A Child's Rights to Quality Arts and Cultural Education

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Introduction

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948), Article 27 (1), it was emphasized that, "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts". This declaration was prefaced by Article 26 (2) that stipulated that "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

This declaration established the rights of all children to receive substantial and high quality arts and cultural education as a key part of any general system of education. A recently commissioned study (Bamford 2006) showed that 94% of countries include the arts as a key part of education policy. Yet despite this high level of international acceptance of the value of the arts – and willingness to pay 'lip-service' to its place within core education, the actual provisions received by many children around the world is of very low quality.

In 1999 UNESCO launched the International Appeal for the promotion of arts education and creativity within schools, as part of the construction of a culture of peace[1]. The appeal, among other things, stated that: "we are today clearly and strongly aware of the important influence of the creative spirit in shaping the human personality, bringing out the full potential of children and adolescents and maintaining their emotional balance." The Appeal also emphasized the need to move to more balanced kinds of education to meet the needs of the 21st century.

The New Basic Literacies

Young people live in a culture of hip pop, mobile phones, ghetto blasters, drum machines, samples, mp3s and Nintendo. Technology and the internet are changing the

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[1] Text available at http://www.unesco.org/culture/lea

way we access knowledge and form wisdom. In the near future it is likely that there will be even greater technological hybridization. Synthetic creativity, organic computers, genetic modification, intelligent machines, skin transfer are all developments that have been patented for future use.

Concurrently, society has taken a visual and aesthetic turn. With this has become the concern that the prevalence of pervasive images has had a detrimental effect on children (Buckingham 2000). There is a growing gap between the wealth of available visual images - and the means to produce visual images - with a corresponding lack of development in the ability to critically analyse images. Observing the new visibility of culture is not the same as understanding it.

An interesting dimension of the technology revolution is the way it relies upon and manifests visual communication. For example, the number of service contracts for mobile phones with built-in cameras is 48 million, or about 60% of all mobile phones. The latest 3G mobiles phones support not just photos, but digital camera quality video and real-time videoconferencing between several people.

Similarly, it is common place for new generation phones to combine visual communication with sound authoring and replay mechanisms. In the broadcasting industry, mobile phones are attracting significant attention as terminals for digital broadcasting and have begun to be used for onsite reporting. The arts are embedded in current and future communicative codes and appeal to a number of sensory modalities not just sight.

Contemporary literacy involves a torrent of fast moving sensory experiences that is pervasive, encompassing, and distracting. Some people see new literacies as being aggressive, exploitative, manipulative, coercive and insidious. These opponents consider that broader conceptions of literacy hamper our ability to recognise the features and patterns of experience in their totality. From this context, we see the parallel emergence of ideas of visual culture.

Henderson's (1999) definition of visual culture "what it is to see and what there is to see" in its simplicity probably most accurately captures the complexity of perceiving and reflecting on visual culture. Visual culture is less about the formal qualities of visual images and more about communication modes and visual meaning making framed by our

experiences. Increasingly these are rarely exclusively visual so there is a confluence between visual and other sign systems.

There is also wide acknowledgement that the visual is not an autonomous communication mode but rather a social practice that involves both reading and making images. Visual culture is the social world mediated by images of beauty, taste, commodity images, presentational "news" and visual technologies. Visual culture includes photography, television, cinema, music videos, graphic design, illustration, video games, comics, computer graphics, and the internet. This social world gives rise to concepts of social and cultural literacy.

Cultural literacy is a general familiarity with - and the ability to use - the official and unofficial rules, values and genres, knowledge and discourses that characterise cultural fields. Social literacy is beyond basic literacy and technological skills, and implies that students need proficiency in collaboration, communication and managing information, including critical and democratic skills.

A number of educational changes in response to perceptions about the shape of new "basic literacies" or core competencies challenge the nature and scope of arts and cultural education. In particular, it is likely in all economies that a greater role will be played by informal contexts in education and that education will be delivered through new modes, especially the profound impact of ICT upon teaching and learning practices. It is significant to understand the scope and nature of the technology. For example, in most developed economies there are more mobile phones than people. Around 85% of all mobile phone have access the Internet, and Internet accesses via mobile phones vastly exceeds those from personal computers. Similarly, there are an estimated 945 million Internet users online at any given time and more than 1 billion web pages. Around 45 % of Internet users also make content for the internet (Greenspan 2002 and 2004).

Similarly, economic forecasts (World Economic Forum, Davos 2006) suggest that the arts will be a major force in economic development. The so-called creative industries are emerging as the largest single sector of economic activity in many countries and as the driving force of the 'tiger' economies of India, China and Korea.

Yet despite a future likely to be highly dependent on an 'arts-inclined' population, the research within the international compendium (Bamford 2006) paints a somewhat

depressing picture of the general standard of classroom provisions in arts education. In around 25% of cases, poor quality arts programmes may in fact negatively impact children's participation in the arts, their creativity and their imagination. The arts in practice are largely taught by people with less than 3 months of arts education training. Ways of measuring children's learning in the arts are poorly developed and funding for arts within education tends to be short-term and insufficient.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 Article 31 (2) states that "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." While the arts are widely recognized as an essential part of most national education and social policies and there is an extensive - and growing - body of evidence that the arts have demonstrable benefits on children, teachers and the characteristic of the school, there is an urgent need to transform the rhetoric of policy into effective practice.

The Right to Quality

In 2004-05 UNESCO commissioned a worldwide study of research on arts education (Bamford 2006). This research - carried out in collaboration with the Australia Council for the Arts (The Council) and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) - aimed to gather research demonstrating the impact (if any) of arts-rich programmes on the education of children and young people.

In order to assess the impact of arts-rich programmes, the qualitative and quantitative information gathered from the extensive survey distributed in November 2004 was analysed. This wide-ranging research was designed to produce baseline knowledge about the organisational frameworks and other conditions which regulate and structure the teaching of arts-rich programs and to ascertain the role of arts-rich programmes in different countries.

The research (Bamford 2006) indicates that any arts education is not 'good enough'. Children require high quality arts education at all levels of education and within both formal and informal education. Yet with the exception of a few countries, the overall standard of arts education received by children is very low. In most countries of the world

teachers are not prepared to teach the arts or to use some of its techniques in the learning process. There is insufficient guidance given to the teachers by way of the curriculum. Poor teaching in turn has a negative impact on the child's creativity and it creates a misleading perception of the results of arts education amongst school officials, families and children.

On the other hand, there are examples of good practices around the world. Research of high quality arts education (Bamford 2006) shows that quality arts education promotes cultural identity and has a positive impact on the academic performance of children, especially in areas of literacy and the learning of second languages. Concurrently, quality arts-rich education leads to an improvement in students' attitudes towards school, on parental and community perception of schools, as well as on student interest for culture and the arts.

It is the actions of the teacher that are crucial to a child's chances of receiving arts education of a reasonable – or frankly even adequate – standard. In almost all cases observed (Bamford 2006) quality arts education is the responsibility of the teacher. In many instances, the teacher is largely unsupported in the teaching of arts education. There is a perception that the arts lack status within most educational curricula and as noted previously, the teachers of the arts are for the most part untrained – or at least inadequately trained. In countries that have taken their responsibility for providing adequate arts and cultural education seriously, implementation of policy has been supported by systematic and extensive teacher professional development.

The overall findings of the research (Bamford 2006) suggests that while the arts appear in the educational policy in almost every country in the world, there is a gulf between the 'lip service' given to arts education and the provisions provided within schools.

The term 'arts education' is itself milieu and culture specific. The meaning of – and inclusions within - the arts varies from country and country, with specific differences between economically developed and economically developing countries. For example, while in all countries – irrespective of their level of economic development – certain core subjects (e.g. drawing and music – but also painting and craft) were part of the curriculum, economically developed countries tend to embrace new media (including film, photography, and digital art) in the arts curriculum. In economically developing

countries far greater emphasis is placed culture and heritage specific arts (e.g. stilt walking in Barbados, and hair-styling in Senegal).

There is a difference between what can be termed education in the arts (e.g. teaching in fine arts, music, drama, crafts, etc.) and education through the arts (e.g. the use of arts as a pedagogical tool in other subjects, such as numeracy, literacy and technology).

Where education in the arts and education through the arts are both part of core curriculum in a systematic, high quality and reflective manner, arts-rich education has documented impacts on the child, the teaching and learning environment, and on the community.

Quality arts education tends to be characterised by a strong partnership between the schools and outside arts and community organisations. (In other words it is teachers, artists and the communities, which together share the responsibility for the delivery of the programmes). Good quality arts education enhances self esteem, builds a sense of identity, and encourages unity and diversity. It improves an individual's ability to handle change in a dynamic society and encourages an appreciation and understanding of heritage (both tangible and intangible). It should be noted that arts and culturally-rich education should not be seen only as a way to transmit existing or previous heritage, but most importantly it enables individuals to be active in the creation of future heritage, design and production. In this way, the arts increase an individuals' potential to contribute to impending society by developing the communication skills and critical disposition that stimulates social responsibility and spiritual growth. In this way, the arts could be viewed as one of the most valuable investments for the future.

Quality Education and Education for All: The role of the arts

As stated, the research suggests that advocacy to include arts as part of education policy has largely been successful this has not led to wide scale implementation of quality arts programmes at the school level. The current situation sees global monitoring and reporting on educational standards within literacy, mathematics, science and ICT but does not include the impact of arts and cultural experiences within a child's total education. It appears that this is due to an insufficient understanding of the implementation process.

This global research – by its very nature – revealed different findings (Bamford 2006). Educational systems are deeply embedded in cultural and nation specific contexts. This is especially the case as regards education in the arts. More than any other subject, the arts (itself a broad category) reflect unique cultural circumstances, and consequently, so does the teaching of the subject.

However, this caveat notwithstanding, it is possible to draw certain overall conclusions and to find common denominators, which can serve as guides for future reforms, changes and revisions of current programs of arts education. Throughout the results of the survey there is an unequivocal indication that the positive benefits of arts-rich education only occur within the provision of quality programs.

The nature of quality

'Quality' is defined as being those arts education provisions that are of recognized high value and worth in terms of the skills, attitudes and performativity engendered.

According to Pearsall (1998) quality implies something that has been achieved successfully. In the case of arts education, quality is considered to exist as something that may include achievements (i.e. quality outputs), but goes beyond this to consider learning journeys, pathways, partnerships and recognition. Dewey (1934: 19) writes of quality as being characterized by a "heightened vitality." He further comments that quality signifies, "active and alert commerce with the world: at its height, it implies complete interpretation of self and the world of objects and events." Under this notion, quality is not a fixed disposition but rather as Kissick (1993: 27) notes, "quality is first and foremost an idea, its criteria are susceptible to influences from within a given society."

While global monitoring of educational standards has tended to focus on achievement in mathematics, literacy and scientific thinking, anecdotal comments from children, teachers and parents suggest that the arts have a major impact on schooling and learning. Yet sustained research on the global extent of this impact has been lacking. Concurrently, even if such monitoring of the artistic and cultural aspects of education were to occur, there currently does not exist an agreed set of standards that could be universally established as being evident of quality provisions for art education.

The qualities of consummate - or frankly even adequate – arts education have been poorly articulated in the literature. Yet highly successful arts-rich programmes are apparent in case studies of everyday practices of arts educators and artists working in a range of educational contexts. It was thus surmised that it may be possible to ascertain the salient qualities that inform principles and practice of effective arts-rich programmes around the world and the impact these successful programmes have.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods applied in the global research on arts education (Bamford 2006) was premised on the assumption that the elusive qualities apparent in effective arts-rich programmes in a range of contexts may be embedded in case studies of quality practice.   Detailed examination of case studies from around the world, given a range of educational, economic and social contexts provides a source of knowledge and enlightenment and sheds light on their beliefs, knowledge and practices relating to arts education.

To this extent, the global research is testament to the diverse nature of the arts, yet within this multiplicity there are clear patterns in terms of quality provisions and the impact of these worthy programmes. Conversely, poor quality programmes, actively inhibited children's artistic, cultural and educational development. This is an important finding as previous studies have tended to suggest that 'any arts are better than no arts'. This does not appear to be the case, with the research suggesting that in up to 25% of cases the arts provisions are of such low quality that they actually harm a child's creativity, imagination and expression. Equally, it is of significance that high quality education where there is the greatest impact at all levels – child, learning environment and community- is achieved where excellent programmes exist both in the arts and through artistic approaches, such as in case study examples from Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, Finland, Slovakia and others. Education in the arts and education through the arts, while distinct, are interdependent and it should not be assumed that it is possible to adopt one or the other to achieve the totality of positive impacts on the child's educational realization.

Quality arts education is the result of interplay of structure and method. This interplay has been explained in Table 1 which exemplifies that way structure and method relate to produce quality outcomes. It should be noted, that these indicators of quality do not specify content. This is deliberate, as the over 45 case studies of programmes ranging

from small school-based projects to vast national projects show, content is of less relevance to quality than method and structure. Therefore, it is not necessary at an international level to specify content, and in fact this should be derived in relation to local environments, culture and resources. Content which is relevant to the child's environment has to take his/her history, culture, as well as social, political and ethical environment into consideration. The difficulty in this is that the teaching content has to be universal but locally relevant, active but reflective, and practical but theoretical at the same time. In this way content operates independently of structure and method.

Table 1: Structural and methodological characteristics of quality arts-rich programs.

Structure	Method
• Active partnership with creative people and organizations • Accessibility to all children • Ongoing professional development • Flexible organizational structures • Shared responsibility for planning and implementation • Permeable boundaries between the school, organization and the community • Detailed assessment and evaluation strategies	• Project-based • Involves teamwork and collaboration • Initiates research • Promotes discussion, exchange of ideas and story telling • Involves formal and informal reflection, that is both formative and summative • Meta critical reflection on learning approaches and changes • Centered around active creation • Is connected and holistic • Includes public performance and exhibition • Utilizes local resources, environment and context for both materials and content • Combines development in the

| | specific languages of the arts with creative approaches to learning |
| | • Encourages people to go beyond their perceived scope, to take risks and to use their full potential |

The following sections explain in more detail each of these structural and methodological parameters of quality and how they may be implemented in school contexts and at the systemic level.

Structural provisions

- Active partnership with creative people and organizations

Active partnership involves the direct inclusion of a range of cultural and artistic organizations in all aspects of the planning and delivery of arts education programmes. The most effective programmes have managed to build sustainable, long-term and reciprocal associations with cultural agencies and industries. These associations need to be authentic partnerships, with all players within the partnership acknowledging the contributions made by the others and being involved in all aspects of decision making, implementation and evaluation. While many schools have had artist-in-residence programmes, these frequently fall short of the level of partnership implied in quality arts provisions.

These partnerships need to occur externally, between different schools and other educational entities/agents such as institutions, artists, the community, and the families. Very often family members are reluctant to encourage students to take part in artistic activities, as it is perceived to be recreational rather than educational. The involvement of cultural partnerships builds support for arts education and encourages the broader community to see the arts as valuable. Furthermore, early alliance between cultural institutions, parents and children is likely to reap benefits in terms of audience development in later years.

Short-term and tokenistic involvement of creative professionals is unlikely to produce sustained changes in the quality provisions within school or educational contexts.

Quality partnerships should ideally be for at least two years duration and involve the high level commitment of education, arts and cultural organizations.

- Accessibility to all children

Quality programmes are built around the notion of inclusivity and worthy arts-rich education for all. This means that all children, regardless of artistic skills and abilities, initial motivation, behaviour, economic status or other entering attribute, should be entitled to receive high standard arts provisions, both within the various art forms and using creative and artistic approaches to teach other areas of the curriculum. This is a particularly important in relation to initiatives to provide education for all and to look at greater inclusion of a variety of marginalized groups within general education.

To meet a baseline in terms of quality arts education, education providers need to ensure that there are arts programmes for ALL children. Providing classes for talented or interested students only cannot be considered as providing a comprehensive education for all. At a practical level, having a school band, choir, dance group, once a year play or art club would not within itself constitute adequate arts education.

Similarly, children with special needs should be given equal access to high quality arts education and an opportunity to engage in meaningful arts learning in all spheres of creative endeavour. It is important to appreciate that the artistic potential of children with special needs is as full as that of other children. Consequently arts education needs to be treated with equal rigour and ambition for **all** children.

- Ongoing professional development

Teachers – especially at the primary school level - lack the proper training and motivation to conduct high quality arts education. There is a general need for quality teachers' training and in-service professional education which is as important as pre-service training.

The research shows that ongoing professional development has the potential to reinvigorate teachers and creative professionals and to build the confidence, creativity and enjoyment of these groups. The arts re-engage teachers and increase the quality of their overall pedagogy. For artists, working within education was stimulating, inspirational and enhanced their incomes and professional status.

The research indicates that inservice professional development of both creative professionals and teachers is far more effective in improving the quality of arts education than preservice training. At the system level, quality arts education would be characterized by adequate and enduring professional development in the arts and arts-based methods for both teachers and artists.

As a cost effective approach, basing artists within educational contexts and supporting sustained partnerships between education and arts organizations seems to be a very effective and efficient way to provide continued professional development. This was particularly the case, where teacher education institutions and universities were part of this partnership process and ongoing professional development could be formally rewarded through enhanced qualifications.

Allied to the needs for sustained professional development for teachers, it is clearly apparent that school leaders such as school directors, principals and local inspectors play a vital role in ensuring quality arts education is implemented within schools. These school leaders require significant professional development to extend the raft of skills needed to effectively manage, organise, adapt and plan instruction, in order to create a space for arts practices within schools.

Arts-rich schools tend to be characterised by school leaders and decision makers who are open to new teaching methods, encourage arts practices and actively select staff committed to creative learning. It is well known from the policy implementation literature (Davis 2001) that the commitment of staff is essential in delivering high quality arts education.

School and community leaders can also initiate the establishment of partnerships and extend the boundaries of the school to include cultural institutions. School leaders should have an understanding of different learning processes and be able to leverage the support of a range of relevant organisations and individuals to support and extend the school programmes.

- Flexible organizational structures

Quality arts-rich programmes tend to flourish in situations where there is scope for organizational flexibility. Within the education sectors, rigid timetables, compartmentalization of learning and restrictive assessment structures tend to limit the

extent and quality of art-rich education. Similarly, within cultural organizations, high costs, containment within the physical boundaries of a gallery or facility and lack of administrative flexibility limit the likely success of engaging fully with the education sector.

Between schools and cultural organizations, there also needs to be less rigidity of physical boundaries, such as galleries and performances coming into schools and 'school learning' being conducted within cultural facilities and museums. Similarly, schools, museums, theatres and galleries need to work more closely with enterprise, industry and higher education sectors. By increasing the permeability between these organizations, it is likely that each will benefit from its blending with the other.

- Shared responsibility for planning and implementation

Implied in earlier discussions of both partnerships and flexibility of organization, it is worthy of particular mention that all quality arts-rich programmes include shared responsibility for planning and implementation of all stakeholders. One of the major inhibitors noted in the research was that there is a widespread lack of consultation between policy makers and those at the coalface of arts education delivery. This results in mismatched aims and inadequate implementation.

Similarly, programmes were generally not successful if one or other organization was seen to be both the driving force and leading the implementation. Programmes such as these have tended to have short-term success, mainly at the cost of the energy and determination of one or two champions, but not generally lead to sustainable programmes over time.

With school, teamwork is very important. Teamwork – or more specifically collaboration - is a crucial part of the arts, especially the performing arts. More than in the case of other disciplines, as arts subjects very often require group work activities such as in the case of drama, music and dancing. Group work in turn creates a spirit of belonging and personal interaction that is also important for the personal development of the child. Teamwork further develops communication and social skills and may have an important impact on the child's general attitude towards school.

It is crucial therefore, that quality provisions in arts-rich education involve shared responsibility and a democratic approaches to planning, policy, implementation and evaluation.

- Permeable boundaries between the school, organization and the community

While this point has already been canvassed to some extent in relation to flexibility of organizational structures, there is need to draw particular attention to the value of the inclusion of community within the development of quality arts education programmes. Both schools and arts and cultural organizations need to be prepared to open their boundaries - actual and metaphoric - to the influences of the community within which they exist.

This is particularly the case within marginalized communities where the perceptions of both schools and cultural organizations tend to be one that is quite negative and often based on misconceptions, generalizations and senses of alienation. The histories of both schools and cultural organizations have not been conducive to open and democratic participation of minority groups within communities.

To redress this, affirmative action needs to be undertaken to reach out to these groups. Exhibition and performance afford wonderful opportunities to more fully engage the community in education and cultural provisions and can act as a catalyst enabling greater community participation.

- Detailed assessment and evaluation strategies

One of the most significant and widespread findings from the research case studies is that there is an urgent need for methods of assessment that more fully recognize the contribution of arts and cultural components within children's education. While over half the countries surveyed assess the arts, the case studies indicated that methods of assessment for creative learning were poorly developed and lacked recognition within the formal assessment processes (Bamford 2006).

This means that arts learning is frequently scantily documented and lacks substantiation and status within educational processes. Concurrently, inappropriate assessment strategies have a direct inhibiting impact on quality programmes. Over reliance on outcomes based assessment, assessment of only a limited number of education disciplines and dominant external examination were seen as factors hindering quality arts education.

Allied to this, impact evaluation in the arts is similarly inadequate. As many arts-based programmes operate on limited funding, financial provision is rarely made to adequate evaluate and report the results of the programme. The arts within education have been characterized by numerous instances of wonderful programmes, but almost no substantial evaluation of these programmes.

Key to the success of any change implementation process is the need for sustained and meaningful assessment and evaluation. It is a sad fact, but there is no doubt that across global education systems, assessment leads learning. If we wish to instigate changes in learning processes, we will need to change processes of assessment and monitoring.

Policy makers need to know which factors lead to learning outcomes and whether those learning outcomes are intended or not. There is a need to look beyond the narrow standards to the qualities required to make meaning in current and future worlds.

In several countries, namely England, Canada, Finland, and to a lesser extent India, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, systematic procedures have been put in place to evaluate and document the impact of arts-rich education. Where these systems exist, there appears to be a flow-on effect to improvements in the quality of programmes, driven by the enhanced perceptions within the schools that the arts are a valued part of a child's total education.

While almost every country gives lip service to the value of the arts in education, it is those countries which back this policy rhetoric with sound evaluation strategies who witness the greatest improvement in overall quality at the school and classroom level.

Combined with these structural aspects most commonly found in high quality programmes, there are a number of methodological elements that seem to be manifest in high quality arts-rich education.

Methodological Essentials
- Project-based

The most significant aspect of methodology that appeared in the qualitative case studies of effective arts-based education was the arousal of children's curiosity about the world through problem or project orientated activities. In diverse case studies, respondents felt

that an open, imaginative and creative mind was a vital aspect of all learning, and most fully developed through engagement with project-based art activities.

- Initiates research

A key characteristic possessed within all the quality case studies was an ability to be flexible and adaptable in their teaching and to provide tasks that initiated research inquiry amongst the children. A research-orientated approach combines with project-based methods to encourage an educational climate where the teachers, artists and children are encouraged to engage in learning conversations and to test their ideas, adjusting rapidly to spontaneous situations to create interesting and meaningful art-based learning opportunities.

Quality arts-based programmes adopted experimental models of teaching. Artists, teachers and children engaged in such programmes tried things and tested ideas in an initiatory way. They reflected on these experiments, adapting the content accordingly.

This adventurous approach may initially appear spontaneous and unplanned, but more correctly represented an inquiry method of learning, based on flexibility of choices governed by sound evaluation practices. Effective programmes as presented in the case studies (Bamford 2006) were ready to abandon preconceived plans and move with the spontaneous arts learning opportunities.

- Centered around active creation

The majority of the case studies of quality arts programmes valued the role of active art making and performance within the design and manifestations of the programme. It could be argued that almost all of the quality programmes placed major value on arts making and performance and exhibition. It was asserted that engagement in active arts creation engendered particular learning and achievement, only possible when embedded within active practice.

- Is connected and holistic

All the case studies of quality practice underpinned the importance of connecting learning experiences in the arts into meaningful sequences and clusters (Bamford 2006). By contrast, poor quality arts experiences were described as being those programmes that were tokenistic, isolated and disconnected – from children, their environment and their other learning.

Connected arts programmes were premised on the arts' capacity for building better relationship with the children. To enable connected learning to be most effective, time had to be more flexible and the arts-based aspects of learning needed to relate to other aspects of the children's learning such as language learning, literature, story writing and history studies.

While there was overwhelming support for the involvement of artists in educational settings, the artists had to be perceived as total partners in the educational endeavour and not as 'specialists' existing outside the general educational processes. It was considered that specialists were hampered in their ability to develop arts-based lessons that could be fully integrated with other subjects.

- Involves teamwork and collaboration

A key feature of quality arts-based programmes appears to be the way they assist in the development of group work and team collaborations in a non-competitive manner. The collaborative nature of creative arts-based projects - especially those within dance and drama - were seen to actively encourage the collaborative working on different stages or aspects of a project. Quality arts-based projects tended to extend over for several weeks - or more - and children worked at their own pace within the collaborative project framework. Additionally, some programmes encouraged the children to work on a number of projects both concurrently and over time.

- Promotes discussion, exchange of ideas and story telling

Quality arts-based programmes involve an active sharing of ideas and conversations between artists, teachers and children. In particular, they placed importance on children's feelings and the manner in which the arts allowed for expression of individuality. High quality programmes provided a range of enticing and varied learning experiences aimed at encouraging the child to unfold their ideas.

Under this conception the child was acknowledged as an artist, and while the teachers and artists provided levels of formal instruction, this was intended to nurture ideas and skills and stimulate aesthetic conversations rather than provide 'closed' directions. All children are perceived to possess the potential for artistic expression and so the emphasis is on studio production and performance underpinned by encouraging conceptual

development through making, verbal and at times with older students, written, conversations within the group of children and between the teacher and the children.

- Involves formal and informal reflection, that is both formative and summative

Formal and informal contemplative practices were valued as a way to encourage the children to view their work more critically and reflectively. Processes of journal writing were common in several of the case studies. In other instances, reflective processes were less formalised, using conversations, images and actions to instigate and maintain the reflective processes.

- Meta critical reflection on learning approaches and changes

Similar to the children being encouraged to build reflective practices, both educators and artists engaged in formative and summative reflective practices. It appeared in the case studies that there existed certain strategies and combinations of behaviours that were consistently held across the variety of case studies and appeared to be successful in a range of contexts. Dahllof (1991: 112) argues that, in a given situation, certain strategies and combinations of behaviours and beliefs may be more effective than others, but that these will be impacted upon by the nature and interest of the students, the phase of the learning cycle, the subject matter, and specific goals of the teacher.

This adaptation of successful models of practice was clearly visible in the quality programs, especially the way that these programs were driven by the interests and desires of the children and the adoption of experiential teaching and learning practices. The teachers and artists made direct links between the children's environment and their art learning, while at the same time presenting provocations and problems that challenged the children to move from their immediate environment and question previously held beliefs and ideals.

- Includes public performance and exhibition

The positive benefits of performance and exhibition were evident in the outcomes of quality arts-rich education. From one perspective, it was considered that a performance outcome provide effective ways to engender a positive school profile, build community links and to showcase the work of the children. It was also suggested that the arts are a performance or exhibition based medium and as such the presentation of the work remains an important aspect of the program.

Performance and exhibitions generated publicity for arts-based education and allowed the work of the teachers, artists and children to be more publicly highlighted. This was of particular benefit in raising the confidence and self-esteem of the children involved and by promoting more favourable views of the school and its local community.

Conversely, there was some concern that performance and exhibition outcome might adversely impact on the goals of a project and that the creative process might be compromised by having to work to a performance outcome and that this in turn would mean that the performance might 'drive' learning rather than the performance or exhibition emerging out of learning. To this extent, the creative process, risk-taking and experimentation were more important than achieving an attractive end product.

Furthermore, an over-reliance on producing a high quality end product may be detrimental to the children engaging in exploratory and risk-orientated processes. Despite these caveats, all the case studies referred to the significance of audience in the artistic process. To this extent, exhibition and performance existed as a way to bring kudos to the children and their arts experiences and as a tool to promote the benefits of arts-rich education to a wider audience.

- Utilizes local resources, environment and context for both materials and content

Quality programmes allowed children to make artistic connections within their local environment. Through the use of local artists and artworks, the teachers hope that the children will make personal connections with art. The qualitative comments suggest that the arts have strong powers of social change and can be used it to build the children's self esteem and address social justice and equity issues within the community.

To this extent, the use of local resources within arts-rich education enables children's needs to be addressed more appropriately.

- Combines development in the specific languages of the arts with creative approaches to learning

The development of language skills appeared to be central within the design and implementation of arts-rich education. This idea was enacted in two ways. Firstly, language was seen to have an important function to perform in giving student the words and language to enable children to talk about their artwork, performance and the work of

artists. Teachers should encourage the children to talk to each other about their arts experiences.

Similarly, the second view of the value of the arts as language was linked to the expression of feeling. The arts were seen as a powerful form of communication.

- Encourages people to go beyond their perceived scope, to take risks and to use their full potential

Quality arts-rich education encouraged the children to take risks and allowed them to make mistakes. 'Letting go' of control and being confident to let the children make mistakes was important part of giving children ownership of their creative processes. Uncertainty surrounds quality arts practice and this is to be encouraged.

Inhibitors of quality

The research points to a clear link between the provision of high quality arts programs and improved educational attainment at the levels of the child, the school and more broadly at the district, country or regional level (Bamford 2006). Yet the benefits of inclusion of a strong artistic component in general education appears not to have been widely considered within the general education literature and as a variable in global educational standards monitoring. The lack of recognition of the value of arts education within general education appears to be due to a combination of factors, including:

- Lack of large scale longitudinal impact studies of arts-rich education;
- Poor connection between policy makers and coal-face policy implementation;
- Inadequate monitoring and reporting on arts-rich components in general education, and;
- Deficient distinctions between the impacts of education in the arts and education through the arts.

These factors combine with a lack teacher expertise and training. One way to reduce the inhibiting impact of lack of teacher skills in arts education is to foster relationships between teachers and other agents like artists, researchers and cultural institutions. Contact with cultural institutions outside of the school will give teachers an opportunity to reflect on teaching methods and motivate them to try to adapt to the changing teaching conditions, to update their knowledge, and to investigate new teaching methods.

Importantly, teachers report that working closely with artists makes them see teaching, children and the arts generally in "new ways" and "through different" eyes.

Conclusion

Quality arts education programmes have impact on the child; the teaching and learning environment, and; on the community, but these benefits were only observed where quality programmes were in place. Poor quality and inadequate programs do little to enhance the educational potential of the child or build first-rate schools. It is of significance to note that a number of case studies indicated that bad and poor quality programmes, in fact may be detrimental to children's creative development and adversely effect teacher confidence and the participation of cultural agencies.

Given that, it is important that the rhetoric of policy that supports the inclusion of arts education within the total educational experiences of the child is backed by substantial implementation and monitoring structures that ensures children receive high quality programmes. These programmes are no more expensive to implement than poor quality programmes and afford the opportunity to initiate sustained educational reform and greatly enhance the overall excellence of education. The argument should be less about 'Education for All' and more about quality learning provisions for all. In this regard, the arts have an enormous amount to offer education.

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