theatre-arts co-curricular activities to external companies or guest artists may in the one hand introduce new directions and benefits, particularly in social capital, however, may do so at the expense of the opportunity to 'extend the classroom' through the fluid interaction of the two environments: curriculum and co-curricular.

The private, single-sex school as the research site, and its context undoubtedly influenced the study: in particular the long history of support for the arts within the school as evidenced in its underpinning principles, of which two refer to the arts. The socio-economic background of the school community also plays a factor as students enjoyed the economic and cultural support of their families in their pursuit of dance and drama training prior to entering the TAP at secondary level. Furthermore, the all-girls environment is a factor in the success of the program, as QCAA statistics (2015) confirm that more girls than boys pursued the study of Dance and Drama as senior school subjects and a greater percentage of girls obtained Very High Achievement standards in these subjects. It could therefore be argued that the all-girls context enabled the positive

environment for the TAP to flourish. Nonetheless, there are aspects of the TAP which could be adopted by schools in lower socio economic and co-educational settings. As highlighted earlier, the program relied heavily on the quality of experience, and this included low-budgeted play productions that relied on minimal staging and costuming. Quality of text and opportunities to perform were other key factors established by research participants. Several studies into disadvantaged youth in community arts and with diverse cultural backgrounds, confirmed that participants gained many of the benefits associated with the TAP, including communication skills, opportunities to express ideas and experiment and pathways (Akrong, 2007; Catterall, 2007; Heath, 1998). Where a school community is passionate about the importance of arts education and driven to produce quality theatre experiences that provide real-life opportunities for students to be theatre makers, theatregoers, and theatre-critiques, I have no doubt that the students of such communities will reap the rewards of such a program.

Conclusion

In undertaking this research, I aimed to investigate the influences of the theatre-arts program on student participants' lives beyond school. Furthermore, to appreciate the unique contribution of individual aspects of the theatre-arts co-curricular activities that led to long-term student benefits. The theatre-arts program at this school emerged from, and worked in partnership with the Queensland Drama curriculum (QSA., 2007; QSA., 2013), with the desire to immerse students in the whole process of creating and appreciating theatre. It did indeed extend the classroom. The review of literature reflects the extensive research into the impact of drama education on school students; recent studies investigate the influence of student attendance at live theatre, and there is further research supporting the benefits of arts co-curricular activities. Specific research into the influence of theatre-arts co-curricular experiences on student participants and their lives beyond school is seldom the focus of researchers. This research has the potential to offer further understanding of the benefits of theatre-arts co-curricular experiences and may influence future program design in terms of offerings, staffing and resourcing. It contributes to the literature which reports on the long-term impact of participation in a theatre-arts program on secondary school students. It further contributes to an understanding of the most influential aspects of a program in contributing to students' post-school lives.

The review of literature illustrates that little focus or indeed, credence is given to the influence of the theatre-arts co-curricular activities on students' long-term and that these activities continue to be sidelined in much of the research. While both the arts classroom and theatre-arts co-curricular experiences allow students to experiment, fail,

take risks and ultimately succeed, there is a difference. Abbey identified this well when she explained:

It was also like, yes you could explore in the classroom, but you would, you'd have to show what you've made to a large audience. It was growing that, what's the word, courage? Confidence? Yeah. Cause you know, you invite all your friends to come watch the play or the musical or dance troupe...

The different benefits and constraints of curriculum arts education and co-curricular theatre-arts activities were clear for participants. Success in a co-curricular production is achieved under the pressure of an immovable deadline (Heath, 1998) and requires extensive teamwork across a broad section of the community, trust and vision. It provides an authentic experience, witnessed and 'judged' by an authentic audience. It leaves a lasting impact on all who participate. Tracey summed up: "They are memories you'll have for a lifetime. They teach you so many incredible life skills, you get so much out of it." This case study shows the benefits for individuals and the broader community of participation in a comprehensive theatre-arts program that extends the curriculum. The Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts (McCarthy et al., 2004) proved invaluable in providing a structure for the analysis of the interview data.

What does it matter if there is or is not any long-term influence on young people's lives as a result of their theatre-arts experiences? In the aftermath of another world-shattering event, 9/11, Jonathan Neelands (2002) reminded us that "in times of crisis we turn to art as a necessary response" (p. 5) and asserts the need for developing 'humanising curriculum' which enables our students to be creative, empathetic, tolerant and compassionate individuals in the face of crisis and change. 2020 challenged us and brought changes on multiple levels of our existence. Viewing the research through this

lens gives weight and value to the voices of students' experiences and urgency to the need for programs that allow students to participate in quality theatre-arts programs.

This study suggests that, as a result of engagement in an intensive and high-quality theatre arts program, all the participants gained long-term benefits including pleasure and pride, improved self-efficacy, expanded capacity for empathy, enhanced oracy, willingness to experiment and take risks. It further suggests long-term habits of theatre attendance and pursuit of creative pathways were benefits accruing from participation in the TAP.

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Appendix A – Focus Group – Discussion Points

Focus Group Discussion Points

What do you remember about the theatre-arts co-curricular activities at school?

What were the key things that you learnt from your experiences in the theatre-arts program?

What single theatre co-curricular experience stands out in your memory? Why?

Have any of these experiences had any lasting influence on your life? How?

Have you experienced anything similar since school?

Considering all parts of the program, what did you enjoy and what didn't you enjoy?

Would you encourage others to participate in co-curricular theatre-arts programs?

Why/why not?

Parent Focus Group Discussion Points.

Do you think your daughter's involvement in the theatre-arts co-curricular program had any influence on her life beyond school? (educationally, emotionally, socially or philosophically?)

Where do you see the influence, if any, in her life today?

Do you consider it to be a positive or negative influence? And why?

What aspects of the program do you think have contributed to the ongoing influence?

What do you see the value of a theatre-arts program to be during secondary school and post-school?

Appendix B – Individual Interview Discussion Points

1. Did your involvement in the TAP influence your social interaction/relationships with peers/friends/teachers/school community/family and has this had any long-term impact on your life? If so, in what way?
2. Did your involvement in the TAP have any impact on your academic development, either at school or since? If so, in what way.
3. Did your involvement in the TAP have any impact on how you saw yourself in your teens, and if so, has that continued to influence your self-perception since? If so, how?
4. Has your involvement in the TAP creative processes and productions, influenced you to pursue a creative outlet in your life since? If so in what way?
5. As a *performer* in the TAP, required to analyse, interpret and portray characters from unfamiliar contexts, has this influenced your understanding of the world and your place in it? If so, in what ways?
6. Is there anything you learned during your experience in the TAP that you don't think you could have learnt anywhere else? If so, what was that? Where do you see this influencing your current life?

Appendix C – Participant information

Table 3

Participant program, education and employment details

Name	Year	Productions/ Tour year	Education	Employment
Tracey Smith	2011	Tour: 2011 The Wiz Wendy's Dream A Chorus Line As You Like It Dance troupe	Bachelor of Mass communications QUT	Television Host: Network 10
Ella Danes	2011	Tour: 2011 A Chorus Line As You Like It	Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Journalism (Drama and English Literature) UQ Diploma of Musical Theatre	Ballroom Dance Instructor Lecturer in Contemporary Dance Performer, director, choreographer: local & overseas
Rebecca Jones	2012	Tour: 2011 A Chorus Line As You Like It Sound of Music Children of the black skirt	Bachelor of Law: deferred Bachelor of Drama QUT Harvest Rain Musical Theatre (Cert IV) Qld Conservatorium Classical Voice Trinity College: ATCL	Group Drama Teacher (8 years) Speech and Communication Teacher (2 years). Speak Up Studio - Performance Coordinator (2 years)
Rhiannon Hart	2012	Tour: 2011 The Wiz A Chorus Line As You Like It Sound of Music Living with Lady Macbeth Children of the black skirt Dance Troupe	Bachelor of Science (Zoology), UQ.	Presenter at Australia Zoo Wildlife Warriors shows Animal keeper David Copperfield's private island Dog trainer working with many high-end reactivity cases
Phoebe Brown	2012	Tour: 2011 The Wiz Wendy's Dream A chorus Line As You Like It Sound of Music Children of the black skirt Dance Troupe	Brent Street Performing Arts School (triple threat full time program 2014-2015). Current: Bachelor of Interior design QUT	Dance teaching at private studios in Sydney and Brisbane. Freelance performer: singer, dancer, actor

Name	Year	Productions/ Tour year	Education	Employment
Roxanne Gardner	2013	Tour: 2013 Birdcage The BFG	Bachelor of Primary Education (QUT)	Disney World: international college program Volunteer at theatre companies. Currently teaching at a rural school in QLD. Including music and drama
Ava Miller	2014	Tour: 2013 As You Like It Sound of Music The BFG Thoroughly Modern Millie Scattered Lives	Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Honours) at ACU from 2015-2018	Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) Leader 2016 at ACU. Facilitated peer-led group study sessions Practice Coordinator Physiotherapy and Pilates private practice 2017-2018. New Graduate Physiotherapy Program at the RBWH (2019-present)
Abbey Young	2014	Tour: 2013 Productions: As You Like It BFG Thoroughly Modern Millie Scattered Lives Dance Troupe	Bachelor of Creative Arts (Theatre) with a major in Acting USQ Current: Bachelor of Laws (Honours) QUT	Feature Film with USQ; Short Films; Web Series with QUT; Plays; Brisbane Sci-Fi Theatre Festival, World Science Festival, CRE8 Festival, LIT Festival: Stories in the Light Advertising/promotional videos Brisbane Family Law Centre
Grace Thomson	2015	Tour: 2015 Wind in the Willows The BFG Thoroughly Modern Millie Scattered Lives	Bachelor of criminology and criminal justice at Griffith	Administrative Appeals Tribunal Youth Work Intern at New Heart Baptist Church

Table 4*Parent involvement details*

Name	Years as parent at school	Number of Children in program	Involvement in TAP
Trixie White	15 years	2 daughters	I volunteered in food preparation (for lunches, after events etc), made costumes, applied makeup and painted scenery, and sold tickets.
Eilish Day	12 Years	1 daughter	<p>Involved in set making, costume support, rehearsal lunches and a committee member</p> <p>As a primary school teacher, I organised a class trip for my year one students to see the BFG production. This gave my class the chance to see a story come to life and enjoy live theatre. My class were able to meet some of the young actors at the end of the show and ask lots of questions. This was a wonderful event for me both as a Teacher and parent.</p> <p>I also called the lighting and sound for Scattered Lives at Brisbane Drama festival.</p>
Michelle Evans	9 years	2 daughters	Member of Performing Arts Support Group (PASG), lunch helper, costumer helper, set painter.

Appendix D – Informed Consent Form



GU ref no:

Research: Extending the classroom:

Investigating the influence of a co-curricular theatre-arts program on secondary school participants.

CONSENT FORM

Research Team	Supervisor:	Associate Professor Madonna Stinson
	Supervisor:	Dr Ben Williams
	HDR Candidate:	Kelly Redhead-Adelt
	School:	Education and Professional Studies
	Contact Phone:	(07) 3735 4375
	Contact Email:	m.stinson@griffith.edu.au

Who is conducting the research? Researchers from the School of Education and Professional Studies led by Associate Professor Madonna Stinson and Dr Benjamin Williams.

Why is the research being conducted? The focus of the research is to reflect on the impact, if any of a co-curricular theatre-arts program on student participants.

Who is participating? Past students of the program from the graduating years 2010 – 2015

How will you be involved? You will be invited to view memorabilia relating to the years of your involvement in the program. You may wish to bring your own memorabilia to discuss. Subsequently you will be asked to respond initially in a focus discussion group of approximately 60 minutes with other past students or parents. You may subsequently be invited to respond in a one-on-one interview of approximately 30 – 45 minutes with the researcher following a list of discussion points pertaining to the program and the individual's participation. Interviews will be recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis. The interviews will occur at Griffith university.

The expected benefits of the research: This research is intended to contribute to the body of research into arts education through its examination of a co-curricular theatre-arts program. It has the potential to influence future design and delivery of theatre-arts programs.

Risks to you: There are no foreseeable risks related to participation in the study.

Your confidentiality: All data identifying you will only be available to the research team. In any reports that the research team creates, your name will not be used.

Participation is voluntary

Questions / further information on this Research project please contact:

Kelly Redhead-Adelt, HDR candidate 0423152462

The ethical conduct of this research: Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If potential participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project, they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you: Participants will be provided with a plain language summary of the final research report at the conclusion of the project. To access this report, participants need to email the researcher.

Privacy Statement – nondisclosure

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375.

Research Leader: Associate Professor Madonna Stinson

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include in participating in an audio recorded short interview/discussion about my experience and participation as a secondary student, specifically with relation to One-Act Plays, Children's Theatre and Musicals and Dance and Drama Tour
- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that my name and other personal information that could identify me will be removed or de-identified in publications or presentations resulting from this research;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Name	
Signature	
Date	