

## **Supporting novice teachers of the arts**

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## Supporting Novice Teachers of the Arts

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### Abstract

This paper examines and reports on beginning generalist teacher self-efficacy, which Bandura (1997) suggests plays an important part in student outcomes. In 2008, 201 beginning generalist teachers throughout the state of Queensland, Australia, participated in a study that aimed to provide a snapshot of current perceptions towards support in schools for the arts. Beginning teachers were asked to rank their school support for a number of different subjects in the school curriculum and provide written justification for these rankings. Results suggest that beginning teachers perceived a general lack of support for the teaching of the arts in their classroom, compared to English and maths. They reported that schools provided greater financial support, assistance and professional development for the teaching of literacy and numeracy with a view to increase school performance in national testing. Findings provide key insights for school administrators and policy makers for the adequate delivery of arts education in Queensland schools, particularly when this task falls to generalist teachers with little or no subject expertise in the arts.

## Introduction

Arts education is an essential component of a comprehensive education, requiring highly skilled teachers to achieve quality arts education (Andrews, 2004). Teachers are expected to gain such skills in pre-service teacher education, to enhance their confidence and capability in teaching the Arts. Teachers must understand the instructional purpose, feel confident in their skills and recognize the benefits to effectively teach the arts in their classrooms (Hord, Rutherford, Hurling-Austin & Hall, 1998; Upitis & Smithrim, 2003).

This paper examines and reports on beginning teacher self-efficacy, which Bandura (1997) suggests plays an important part in student outcomes. Findings from this study provide a snapshot of current perceptions towards beginning teacher self-efficacy in schools and the support beginning teachers receive for the teaching of the Arts. Findings also provide key insights for school administrators and policy makers for the adequate delivery of arts education in Queensland schools, particularly when the task falls to generalist teachers.

## Arts Education

In Queensland, Australia, The Arts is a compulsory learning area in the curriculum (Essential Learnings, 2007), often taught by generalist teachers in primary schools. It is comprised of four areas of application: dance, drama, music, media and visual art. Music in particular is often taught by a specialist teacher. In the National Review of School Music Education (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005, p.135) submission from the Director General of Queensland Department of Education and the Arts, “it was noted that all primary schools in Queensland participate in mandatory primary music programs (usually delivered by a specialist music teacher).”

Teachers find their responsibilities for teaching the arts in the *Arts Learning Statements* as part of the *Queensland, Curriculum, Assessment and Reports (QCAR)* framework (2007). Arts outcomes have been defined from years 1-10 to provide increased consistency of what is taught across Queensland classrooms in each of the strands. The following hours are recommended for delivery of the arts in schools (QCAR, 2005):

- Year 1-3: 300 hours across the three years;
- Year 4-7: 400 hours across the four years; and
- Year 8-10: 180 hours across the three years.

Based on a 40-week school year, this equates to 2.5 hours per week in years 1-7, and 1.5 hours per week in years 8-10. The National Review of Visual Education (2008, p.98) provided a grim reality for each of the arts areas under this time recommendation:

[I]f one assumes the four main arts disciplines are accorded equal time, that would

equate to 35.7 minutes per week in Queensland for visual arts. If media were to be included in the arts area, the number would further be reduced

In 2005, the *National Review of School Music Education* (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005) raised a number of questions in relation to the teaching of music and the arts in schools by generalist teachers and again in 2008, the *National Review of Visual Education* (Australian Government, 2008) raised similar questions in regard to visual arts teaching by generalist teachers. In 2009, the *National Audit of Music Discipline and Music Education Mandatory Content Within Pre-Service Generalist Primary Teacher Education Courses: A Report* (Hocking, 2009) was commissioned for the Music Council of Australia. The report found that the incorporation of music into creative arts has resulted in less time and scope for music studies. This applies in teacher training programs, in the curricula, in national and local goals for education, and in accreditation requirements investigated. In the survey of 28 universities, on average, 41.75 hours are devoted to creative arts subjects, with only 16.99 hours given to the study of music in the surveyed teacher training programs (Hocking, 2009, p.5). Furthermore, the report (2009, p.4) found that:

There is no musical competency specified by teacher accreditation authorities for generalist primary teachers. Rather, as with all disciplines and subjects, there is a general expectation that ‘teachers need to know their content’. This is not tested: it is presumed that teachers who study approved teacher training programs will fulfil this minimum requirement.

Findings suggest most programs offered very few hours of music instruction with little opportunity for content knowledge and skills in music to be learned. In these universities however, pre-service teachers are eligible for teacher accreditation, and subsequently eligible for employment as a teacher. The report suggests the problem requires National intervention, with National Statements about minimum requirements for time spent on music, both in teacher training programs and in schools, as well as activities to be covered, need to be specified in the accreditation of arts subjects (Hocking, 2009). While generalist teachers are expected to teach music, they have not been trained sufficiently to do so. The report also recommends that early-career generalist primary teachers need to be supported through additional resources, including online resources, and workshops to build upon their nominal elementary music training (Hocking, 2009).

Teacher education in Queensland is governed by the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), and regulated by the *Program Approval Guidelines for Pre-Service Teacher Education* (2007). The Queensland College of Teachers responsibilities are “to develop and apply professional standards for entry to, and ongoing membership of, the teaching profession; and

approve and monitor pre-service teacher education programs for provisional registration” (QCT, 2007, p.4). The *Approval Guidelines* (2007, p.4) are stated to have been informed by current national and international research, “including a number of recent studies that focus on teacher quality, the changing nature of teachers’ work and the new demands being placed on teachers by students, their families and the broader society”. Little is known about what research was consulted and why it was chosen as an example of excellence. It is assumed that pre-service teachers exit teacher training with adequate arts content knowledge and skills.

The guidelines provide directions for teacher education courses in primary and middle years of schooling. For a primary teacher education program to be approved, universities should ensure “teachers are well-prepared to teach the English and mathematics key learning areas and are able to teach across the key learning areas of SOSE<sup>1</sup>, Science, Technology, the Arts and Physical Education, and have at least an awareness of the LOTE<sup>2</sup> key learning area” (QCT, 2007, p.20). Within the Middle Phase of Learning, teacher education programs must produce graduates who “should have the ability to teach in all key learning areas and it is desirable that they have in-depth knowledge of at least two subjects areas” (QCT, 2007, p.20). Little has been explained about the appropriate level of Arts education needed in teacher education programs.

Beginning teachers in Australia do not appear to have adequate content knowledge to teach the Arts. As Paris (2006, p.29) notes, “beginning Visual Arts education teachers are increasingly struggling to navigate the issues associated with significant deficits in their subject specific content knowledge bases.” Grauer (1999, p.19) highlights the tension with content knowledge further by contending:

The underlying premise is that teacher education in art should be more than the training of specific skills and knowledge. It is not enough for teachers to be capable of replicating their own education in art, or even of promoting the status quo in schools...One of the first challenges facing teachers is the transformation of their disciplinary knowledge into a form of knowledge that is appropriate for the students they are teaching...The key to pedagogical content is for the teachers to be able to represent subject matter knowledge to students in a way that they can understand.

Arts courses in teacher education in Queensland do not appear to be common. Table 1 presents data on Arts teacher education gathered from Queensland university websites (see

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<sup>1</sup> Study of Society and Environment

<sup>2</sup> Language Other Than English

appendix). It appears not all courses offer Arts training as part of teacher education. This appears most relevant in the Graduate Diploma Degrees, completed in one full year of study. Those Arts courses that were offered consisted of only one semester of training or were integrated with other key learning areas during that semester. The Arts were integrated with technology, Studies of Society and Environment, and Health and Physical Education. The lack of Arts education in Queensland teacher education highlights that recommendations from the *National Review of School Music Education* (Department of Education Science and Training, 2005) have not been implemented. All university courses however have fulfilled registration requirements by the Queensland College of Teachers, acknowledging that the teacher education program has passed *Program Approval Guidelines*.

Problems also arise regarding the content within Arts courses. Most decisions regarding the content of specialised courses for pre-service primary generalist teachers is based on the professional wisdom of lecturers (Jeanneret et al., 2006). Many of these opinions are focused on what the discipline believes classroom teachers should know and use, rather than what knowledge and skills classroom teachers will need (DeGraffenreid, Kretchmar, Jeanneret & Morita, 2004; Jeanneret, 1997). Without a standardised content across universities, pre-service teachers are exposed to different levels of training in the Arts. In regard to Arts education, Jeanneret et al. (2006, p.79) notes that:

Although [students] may have demonstrated an understanding of theories presented at university, they frequently ignore much of this knowledge and ‘teach as they were taught’ once in the autonomy of their own classrooms, or, in the case of the Arts, not at all if they can avoid it.

This suggests that beginning teachers, even though they may have skills to teach Arts education, because of a lack of self-belief towards the teaching task of the Arts, they avoid it in their teaching altogether. Making self-efficacy judgments therefore requires consideration of the teaching task and context where one’s strengths and weaknesses are assessed.

What is known is that the responsibility of the generalist teacher to engage with artistic practice is dependent on their own beliefs about the arts (Kane, 2008; Oreck, 2001). This points to the need to better understand teacher self-efficacy beliefs as they are therefore an important predictor of arts education teaching.

Table 1. *Arts teacher education courses in QLD*

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Arts Subjects Covered</b>
Bachelor of Education (Primary)	4 years	University of Queensland	1 introductory Arts course (1 <sup>st</sup> year); integrated Arts and technology course (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Bachelor of Education (Middle Years of Schooling)	4 years	University of Queensland	1 introductory Arts course (1 <sup>st</sup> year); integrated Arts and technology course (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
Bachelor of Education (Primary)	4 years	Queensland University of Technology	1 course on teaching Dance and Drama, 1 course on teaching Music, Visual Arts and Media
Graduate Diploma (middle years)	1 year	Queensland University of Technology	1 course on integrated Arts and SOSE
Bachelor of Education (Primary)	4 years	University of Southern Queensland	1 course on the Arts Curriculum and Pedagogy
Graduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching	1 year	University of Southern Queensland	No Arts courses during entire degree
Graduate Diploma in Education (primary)	1 year	University of the Sunshine Coast	No Arts courses during entire degree
Graduate Diploma Education (middle years)	1 year	University of the Sunshine Coast	No Arts courses during entire degree
Bachelor of Education (Primary)	4 years	University of Sunshine Coast	No Arts course during entire degree
Bachelor of Education (Primary)	4 years	James Cook University	1 course on Arts education for Primary School
Bachelor of Education (Middle Years)	4 years	James Cook University	1 course on Arts education for Primary School
Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary)	1 year	James Cook University	All key learning areas taught together over two courses
Graduate Diploma in Education (Years 1-9)	1 year	James Cook University	1 course consisting of Arts, Health and Physical Education and Technology
Bachelor of Learning Management (Primary)	4 years	Central Queensland University	1 course on the Arts

### **Teacher Self-Efficacy**

What is teacher self-efficacy? Efficacy is a motivating belief that a person can act in a way that changes the environment and achieve positive outcomes. Teacher self-efficacy is a teacher's belief in his or her ability to affect change in students' learning outcomes. It is based on the theory of social cognition that argues that individuals are agents in their own actions (Bandura, 1997). Yet, as Bartel, Cameron, Wiggins and Wiggins (2004) argue, confidence alone is meaningless according to self-efficacy theory unless it is accompanied by competence (Bandura, 1977; 1986; 1997).

Hence, efficacy plays an important role in teacher practice and how it relates to student outcomes. It is accepted that confidence, motivation and self-knowledge inform a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs system. These beliefs operate as a key factor in a generative system of human competence (Bandura, 1997), leading to the assumption that they are powerful influences on the overall teachers' effectiveness with students. Being high in self-efficacy means that teachers make a judgement that they can perform a task or solve a problem and that they are confident that they have the knowledge and skills to plan and implement a course of action. They can carry out the action in practice, it may have an effect, but its effectiveness may not be measured or otherwise established. On the other hand, being low in self-efficacy means that teachers are passive, think their action will make no difference to student outcomes, and believe that change is an impossible goal. Research on practice confirms whether practices are effective or not and motivates teachers to action.

Moreover, teachers' beliefs in their efficacy "affect their general orientation toward the educational process as well as their specific instructional activities" (Bandura, 1997, p.241). Teachers who do not expect to be successful with certain students are less likely to put forth effort into planning and teaching, even if they know of strategies that could help students. Teacher self-efficacy is still forming in the beginning years of teaching and - according to theory - once developed, is resistant to change (Bandura, 1997). During this beginning phase, teachers create their own self-knowledge through their efficacy beliefs as they reflect on teaching in the arts. Subsequently, efficacy beliefs determine how environmental opportunities and impediments are perceived (Bandura, 2006). Novice teachers therefore set goals, anticipate outcomes and monitor their actions as they reflect on their personal efficacy when teaching the arts. Thus, the developmental self-efficacy beliefs of beginning teachers are important for investigation for recognition of confirming and disconfirming experiences that shape this motivational construct.

There are four sources of efficacy that inform teacher self-beliefs. These are: mastery experience; verbal persuasion; vicarious experiences; and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1997). Successful mastery experience of a task can strengthen teacher self-efficacy. Alternatively, an



unsuccessful mastery experience of a task could weaken teacher self-efficacy. Verbal persuasion is associated feedback from undertaking a teaching task. It may include words of praise from colleagues or assistance and advice for future action of the task. Vicarious experience is the associated modeling of the task. For example, a teacher may watch another teacher complete a successful lesson. From this experience of observation, the teacher may then feel more positive about trying a similar lesson in their own classroom. Finally, emotional arousal are the emotions associated with lived experienced. For some people, the emotional arousal around a previous unsuccessful task could be too great to even try the task again for fear of further failure.

Beliefs may be based on support structures that exist within the school including collegial support, administrative support, suitable resources and access to professional learning, all of which contribute to the development of school culture and collective efficacy. Ashton and Webb (1986) indicate that teachers who feel unsupported in the teaching of the arts and music have lower perceptions of self-efficacy in teaching in these areas. As a result of the potential influence on teachers' perceptions of their capability to teach these areas, further research into the support structures available to teachers for the teaching of music and the arts is necessary.

Teacher self-efficacy is influenced by past experiences. Jeanneret et al. (2006, p.79) observe that "many pre-service primary teachers have had negative prior experience with the Arts and that... 'unpacking baggage' brought with the students is almost as important in some cases as acquiring knowledge and skills associated with the discipline". These past experiences have an impact on teacher self-efficacy. Affective states caused by emotional arousal may create negative beliefs for beginning teachers. For example, an individual with previous personal failure may create high emotional arousal, leading to fear provoking thoughts that far exceed what would actually occur if the individual attempted the feared task (Tosun, 2000). High emotional arousal may also be created by observing failure in a similar situation or from negative verbal persuasion. Science teacher self-efficacy research has found that beginning teachers who lacked confidence in teaching science, deemphasized or avoided teaching science all together for fear of failure (Tosun, 2000). This suggests that the emotions attached with certain subject domains relay fear provoking thoughts to the cognitive processing for self-efficacy, creating patterns of avoidance behaviour. The problem of emotional arousal as a negative source for efficacy in science teacher education may also be present in Arts education, explaining patterns of avoidance behaviour. However, without clear evidence of when or how these affective states are created and impact upon self-efficacy development, it is impossible to provide suitable support structures necessary to develop self-efficacy.

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards instructing in the fields of music and the arts are influenced by the culture within their schools, and the beliefs about collective efficacy that are

created within that culture. Notions of collective efficacy refer to the beliefs about the ability of a group (or school) to bring about desired outcomes based on their perceived capabilities to successfully perform tasks. Beliefs of collective efficacy in schooling are shaped by the support structures available to teachers to effectively pursuing the task of teaching.

If there is history of academic failure in a school, low collective efficacy among staff may be evident, resulting in lower effort and levels of persistence by the teacher (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Moreover, Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2007) suggest that it may create a demoralizing cycle of failure. In this cycle, low levels of collective efficacy among teachers may contribute to lower student achievement, which, in turn may lead to further declines in teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy.

Alternatively, if a school has high levels of perceived collective efficacy, staff members have higher levels of teacher self-efficacy beliefs (Goddard & Goddard, 2001) and there is subsequent higher student achievement (Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Bandura (1997) suggests that as academic achievement is improved, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs increased. The increased self-efficacy beliefs lead to further enhancements in student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic status of the students. Drawing on Bandura's assumption, the effects of supportive structures on increasing collective efficacy leading to increased teacher self-efficacy are crucial to improving levels of student achievement.

School culture may place greater value on some subjects than others. The relatively low status of music and arts education in comparison to subjects such as mathematics, language and science in some schools may also contribute to negative teacher beliefs of their individual and collective efficacy. Eisner (1989) suggests that, in many countries, arts education is considered peripheral to the real mission of the school, namely, to prepare children for the world of work. This notion seems to reflect the role of music and arts education as a method to enrich education, as opposed to an integral part of education, leading to career and life opportunities. Oreck (2001) agrees, suggesting a generalist teacher may feel that participating in arts education is enjoyable and holds social and cognitive benefits for students, yet be unconvinced that the learning of the arts is a judicious use of teaching time.

A theoretical understanding of the development of beginning teacher self-efficacy within different contexts is necessary to provide a greater understanding of the suitable sources of efficacy necessary to sustain and develop self-efficacy and negate the effect of negative contributors. While research has provided segregated views of beginning teacher self-efficacy by exploring the impact of different sources, a view that encompasses the development of efficacy through all sources is needed.

### **Focus of this Study**

This study focused on two questions relating to the way beginning generalist teachers perceive support structures in their school, and hence impacting on their self-efficacy, which has been explained is likely to be the ongoing level of efficacy they attach to the teaching of music and the arts, beyond their status as a beginning teacher. It was expected that findings would provide insights of the current support structures given for music and arts education in Queensland schools, influencing teacher's beliefs about their ability to teach the arts within their classroom, ultimately impacting on the learning experiences of students. For this study, 'beginning generalist teachers' were defined as those within three years of commencement of work as a generalist teacher.

The questions are:

1. What are current levels of teacher self-efficacy for each of the arts subjects compared to maths and English?
2. How do beginning teachers rate support for the teaching of music, dance, drama, visual arts, media and English and what factors shape these ratings?

### **Method**

In 2008, questionnaires were administered to beginning generalist teachers throughout the state of Queensland Australia, to create a snapshot of their perceptions towards support in schools for the arts. Respondents were recruited by advertising in professional teacher organizations, at schools and at beginning teacher conferences. An information letter was provided to potential participants. If a beginning generalist teacher expressed an interest in participating, they were provided with contact details of the research team and encouraged to contact them by email. The questionnaire was then sent directly to the participant.

Participants were advised that upon return, all questionnaires would immediately be de-identified, with no distinguishing features left of person, place or context. Two hundred and one beginning teachers responded, with an almost 100% response rate. The questionnaire incorporated an adapted version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), adding the context of arts education. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale consistently produces high ratings for reliability. When the scale was first tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha, it was reported high at 0.94 (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Since then, similar studies have reported reliabilities between 0.92 and 0.95 (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). The scale consists of 24 items ranked on a 9 point Likert scale, and is based on Bandura's instructional scale for teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; 2006).

Questions related to school support made up a sub-section of the questionnaire. Using a 5 point Likert scale (1= very low, 5 = very high), respondents were asked to rate their perceived school support for music, dance, drama, media, visual arts, English and maths. In the open-ended question that followed, beginning teachers were asked to comment on why they had provided that rating for those particular subjects. Open-ended questions were analysed using content analysis to show key themes that emerged. Content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18). It is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts and in some cases to determine the relative frequency of the responses, according to categories developed by the researcher.

### **Demographics**

The respondents were 201 beginning generalist teachers in grades 4-9 throughout Queensland. They were aged between 21 and 52 years. 34.8% of the sample were male and 65.2% were female. Beginning teachers were located in government (46.8%) and independent schools (53.2%); and in terms of locality, 31.8% were in the city limits, with 49.8% suburban and 18.4% in rural area. Schools classed as independent could be primary, middle school, secondary or a combination of all three stages of schooling in a Preschool – Year 12 school. All respondents, as beginning generalist teachers, were within their first three years of teaching since graduation from a teacher education institution.

Generalist teachers reported some specialist teachers in their schools. 80% of beginning generalist teachers reported a music specialist teacher, 1.5% reported a dance specialist teacher, 0.5% reported a drama specialist teacher, 1% reported a media specialist teacher and 16.5% reported a visual arts specialist teacher in their school

### **Results**

Teacher self-efficacy scales were collected for each of the arts (music, dance, drama, media, visual arts), maths and English. Overall, self efficacy scores for music were the lowest at 3.44, while maths (7.02) and English (7.06) were reportedly the highest for teacher self-efficacy. Alpha reliabilities for each of the scales were above 0.96, making this a valid response. Results are presented in Figure 1.

Beginning teachers were asked to rate the level of support given to each of the subjects within the school. Overall, English and maths were rated as receiving the highest support compared to all of the arts subjects.

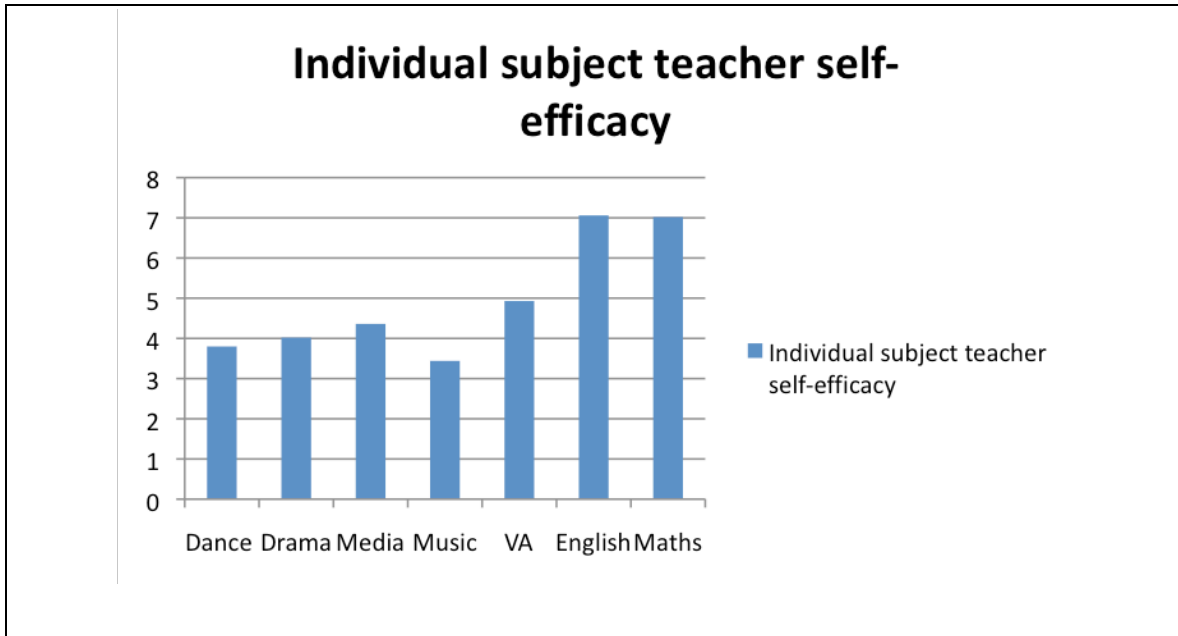


Figure 1: Comparison of Means in Beginning Teacher Self-Efficacy for Individual Scales

The mean responses for individual subjects were also compared to provide a greater discrimination of the difference in the levels of support for various subjects as perceived by respondents. On a five point scale with 5= very high, English (4.20) was rated as having the highest level of support, followed by maths (4.15), visual arts (2.47), media (2.25), music (2.25), drama (2.11) and dance (2.05). Results of the means are presented in Figure 2.

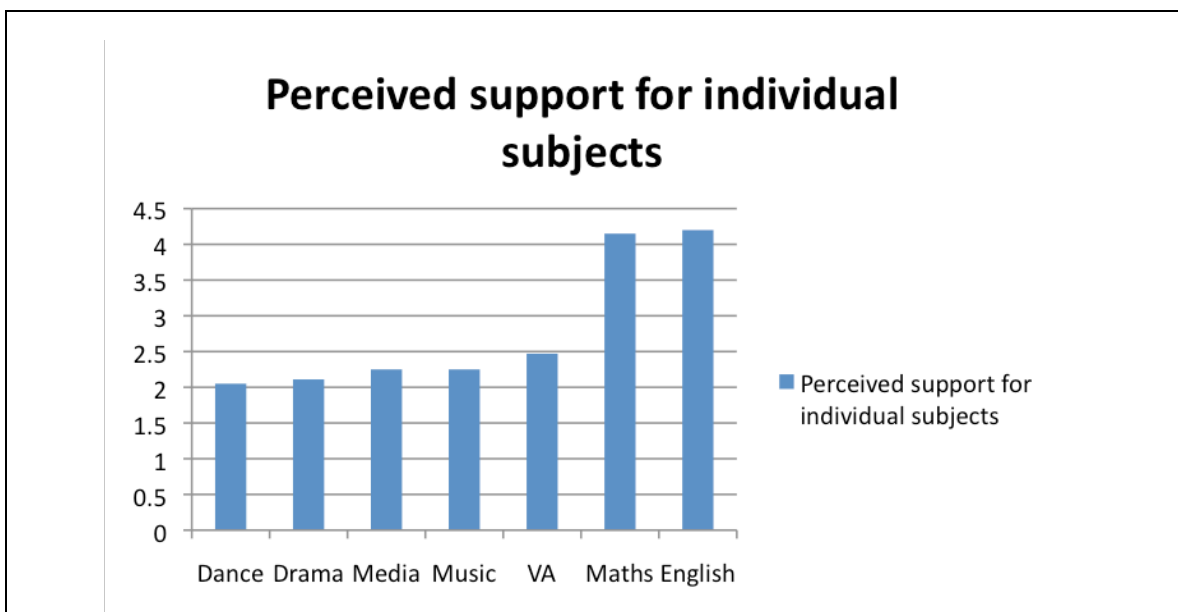


Figure 2: Comparison of Means in Perceived Support for Individual Subjects

To gain a better understanding of why beginning teachers perceived subject support in the reported ways, they were asked to comment on their individual subject ratings. Five main categories of responses, generated from content analysis, emerged from the teacher responses. These are: limited support (42%); colleagues (20%); resources (19%); specialist teachers (14%); and other ideas (5%). These are represented in Figure 3.

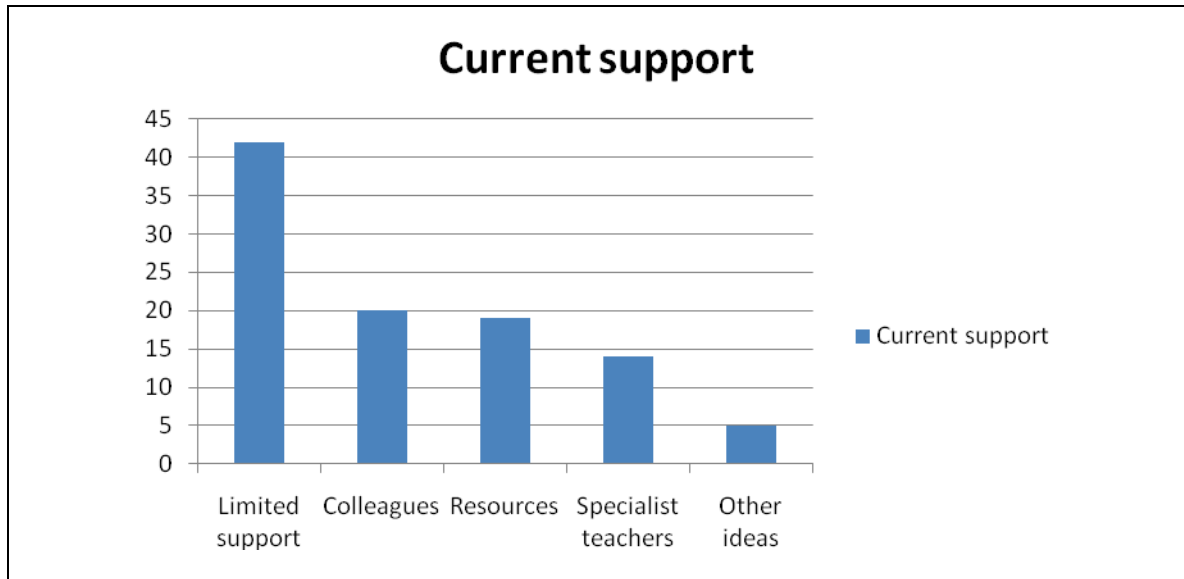


Figure 3: Current Support for Subject Rating

Each of these categories is discussed in the following sections, with textual examples provided to add respondent's voices to the findings.

### ***Limited Support***

Respondents described receiving no or limited support when teaching any of the arts subjects. They commented that the arts did not receive support or encouragement from within the school or from administrative staff. The majority of respondents reported that this was because the arts were undervalued at their school and they were competing with literacy and numeracy for support. By way of example, the following quotes reveal the challenges of being expected to prepare school productions, with little support:

*The principal encourages me to have a school play every year. However, I am on my own when it comes to putting it on and enlisting other teachers to help. On occasion I am asked to put on skits etc for school events however these don't always fit with the student's work and invariably requires me to give up my outside school time for rehearsals (Beginning Teacher, 21).*

*The school does support musicals and performances provided they do not interfere with other key learning areas (Beginning Teacher, 42)*

One beginning teacher summarised the problem as a matter of school priority, with the problem being common to most schools, as reflected in the following statement:

*Arts in general do not take priority in most schools (Beginning Teacher, 75).*

The idea of priority was also discussed by other beginning teachers who suggested the arts are in competition with maths and English. English and maths were used interchangeably by teachers with literacy and numeracy. Some beginning teachers perceived them as the same area of study. Teachers felt that because of the annual national standardised testing in literacy and numeracy for grades 3, 5, 7 and 9, they were afforded greater focus in order to improve school public results. For example:

*The school is spending more money on improving national test scores (Beginning Teacher, 157).*

*Greater focus towards doing well in maths and English (Beginning Teacher, 170).*

To assist beginning teachers to increase their skills in teaching the arts, some of the respondents reported that they had asked for arts education professional development (PD), but that frequently these requests were denied. The following quotes are examples of this being reported:

*No allowance for PD (several requests denied!) (Beginning Teacher, 8).*

*Most current teachers have had little in-service in the Arts area- they can only choose one professional development day per year and have opted for other choices (Beginning Teacher, 109).*

*There is little or no support for PD, you just have to teach yourself (Beginning Teacher, 5)*

Only two beginning teachers out of the entire sample (N=201) reported they had undertaken professional development in the Arts. These teachers admitted they were 'lucky' because their school valued the arts.

A large number of respondents also noted having limited or no access to resources for the arts. This was considered a major problem when trying to teach the arts, especially in the area of visual arts. Their comments included:

*There is a little support for extra curricula events such as shows but it is a struggle with support and resources (Beginning Teacher, 39).*

*I have not come across any formal support in the Arts areas at this school (Beginning Teacher, 61).*

*There is limited funding to purchase equipment (Beginning Teacher, 113).*

With limited support for resources, denial of the opportunity to participate in professional development in the arts, little support from within the school and competition for curriculum time against instruction focused on the national standardised testing for literacy and numeracy, many of the respondents felt it difficult to even begin considering teaching the arts in the classroom. All of these factors contribute to negative beliefs about the school's collective efficacy in teaching the arts, and may lead to lower teacher self-efficacy for the arts.

### **Colleagues**

One of the support mechanisms respondents discussed was advice, discussion and support from colleagues. Respondents in this study reported that they valued advice from other experienced teachers, which contributed to the sharing of resources, ideas, units of work and teaching strategies, as reflected in the following excerpts:

*Mostly support from more experienced teachers, as in they will guide you as to how to do certain tasks. There is also a bit of sharing of resources e.g. examples of artwork across groups (Beginning Teacher, 36).*

*I have been fortunate in that I have worked with people who are both very skilled and very passionate about arts education. This has helped me gain skills and knowledge to assist me to better teach the arts to my students (Beginning Teacher, 45).*

The respondent beginning teachers also talked about receiving support from other colleagues outside of the arts field, such as the school librarians and teacher aides, as noted in the following textual examples:



*The people in the library are very helpful when looking for resources for the arts (Beginning Teacher, 56)*

*Teacher aide was very helpful in sourcing ideas and finding the material I needed for visual arts lessons (Beginning Teacher, 59).*

The respondents who had access to supportive school colleagues emphasised their support, acknowledging that this type of collegial support is not present in all schools. Beginning teachers used phrases, such as “*I’m lucky to teach in a school..*”, “*I have been fortunate...*”, “*I’m privileged in this school...*”, to describe the perceived rarity of their supportive situation. These forms of support from colleagues, as a source of efficacy, appear to increase the teacher’s perceived capabilities towards the arts. It appears to act as a support structure for beginning teachers where they know they are supported in a learning community and can seek assistance from other staff members. It appears that all members in this supportive community feel valued and share a combined goal of providing arts experiences for all students in their generalist classrooms.

### ***Resources***

A low 19% of beginning teachers reported having access to suitable resources, including curriculum resources, materials and an appropriate budget to buy supplies required for the arts. Comments reflecting this situation are typified by the following:

*A good amount of money is given to class teachers by admin to purchase supplies for the arts (Beginning Teacher, 44).*

*A curriculum folder with examples and some resources is distributed at the start of each term (Beginning Teacher, 23)*

Of concern was the limited mention of all areas of the arts. In their open-ended survey responses, these teachers generally only referred to the resources available for media or visual arts, and did not offer any indication of the level of resources given for dance, drama and music. For instance:

*We have great visual arts resources in our school (Beginning Teacher, 7).*

*We have resources for painting and drawing but that is it (Beginning Teacher, 3).*

### ***Specialist Teachers***

Some beginning teachers indicated that they received support for teaching the arts from a specialist teacher, who took lessons in their particular specialist areas. The majority of schools represented by participants in this study appeared to have at least one specialist teacher in a key learning area. Respondents explained that:

*I have the support from the music teacher who is very experienced and loves to help with ideas on music (Beginning Teacher, 114).*

A small number of beginning teachers describe having a combination of more than one arts specialist teachers (music, visual arts, dance) at their school to provide support. This occurred mainly in independent schools (usually with primary, middle school and secondary school phases), where specialist teachers in the secondary school would teach in the middle and primary schools for music, dance, visual art and drama.

Some beginning teachers indicated they could go to specialist teachers for support in attempting classroom activities. The responses from the teachers in these schools suggested that these teachers were comfortable to give specialist teachers' responsibility for arts education in their schools. It is unclear whether scheduled arts lessons for students formed part of non-contact time for beginning teachers. In Queensland State schools, mandatory non-contact time for beginning generalist teachers is stated as (Education Queensland, 2002, p.20):

The rostered duty time of a classroom teacher in primary schools and special schools will include no more than 22 hours 10 minutes of rostered face to face teaching and associated professional duties and no less than 2 hours of rostered preparation and correction time.

The agreement further states that generalist teachers can have scheduled non-contact time with non-attendance at specialist classes within primary schools such as LOTE (Languages Other Than English), music, physical education and specialist classes within special education.

### ***Other***

Five percent of beginning teachers referred to a range of other forms of support for arts education within their schools that did not fit into the main categories. Positive support mechanisms included behavioural support, where teachers knew they were supported with behaviour management strategies in their classroom. To some beginning teachers, being able

to take control within the class and feeling supported in control of students was very important to teaching beliefs.

Timetable support was also mentioned by beginning teachers. Timetable support was seen as part of the support structures given from administration towards the teaching curriculum. As this respondent notes, "*Administration support me in the teaching of the curriculum. I really value this*" (Beginning Teacher, 25).

Parental support also emerged in the category of 'other', suggesting that some teachers had higher self-beliefs when they knew that parents also supported their teaching. For instance "*I feel supported by the parents who will often get behind certain arts units*" (Beginning Teacher, 31).

Parental support appeared to be important to the respondents, who could draw on the experience and expertise of parents within their classrooms. Parental support also included fundraising for resources within the school.

### **Discussion and Implications**

Results from the respondents, who are defined in this case as beginning generalist teachers with no more than 3 years teaching experience, with respect to teacher self-efficacy scales for individual subjects, reveal that teachers have higher self-efficacy for maths and English when compared to music, dance, drama, media and visual arts. Also, perceived support for each of the arts was lower compared to perceived support for maths and English. While this relationship was not tested statistically, it could be hypothesised that there is a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and perceived support for subjects. This hypothesis however, requires further investigation. If it is true, the support structures in schools given to beginning teachers requires further investigation to recognise confirming and disconfirming factors that create the motivational construct of teacher self-efficacy, which ultimately impacts on student learning outcomes.

The results from this survey suggest that beginning generalist teachers, as respondents in this study, perceived a general lack of support for the teaching of the arts in their classroom, compared to English and maths. Many beginning teachers stated that schools provided greater financial support, assistance and professional development for the teaching of literacy and numeracy (typically described as English and maths), to increase school performance in national testing.

The results from this study provide an insight into the current imbalance occurring between the arts and literacy and numeracy in schools. Beginning generalist teachers may come to

accept the perceived imbalances in the support provided to the arts and other subject areas as the norm and these perceptions could, in turn, impact on their own attitudes and approaches to teaching the arts. Comments from beginning teachers constantly affirmed a strong school emphasis on literacy and numeracy within schools. This strong affirmation is likely in time to result in less time and effort being devoted to planning and teaching the arts. Yet, the arts remain a compulsory part of the curriculum in Queensland. While music may be covered by a specialist teacher in some schools, the other Arts disciplines are not. They fall to the role of the generalist teacher for delivery.

When beginning generalist teachers reported that they felt supported in their schools, it was because of help from colleagues, including other generalist teachers or specialist teachers. The results from this survey suggested that beginning teachers valued this support for approaches to arts education in their classrooms. Teachers who received this kind of collegial assistance reported that they felt ‘lucky’ to be in a school environment where support was available for the teaching of the arts. The notion of ‘supportive environments for the arts’ however, were described as rare.

The findings of this study offer important insights for school administration and policy makers regarding the adequate delivery of arts education in Queensland schools. If the quality of arts education is to improve in schools, teachers need their teaching to be supported by the school community, with adequate resources and access to specialised professional development activities. The imbalance between subjects in the curriculum resulting from the current political environment must be re-examined. If schools are to support teachers with arts education, support must first come from policy makers.

The school’s beliefs towards resourcing, teaching and professional development are part of the school’s overall collective efficacy. These beliefs subsequently filter through to individual teacher self-efficacy, creating greater motivation and higher levels of confidence for certain subject areas over others.

Schools must also provide opportunities for beginning generalist teachers to collaborate with specialist teachers and more experienced generalist colleagues. This would allow beginning teachers to have access to vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion as sources of efficacy development. In this study, beginning teachers indicate they placed a high value on this type of school support for their teaching. They reported that they felt they could share ideas, resources and ask for help from other members of staff (suggesting vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion). Through positive school support, beginning teachers may have a stronger desire to develop their teaching of arts education. Accordingly, teachers may feel more confident and competent in their own teaching practice.

This paper raises interesting questions about the support structures for teaching the arts available to beginning teachers in Queensland schools and the impact of these support structures on their perceptions of self-efficacy. It also raises starting points for future research into creating supportive school cultures and investigating relationships between teacher self-efficacy and support structures. In particular, it would be interesting to investigate the impact of enhanced in-service training and school support for the arts for beginning generalist teachers and their subsequent perceived self-efficacy. If the quality of arts education is to improve in schools, we must first think about changing school beliefs towards the arts and the impact of these beliefs on beginning teacher's self-efficacy, and inevitably their practice.

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### **About the Authors**

Susanne Garvis has worked in the areas of music and arts education before joining Griffith University. She currently teaches in the early childhood program. Susanne's research interests include teacher self-efficacy, the Arts and the use of narrative inquiry. Susanne's PhD investigates beginning teacher self-efficacy for the teaching of arts education.

Associate Professor Donna Pendergast has conducted a number of national research projects of significance including "Beyond the Middle", which investigated literacy and numeracy in middle schooling; and "Lifelong Learning and Middle Schooling". She has completed an evaluation of the Education Queensland Virtual Schooling Service and is often employed as a consultant to review school reform initiatives. Donna is highly sought after as a speaker on the topic of the MilGen and teaching, and has completed several intergenerational studies in content areas.

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