

Moving Forward on Arts and Education¹

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Background

The following statements are meaningful to Arts education issue

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 26 (2)

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Article 27 (1)

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 29 (1)

The education of the child shall be directed to ... (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential...

Article 31 (2)

State parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.'

A. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

I. General Principles

1. Current state of arts and education policy worldwide:

- The arts are widely recognised as an essential part of most national education and social policies.
- A significant body of national and international research exists that highlights the positive impact of participation in arts in education on all participants including the students, artists, arts organisations, schools and wider community.

¹ Main results from The arts and education mini-summit was convened by the Australia Council and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) with the assistance of Arts Victoria in Melbourne on 11-12 September, 2005.
c.f: Complete report and annexes at www.unesco.org/culture/lea

- The greatest and most urgent need is to significantly improve the implementation of policy into effective practice.
- The evolving technologies and diversity of cultures being embraced by the next generation are creating demands and opportunities that current arts and education structures are unlikely to be able to meet.
- The arts should be part of the systemic and long-term changes required of education structures and programs.
- Artists and arts organisations play an invaluable role in formal, nonformal and informal education in rich and diverse ways.
- Artists' engagement with schools forms a significant part of contemporary arts practice, providing a fertile context for innovation and enrichment of artists' practice and art form.
- high quality education not only in the arts, and of
- considering education as a life-long process, from early childhood through to late adulthood.

2. Good quality arts education is an essential component of holistic education (formal and informal) since it:

- enhances self esteem, a sense of identity, unity and diversity
- improves ability to handle change in a dynamic society
- encourages an appreciation and understanding of heritage
- enables the creation of future heritage, design and production
- increases individuals' potential to make a living, be more creative in the workplace and improve achievements in other spheres of life
- encourages freedom of expression and enriches the child's creative and imaginative self
- improves linguistic skills and stimulates social responsibility and spiritual growth

II. Areas for action

Four key areas requiring action by governments to improve the implementation of arts and education policies in order to equip young people for the 21st century.

1. Identifying persuasive arguments

There is a need to collate, analyse and share findings from existing national and international research in making the case for arts in education and to avoid duplication in research effort. This material can provide the basis for advocating the value and effectiveness of a comprehensive arts in education experience. In advocating for improvements to arts education we must strive to:

- break down the divide between policy, practice and research and facilitate communications between policy makers and those who implement policy
- tell evocative and inspiring stories, using language appropriate to the

audience and keeping messages simple and clear

- use the arts as a means of telling success stories and delivering key messages
- focus on presenting arts-based solutions rather than identifying problems
- take a bipartisan, not party political, approach
- challenge ideologies in politicians and policy makers by describing the arts in a personal way
- involve policymakers in arts education experiences to help them understand the power of the arts
- identify heads of state that could become arts education champions
- ensure that practice informs research and both practice and research inform policy.

2. Enhancing the training and development of artists and educators

The nature of teaching and learning in the arts is open-ended, iterative and evolving and not necessarily content-driven. There is a need for:

- pre-service and ongoing in-service teacher training that assists teachers to understand the evolving nature of the arts and does not focus on preconceived outcomes
- recognition and promotion of teachers as learners alongside students in the arts and acknowledgment that students may know as much as or more than the teacher, especially in relation to new technologies
- the development and promotion of principles to guide school administrations in supporting the above.
- more opportunities for professional development for teachers, artists and arts organizations and for sharing expertise and learning.

The arts and teaching professions must be valued for their integral role in society and the community. There is a need to:

- reconsider teacher workloads to enable increased participation in the arts
- promote the means to support teachers as arts practitioners
- acknowledge the arts as a means of reinvigorating and motivating teachers and thereby improve retention rates.
- identify career paths for artists in educational contexts e.g. by redressing inequalities between education officers and curators in galleries.
- provide appropriate resources and incentives for artists and arts organizations working in formal and non-formal education settings to improve the quality of arts practice.

The aesthetics of the arts are valid and relevant in all areas of contemporary education and therefore an important aspect of teacher training. There is a need to:

- be explicit about the characteristics of quality teaching, particularly in the arts, and to conduct more research as required
- acknowledge the aesthetic dimension of effective teaching in any area
- promote arts pedagogies in general teacher training
- engage artists in teacher training to develop learning tools e.g. the use of drama skills by teachers, effective use of the pause etc.
- ensure teachers have access to high quality arts and artists as part of their training and induction
- promote post graduate study in the arts to teachers of all subjects
- incorporate into pre-service teacher training internships in arts partnership programs
- provide educational and pedagogical training for artists
- explore different strategies required to engage the full range of people involved in education/learning e.g. parents, principals/administrators, community members, cultural institutions and organisations.

Given the widespread focus on the issues of quality teacher retention and of teacher registration, the area of aesthetics should be increasingly important for educational policymakers.

3. Refining methods of accountability

Accountability is a critical component of any quality arts education program.

Accountability can be enhanced by:

- ensuring it is more effective
- making it more holistic
- aiming to drive learning not obstruct learning

An alternative paradigm for accountability is required – a new culture with four dimensions: evidence and reflection, participation and presentation.

Evidence

- adopting a resolute focus on practice when gathering evidence
- ensuring an inclusive notion of researchers such that all stakeholders are considered researchers including teachers, students, parents and administrators
- acknowledging that gathering evidence is part of lifelong learning so there is an emphasis on process

Reflection

- gathering evidence should inculcate a spirit of self-reflexivity or reflection, thereby building analytical skills

Participation

- conducting research both vertically and horizontally, and where appropriate, reversing the conventional hierarchy and enabling children to research their teachers
- using peer to peer research, with students trained as researchers to incorporate the views of young people
- making research and policy development much more participatory by

including children and young people in decision-making

Presentation

- when presenting findings, using manageable and efficient methods that can be used in education as a whole not only in education and the arts
- acknowledging that what we learn from the arts can help in developing this new paradigm of accountability, which can be used in any educational context
- developing manageable and effective assessment instruments that can be transferred to all educational contexts, beyond the arts
- widely distributing findings to parents, communities and decision makers

4. Improving collaborations with other key partners

The outcomes described above cannot be achieved without collaboration and cooperation. Therefore, there is a critical importance for partnerships for quality arts education. There is great value in sharing information, ideas and resources across sectors, industries, regions and international borders.

Recommended conditions for effective partnerships:

- Clearly articulated reasons for and benefits of the collaboration. Parties need to identify their needs and how they anticipate they be met by each partner. The needs are easier to identify on a local level, particularly at school and community level.
- Both intra- and inter-agency partnerships are important in order to identify common directions and common interests within and between agencies. It is critical to develop shared understandings about arts, culture, education and arts education and about how each partner can assist each other.
- The development of a common language between partners e.g. between bureaucrats and practitioners, between government and non-government.
- An ability to look beyond the familiar when seeking partnership opportunities e.g. to sectors such as justice, social services, festivals, community events
- Acknowledgement of the different qualities brought to partnerships by different partners – not necessarily always financial, but also services, common directions, expertise.
- Ensuring there are shared interests and shared values. Taking a team approach and offering solutions, not just identifying problems.
- Allowing development time – good partnerships are not developed instantly.

Sustained, long term connections, are considered of a great value, rather than short term or one-off projects.

- Development of skills in working collaboratively, from planning, research, implementation, evaluation and allowing time for critical reflection by the partners.
- An understanding of cultural sensitivities and protocols and mutual respect between parties.
- Building in mechanisms to support changeover of individuals within partnerships to ensure continuity of skills, commitment, etc
- Creating opportunities for collective learning, mentoring and reciprocal benefits for all parties in the engagement.
- Allowing flexibility around school hours and premises.
- Establishing clear agreements for corporate sponsorships and partnerships

B. RECOMMENDATION TO UNESCO

The delegates recommend that UNESCO commission an international case study of research that uses students as researchers in diverse contexts, that could then be used by researchers as a guide for engaging in more participatory and practice-led research. Examples can be provided if required.

Such a case study could lead to the development of an international network of student researchers sharing methodologies and building better models of assessment with students/artists/teachers/parents as active participants. This would build capacity for the future and inform lifelong learning and assessment.