Partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector

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Every child, every opportunity

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Foreword

Participation in arts and cultural activities in schools is known to have a number of benefits for learning outcomes, student social and personal development as well as wider community development outcomes. Learning in schools occurs both *in the arts and through the arts* (where the arts are integrated into non-arts curriculum areas). Partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector can take either form and are a growing area of education in Australia and around the world.

Partnerships are also central to the policy and research priorities of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. In particular, the *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* (DEECD 2008a) emphasises the role of partnerships between schools and communities in supporting children to thrive, learn and grow. The *Research Priority Areas of Interest 2008-11* (DEECD 2008b) also include a focus on monitoring and assessing the role of networked approaches to teaching and learning in catering for diverse student needs and supporting flexible learning options.

The Victorian Government's arts policy, *Creative Capacity +* (Arts Victoria 2003) emphasises the potential of students' active involvement in the arts to impact positively on education and learning outcomes. Arts Victoria, through its Statement of Strategic Intent, *Creating the Future: Towards 2020* (Arts Victoria 2008)*,* commits to fostering greater engagement of young people.

The notion of creativity is also high on the national policy agenda and is reflected in the new *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA 2008) and the arts and education ministers' *National Education and the Arts Statement* (Cultural Ministers Council & MCEETYA 2005)*,* as well as the results of the recent 2020 Summit (Commonwealth of Australia 2008b). Creative and performing arts will be included in the second phase of the national school curriculum, to roll out in 2011. At a school level, partnerships with practising artists and the professional arts sector contribute to the creativity agenda.

In line with current policy, the Department, with Arts Victoria, has produced this timely research report focusing on partnerships between schools and the arts sector. The report highlights the growing body of national and international research into such partnerships and provides some examples of partnerships which took place in Victorian schools in 2008. While there is a range of literature around arts sector partnerships and learning in literacy and numeracy, this summary of literature is structured around the role played by arts sector partnerships in enhancing student engagement, social learning, personalised learning, innovation and the development of arts-related knowledge. The examples of Victorian school/arts sector partnerships represent a range of partnership models with an emphasis on artists-in-residence programs.

We trust that this report will be a useful resource for generating discussion, interest and ideas around school/arts sector partnerships and education *in* and *through* the arts.

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1 Executive Summary

Background

This report is the result of a research partnership between Arts Victoria and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The report is the result of the first stage of the project which aimed to identify and evaluate partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector with a focus on improving student outcomes.

Participation in arts and cultural activities in schools is known to have a range of benefits for learning outcomes, student social and personal development as well as wider community development outcomes. Partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector are a growing area of education.

School/arts sector partnerships in Victoria

The Victorian Government's arts policy, *Creative Capacity +* (Arts Victoria 2003) emphasises the potential of students' active involvement in the arts to impact positively on education and learning outcomes. Arts Victoria supports a range of partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector including 'Artist-in-residence' programs, school based 'Exposure to the arts' programs, and venue-based programs in galleries, performing arts centres and museums across Victoria. DEECD's Strategic Partnerships program supports a broad range of arts sector partnerships.

Why arts/education partnerships are important

The discussion in this paper focuses on the impact of arts partnerships on: school attendance; motivation and creative pedagogies; whole-school change; and student engagement. Beyond these, key research findings relate to academic attainment and transformation in the quality of student-teacher relationships.

Partnerships, motivation and creative pedagogies
The report highlights strategies employed by creative practitioners to boost pupil motivation, think creatively, generate student ownership of ideas, and boost self-confidence for future challenges.

Internationally, schools have reported the impact of creative arts partnerships on their school as a whole in terms of:

• broadening the school's approach to teaching and learning
• forming cross-curricular links
• enabling the school to focus on creativity
• Improving provision for the arts.
• enhancing the school's image/profile
• unifying the whole school in a common purpose.

Social learning
Most research reports that arts participation was seen to enhance personal confidence, develop skills of cooperation and collaboration, and help foster

relationships of trust and a sense of belonging. Studies also note the role of the arts in building racial harmony through acknowledging identity and cultural difference.

Partnerships and problem-solving in learning contexts

International studies identify improved problem-solving, teamwork, working within limitations, task and goal setting as characteristics of learning that occurs within school/arts sector partnerships. Research commissioned for the Australia Council for the Arts identified evidence that 'arts participation can foster a positive attitude to learning by helping to develop 'enabling' skills that can be transferred to other learning contexts'. It reports that arts participation can:

• lead to improved motivation, interest and participation in classroom learning
• foster self-reflective learning
• enhance skills of planning and independent learning
• enhance confidence in learning.

Partnerships and resolution

The analysis of many educational drama projects demonstrates that students gained new knowledge and understanding of conflict management on several levels:

• On a social level: getting to know each other in new ways, developing feelings of fellowship, empathy and respect, expanding their listening capacity, understanding the importance of cooperation and skills such as listening to others
• On an aesthetic level: finding creative ways of expressing feelings and thoughts
• On a cognitive level: discovering new understandings of the nature of conflicts and the different ways to handle conflicts, different perspectives on life and society.

Personalising learning

Investigation of personalised learning approaches by schools in the UK described a number of schools which employed arts programs. Other findings relating to personalised learning include: the relationship between students' arts participation and the increased involvement of parents and families in student learning; the ability of arts programs to engage students in authentic learning tasks; and, the engagement of students as researchers in their own student learning within arts programs.

Creative skills as a key component of innovation

Researchers have posited that creative practitioners open up processes of thinking and questioning, and engage children as active participants in their own learning through critical thinking, analysis and evaluation. They encourage independence and teach divergent *and* convergent thinking because the solutions to artistic problems are multiple.

Building more and better partnerships between creative organisations, the education sector, and digital infrastructure industries is seen as both necessary and desirable. There is a particular need for more Australian-developed content in multimedia and interactive digital and media programs within an educational environment.

Arts education has contributed significantly to teaching information and communications technology, computer skills and technology skills.

2 Introduction

This report is the result of stage 1 of a two-stage research partnership project between Arts Victoria and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department). It is based on work undertaken by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne.

Stage 1 of this project sought to identify and evaluate partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector with a focus on excellence in student outcomes through improved student engagement, social learning, personalised learning, creativity and arts-related knowledge and skills.

This timely report provides a literature review of national and international research in this area of school/arts sector partnerships as well as a number of recent examples of school/arts partnerships undertaken in Victorian schools. In order to best represent current trends and issues in this area, the research focuses on the major literature published in this field between 1999 and 2008, while examples of Victorian partnerships are drawn from 2008.

School/arts sector partnerships are not a new phenomenon; museums, art galleries, performing arts centres, performing arts companies and a range of other arts organisations in Victoria have been running partnerships and special programs for school students for many decades. The Department and Arts Victoria have been running the Artists in Schools program since 1981. However, it is not until recently that a strong body of research literature and methodologies for evaluating school/arts partnerships have emerged. Since 1999, there have been several important studies in the area of arts education, including:

- *Champions of Change* (Fiske 1999), an initiative of The Arts Education and The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities in the US, set up to investigate why and how young people change and grow through arts experiences
- *Critical Links* (Deasy 2002), a compendium of 62 robust research reports focused on the academic and social learning effects of the arts
- *The Wow Factor* (Bamford 2006), the first international survey of over 60 countries on the impact of arts in education.

These studies, among others, are addressed in the summary of national and international literature in section 5 of this report. Overwhelmingly, this literature reveals the wide range of student outcomes positively influenced by successful partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector. As Russell, Ainley and Fydenberg (2005) note:

> *If [students] are to live happy and productive lives in the complex world of the twenty-first century, students need to achieve a wide range of schooling outcomes. In addition to basic literacy and numeracy skills and disciplinary knowledge, they also need strategies, capacities, qualities, characteristics and values that are developed and learnt through the operation of the whole school curriculum, sometimes referred to as the 'meta-curriculum'.*

It is within this meta-curriculum that the arts/school partnerships are particularly well served.

Section 4 of the report includes examples of school/arts sector partnerships which have taken place in Victorian schools. The examples illustrate the range of creative projects undertaken in both primary and secondary school settings in regional and metropolitan Victoria. The projects themselves range from puppetry to environmental art practices and performance pieces. Despite the diversity of projects and school settings, the outcomes of these examples clearly point to the value of partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector. Evaluation of these projects reveals a range of positive outcomes for teachers, students and artists, including: an increase in arts-related knowledge for teachers and students; a strengthened sense of confidence and communication skills; and new perspectives on creativity and the creative process.

Overall this report provides important insight into the unfolding world of school/arts sector partnerships and their current and potential value for Victorian schools.

Key findings from Stage 1 of this project are informing the second stage of the work, which is now underway. The second stage involves research into and evaluation of partnerships between Victorian schools and the professional arts sector with a focus on excellence in student outcomes through improved student engagement, social learning, creativity and arts-related knowledge and skills. The research questions to be addressed include:

• To what degree do school/arts sector partnerships currently funded through Arts Victoria contribute to improved student engagement, student voice, social learning, creative skills and arts-related knowledge and skills?
• What are the characteristics of effective school/arts sector partnerships that lead to improved student engagement, student voice, social learning, creative skills and arts-related knowledge and skills?
• What are the special roles, functions and characteristics of the teacher, artist and school leadership team in effective school/arts sector partnerships?

This project is expected to be completed by March 2010. A final report of stage 2 of the project will be presented to Arts Victoria and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

3 Background

There are many practical and policy-based reasons why the arts and education communities should work in partnership. This section provides background relating to the education and arts policy landscape in Victoria, the relationship of this policy landscape to the broader policy context and a brief section on the notion of effective partnerships.

The Victorian education context

In the Victorian education context, it is important to contextualise school/arts sector partnerships in relation to approaches to curriculum and assessment in the state. In 2006 the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (the Standards) were introduced as the basis for curriculum and assessment in schools from Prep to Year 10. The Standards aim to prepare students to succeed in a world which is 'complex, rapidly changing, rich in information and communications technology, demanding high-order knowledge and understanding, and increasingly global in this outlook and influences' (VCAA 2004). The Standards are characterised by three interconnected strands of learning, each of which are made up of a number of domains:

Physical, Personal and Social Learning
• Health and Physical Education
• Interpersonal Development
• Personal Learning
• Civics and Citizenship

Discipline-based Learning
• The Arts
• English and Languages Other Than English
• The Humanities (Economics, Geography and History)
• Mathematics
• Science

Interdisciplinary Learning
• Communication
• Design, Creativity and Technology
• Information and Communications Technology
• Thinking.

The review of literature reveals student engagement in the arts and creativity can have a positive impact on all the dimensions of physical, personal and social learning. Furthermore, beyond the obvious relationship with discipline-based learning in the arts and other disciplines, many school/arts partnerships have the potential to introduce new and creative ways of thinking and learning which can have a positive impact across all disciplines as well as the interdisciplinary learning standard.

Victorian government schools strive to achieve improved student learning; enhanced student engagement and wellbeing; and successful transitions and pathways. As part of the current reform agenda, the Department is also integrating Victorian early childhood services and schools due to the increasing evidence of the need for a

stronger and more consistent focus on wellbeing, learning, health and development across all of the places that children and young people spend their time (DEECD 2008a).

In the context of the Standards and the new emphasis on early childhood development, the notion of arts and creativity cuts across the curriculum and reform policy agenda.

The Victorian *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* (DEECD 2008a) sets out the Government's five-year reform agenda for improving the educational outcomes in the state. It emphasises the role of partnerships between schools and communities in supporting children to thrive, learn and grow. The Department's *Research Priority Areas of Interest 2008–11* (DEECD 2008b) also include a focus on partnerships and the monitoring and assessment of networked approaches to teaching and learning in catering for diverse student needs and supporting flexible learning options.

The Department's Strategic Partnerships program supports a broad range of arts sector partnerships. The program provides funding to not-for-profit agencies and organisations to deliver outcomes-based programs for schools and teachers that link schools with their wider communities. The Department and Arts Victoria jointly support the Artists in Schools program as part of that program.

The Victorian Government's Education Strategy for Koorie Students, *Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future* (DEECD 2008c), also proposes initiatives to improve educational outcomes by 'Developing innovative learning tools and programs through the use of technology that builds community and student engagement'. The research presented here illustrates that school/arts sector partnerships are an effective means of building both community and student engagement.

The Victorian arts context

Arts Victoria identifies arts education as a priority in its 10-year arts policy *Creative Capacity +: Arts for all Victorians* (Arts Victoria 2003). In particular the policy states:

> *We will engage more school students and community organisations in arts and cultural learning through:*
>
> *2.1   innovative, participatory education programs run by our museums, arts centres, performance companies and leading cultural institutions*
>
> *2.2   expanding the Artists in Schools program in partnership with the Department of Education and Training [1]*
>
> *2.3   working with the Department of Education and Training to support arts education as a significant priority.*

[1] Now the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Arts Victoria supports a range of partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector including 'Artist-in-residence' programs, school based 'Exposure to the arts' programs, and venue-based programs in galleries, performing arts centres and museums across Victoria. Over 110 organisations operate in the arts in education arena; there is an extraordinary and diverse array of programs offered to Victorian students and teachers. From performance groups which visit schools across the state to digital media workshops in the city, Victoria's broad range of programs and projects challenge, enrich and engage school students of all ages. More information is available on the Arts Victoria website at: ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/ Arts_in_Victoria/Arts_in_Education.aspx›.

Arts Victoria's Education Partnerships program supports two artists-in-residence programs, Artists in Schools and Extended School Residencies. The Artists in Schools program is funded by the Department through the Strategic Partnerships program and is managed by Arts Victoria. The Education Partnerships program is supported by the Victorian Government's Community Support Fund. It provides opportunities for artists and arts organisations to support and enrich learning and teaching in Victorian primary and secondary schools. The program aims to:

• support student learning across the curriculum
• enrich teaching practice through interaction with professional artists
• expand opportunities for Victorian artists and arts organisations to work in collaboration with schools ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Funding_ Programs/Education_Partnerships.aspx›.

Arts Victoria also supports arts sector/school partnerships through the:

• Community Partnerships program, ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/ Funding_Programs/Community_Partnerships.aspx›
• Organisations program, ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Funding_ Programs/Organisations.aspx›
• venue-based programs in galleries, performing arts centres and museums across Victoria, ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Arts_in_Victoria/Arts_in_ Education.aspx›.

This report provides a range of examples of school/arts sector partnerships drawn from Arts Victoria's programs.

Broader policy context

School/arts sector partnerships are also important in a broader policy context because they contribute to improving the social, creative and cultural life of the schools and communities in which they take place. *Growing Victoria Together: A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and beyond* (Department of Premier and Cabinet 2005) is the State Government's major policy statement for Victoria to 2010 and beyond. One of the major goals of *Growing Victoria Together* is the improvement of 'student participation and the successful completion of Year 12 or its equivalent'. The policy also 'aims to reduce the number of early school leavers and provide opportunities for engaging students in learning across the curriculum in Year 5 to Year 10'.

Strengthening the connection between arts and education has also been a priority at a national level. In 2005 the Cultural Ministers Council and the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs released a joint statement declaring their commitment to education and the arts. The *National Education and the Arts Statement* aims to 'foster a culture of creativity and innovation in Australia's school systems in partnership with creative individuals and organisations' and puts forward the position that 'Through the arts and creative cultural expression we learn about ourselves: who we are, where we have come from and what we feel, value and believe'. The statement is underpinned by three key principles:

1. All children and young people should have a high quality arts education in every phase of learning.
2. Creating partnerships strengthens community identity and local cultures.
3. Connecting schools with the arts and cultural sector enriches learning outcomes.

The statement also specifically addresses the issue of arts partnerships and argues that 'Community-based arts and education partnerships build social cohesion, respect, community spirit and active local citizenship ... increase community awareness of educational issues and can help mobilise and draw on communities' local arts and cultural resources' (Cultural Ministers Council & MCEETYA 2005).

More recently, the Commonwealth has developed the Artists-in-Residence initiative. In the 2008–09 Federal Budget $5.2 million was allocated for artist-in-residence programs for schools and universities to be delivered over the next four years. This initiative will be delivered by the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Education Partnerships program, in partnership with state governments. In Victoria this will see an expansion of the Extended School Residences program and provide greater support and professional development to schools and arts organisations.

Reflecting these national trends, school/arts sector partnerships were also addressed in the Creative stream of the Australia 2020 Summit conducted in April 2008. The discussions identified the role of artists in schools as a critical strategy in developing a creative Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2008b). In particular the participants suggested that integrating artists more thoroughly in education delivery could provide a new model of teacher interaction. They also suggested that students should be exposed to creativity, through the presence of artists in schools acting as mentors and residents.

In December 2008, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians was launched. The Declaration, made by all Australian education ministers, seeks to achieve new levels of engagement with all stakeholders in the education of young Australians. Improving education outcomes for all young Australians is regarded as central to the nation's social and economic prosperity. Goal 2 of the Declaration states that 'All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (MCEETYA 2008). The characteristics of confident and creative individuals are described in the Declaration; it includes the view that such individuals will be enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities.

Effective partnerships

It is not the primary focus of this report to identify the characteristics of effective school/arts sector partnerships. However, a common through-line in arts education research emphasises that the *quality* of the arts experience is a vital ingredient in its effectiveness. This holds true for arts education research generally (where the focus may or may not be on a partnership) and work focused specifically on a school/arts partnerships. For example, Bamford (2006) uses the term 'arts-rich' to describe those programs where the arts are employed in a significant and substantial way and have a direct impact on a student's education:

> *'Quality', is defined as being those arts education provisions that are of recognised high value and worth in terms of the skills, attitudes and performativity engendered ... In the case of this book, quality is considered to exist as something that may include achievements, but goes beyond this to consider learning journeys, pathways, partnerships and recognition.*

Dewey (1934), whose work stands the test of time, writes of quality being characterised 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'.

The research literature discussed in section 5 raises several interesting questions regarding an *effective* school/arts partnership that require further investigation in the future, including:

- What are the functions of the teacher, artist and school in an effective school /arts partnership?
- What kind of communication patterns foster effective partnerships?
- What is special about the roles of artist and teacher in an effective partnership?
- How can the *aims* of artists, students, teachers, schools, education and arts funding bodies be *aligned* and compared?
- What is the role of context on measures of effectiveness?

4 School/arts sector partnerships in Victoria

Over 110 organisations operate in the arts in education arena; there is an extraordinary and diverse array of programs offered to Victorian students and teachers. From performance groups which visit schools across the state, to digital media workshops in the city, Victoria's broad range of programs and projects challenge, enrich and engage school students of all ages. For further information go to: ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Arts_in_Victoria/Arts_in_Education.aspx›.

A number of these programs receive support from the Department through the Strategic Partnerships program. For further information on the program go to: ‹http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/partnerships/default.htm›.

Arts Victoria supports school/arts sector partnerships in schools as well as arts organisations, galleries, performing arts centres and museums across Victoria.

In Victoria, many schools work in partnership with artists and arts organisations; these projects are funded from within the school or external funding is sought from Arts Victoria, local government or philanthropic trusts. Funding is available from Arts Victoria to support residencies and partnerships through the Education Partnerships program and Community Partnerships program.

This section briefly outlines the format and aims of these programs and provides examples of some recent partnerships which have taken place between artists and schools in Victoria. There is also one example of one of the many partnership programs offered through Victoria's key arts agencies.

Education Partnerships program Extended School Residencies program

The Extended School Residencies program supports collaborative projects between arts organisations and schools over a minimum of two school terms. The residencies are supported by additional professional development for teachers and artists and involve arts organisations working in extended partnerships with students, teachers and school communities.

The Extended School Residencies program aims to:

• expand opportunities for Victorian arts organisations to work in collaboration with teachers and students in primary and secondary schools
• provide opportunities for smaller, disadvantaged schools to enrich teaching and learning through collaboration with professional artists
• generate rich, authentic learning experiences that engage students in learning across the curriculum as well as in the arts.

The Extended School Residencies program began in 2008.

Photo: Nolan Bradbury

Music Connections: Newport Lakes Primary School with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

School

Newport Lakes Primary School is a small school in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The school has a medium-high Student Learning Needs index with over 60 per cent of students from non- English-speaking-backgrounds and up to 65 per cent of families receiving Education Maintenance Allowance. The school embraces the challenge of developing life long learners who leave the school confident, happy and prepared for the future. The school had identified the Arts as a priority in their strategic plan and, as a small community with no music teacher, a partnership provided the ideal way to address this.

Arts organisation

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's (MSO) Education and Community Outreach program has been working for a number of years to develop ties with the wider community by introducing the love of classical music through schools, free public events, and community venues in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Project

The partnership project introduced orchestral musicians into the working life of a school for a period of two terms. During that time, the musicians worked with the staff, students and the wider community to create a positive learning environment for creativity and artistic inspiration to take place.

Beginning in the third term of 2008 and extending throughout the second semester, teachers were introduced to the work of the orchestra and Music Education with a series of professional development (PD) sessions and concert opportunities. Regular participation by staff in PD sessions enabled integration into the Victorian Essential Learning Standards on many levels of learning while embedding the work seamlessly throughout the school's community. Students throughout the school were given the opportunity to work with MSO professional musicians in a range of methods, based on their year level and ability. At the end of the semester a celebration of the work with the larger Newport community was held in conjunction with the opening of the suburb's new performance centre – the Substation.

Workshops fell into five main categories; Teacher Professional Development, Class Workshops, Skills Workshops, Composition Projects and Community Projects. Each section of work was delivered by specialists in their area permitting the students to engage with some of the best musicians in the industry.

Five PD sessions were run for all staff introducing them to the music and exploring how to engage their classes in using instruments, composing, music technology, singing and general music making. Teachers were encouraged to trial their skills in the classroom between PD sessions and assistance was given by MSO to develop their own teaching units with music as an added dimension to the delivery.

Musicians from the MSO visited each class giving demonstrations, answering questions and developing students' knowledge of the instruments used in the orchestra as a precursor to their skill workshops. Students were later offered intensive music lessons on singing, Middle Eastern drumming, tuned and keyboard percussion and composition. The diverse range of subjects was taken on board with vigour amongst the children and their creative skills and arts- related knowledge developed significantly in the time the partnership existed.

This enthusiasm spread and parents became immersed in the progress taking place. Jackie Green, principal of Newport Lakes said: 'The partnership created opportunities for us to explore the power of music to connect people together, in the school and in the community. The unexpected outcome of this partnership has been the approach by two community groups offering to form a partnership with the school to continue the profile of music in the school and the wider community. Also, various talented parent musicians in our school community have come forward to offer their skills after observing the benefits to children from interacting with musicians'.

The opening of Newport's performance space, the Substation, allowed the students a perfect opportunity to give back to the community all that they had learnt, developed and created in their partnership. One child was heard to remark, 'The grand opening was at the Substation and we were invited to perform our masterpiece!' Teachers, students' parents and friends were there to support and embrace all that had been accomplished during the partnership.

The Impossible Zoo: Coburn Primary School, Melton with Polyglot Puppet Theatre

Coburn Primary School in Melton has a current enrolment of 346 children. It is a fast growing area and one that suffers socio-economic disadvantage as well as being in one of Melbourne's outer suburbs. The housing and rental accommodation is identified as the cheapest in the Melbourne metropolitan area and attracts an influx of struggling families due to the affordability.

Project
In terms 3 and 4 of 2008 the Polyglot Puppet Theatre worked with students of Coburn Primary School. Through the use of many art mediums, children participated in a project that involved turning the school into a make-believe zoo for the evening. The children used puppetry, media, music, singing, and visual art skills to investigate, plan, develop, perform and evaluate the project.

Polyglot worked directly in collaboration with the students, worked directly in collaboration with the teachers, guided the process of the project, provided professional development sessions for staff to strengthen and develop on-going arts practice in the school.

The students' own vision and aesthetic instincts drove the look and feel of the performance. They used recycled materials as the major resource, and were encouraged to use any materials that they can find anywhere, while fitting in with the school's environmental policy.

The audience came into the school on a Sunday afternoon to be met by students being ticket sellers, waterbirds, meerkats, lions, walking rubbish bins, animal poo collectors, butterflies, spiders in a toilet, and legs of a gigantic dragon. The huge audience wandered around looking at the zoo exhibits, eating food, watching the children perform and they then sat down to watch a simple and all-involving performance with three major songs and puppetry.

The school integrated the project into the curriculum through the integrated studies block. From there it integrated the themes into the literacy block. Grade teachers took the concept of the zoo and constructed their own unit plans and themes. For example, certain levels took on a sea creatures, water birds or animals theme. Other levels implemented a wetland theme and some used an integrated approach where they studied animals, integrating it into their lieracy blocks.

Teachers and staff at Coburn PS were deeply involved in the success of the Impossible Zoo. The Impossible Zoo provided the focus for a whole school integrated curriculum unit for term 4.

'Through professional development and exposure to professional artists the teaching staff were able to gain insight into different ways of using puppetry, visual and performing art in the classroom.

The culture of art and performing will continue in the school because staff and students can now see what is possible and the project has left students and staff with additional skills that they can build upon' (Kathy Burke, teacher).

Arts organisation

Polyglot Puppet Theatre, founded in 1978, is a centre of artistic exploration and a place where kids are the catalyst for original, visual, new Australian plays. Polyglot has been recognised for excellent work in community participation performance and has a reputation for innovation and quality in its professional productions. For more information, go to: ‹http://polyglotpuppets.com.au/›.

Research and evaluation

Students ran the evaluation and documentation of the project through the expertise and process of Trax – a company Polyglot works with in film and community evaluation processes.

‘As part of our evaluation process, questionnaires were presented to student, parent and staff communities. It was revealed through the students' evaluations that there was improved school connectedness. One particular quote from a student who participated in our documentary group was: 'My school now has me in it' (Sarah).

The students were exposed to a lot of creative freedom and were involved in designing, drawing, creating and making all puppets and sets displayed on the night. They were enabled through this process to discover their strengths and weaknesses through the open learning style that the project created. Teachers observed and reported that the particularly 'at-risk pupils, who often resort to bullying as a means to establish hierarchical status, were engaged in the project. They observed these children exhibiting qualities of teamwork, compassion, compromise and understanding.

‘Children learnt to think constructively and analytically. They used many thinking skills and extended their imaginations in a way they don't do in a normal classroom environment. When making their puppets, difficulties in movement arose and children had to find alternate solutions' (Kathy Burke, teacher).

In relation to school community and pride, there was huge turnout on the night. It was so great that the community was lining up down the street to enter the Impossible Zoo. There were reports of parents crying during the Grade 5–6 ensemble.

This project was supported by the Extended School Residencies program which is funded by Arts Victoria with support from the Community Support Fund. For more information, go to: ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Funding_Programs/Education_Partnerships/Extended_School_Residencies.aspx›.

Artists in Schools program

The Artists in Schools program ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/› creates the opportunity for practising professional artists to work with young people in Victorian primary and secondary schools. It involves schools and communities in creative projects while providing students, teachers and artists with diverse and challenging learning experiences. The program generates innovative ways to engage students across all strands of the curriculum, Prep to Year 10.

The Artists in Schools program has been running since 1981 and aims to:

• support high quality student learning across the curriculum
• enrich teaching practice through interaction with professional artists
• promote cultural vibrancy in schools through creative partnerships
• expand opportunities for artists to work with young people.

Heroes: St Joseph's Primary School Collingwood with artists Rebecca Russell and Ken Evans

St Joseph's Primary School is an inner city primary school of 120 students, representative of a diverse range of cultures, languages and religions. The majority of students are from non-English-speaking-backgrounds. Over the past few years, the school has sought collaborations with experts within the local and wider community to access resources and skills unavailable within the school community to enrich the learning environment and incorporate the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (the Standards) into the curriculum.

Project

'Heroes' involved a group of 20 students from Years 4–6 working with artists, Rebecca Russell and Ken Evans, to create a contemporary shadow play that was then adapted to digital video to produce a 'live' shadow animation. Over a 15-week period students examined the theme of what it means to be a hero from a multicultural perspective, researching literary and real life heroes and analysing media stereotypes of heroes. The young people worked with the artists to create storyboards, experimented with shadow, light and puppetry to tell a story and explored traditional and contemporary shadow theatre towards creating the final work.

Students took on various roles from actors and designers, to puppeteers and directors, drawing on their individual skills, ensuring their engagement in the project. Jim commented 'I felt like a professional puppeteer when I held up the pyramid turning it into a Scorpion man'. The group were encouraged to have complete ownership of the project by making decisions that directed the final work and solving problems with guidance from the artists and the classroom teacher. Adam learned from this experience that 'you don't need colour and machinery to make a good play, you just need good ideas'.

Students also learnt computer animation techniques to edit the performance into a DVD which was screened to the school community.

Denise Santamaria, the classroom teacher, worked alongside the artists on the development of the project and its integration into the school curriculum through the Standards. 'Heroes' addressed learning in the Arts and English domains, but was also embedded through the domains of Physical, Personal and Social Learning and Inter-disciplinary Learning. Teacher professional learning opportunities were offered to all teachers at the school, focusing on shadow puppetry, enabling the teachers to expand their skills through the project. Denise felt that 'It was fascinating to see the children's understanding of artistic concepts and the language of visual theatre develop'. The artists themselves also found this project to be a valuable experience, commenting that it enabled them to 'explore ways to encourage children to think visually and to develop artistic concepts and processes'.

Artists

Ken Evans has been designing for puppet theatre, visual and image-based performance work for 25 years for both adults and children. He has been a lecturer in visual theatre at Swinburne University and RMIT University; he has undertaken several artistic residencies and has created works and staged performances for children at ArtPlay's Puppet Lab.

Rebecca Russell has been working in the Arts for the last six years. She has worked as a director, performer and co-devisor with her own critically acclaimed theatre company 'Spin Sisters'. She has also worked at ArtPlay and for the past three years and has been the curator of ArtPlay's annual Puppet Lab.

This project was supported by the Artists in School program which is funded by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and managed by Arts Victoria. For more information, go to: ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/ Funding_Programs/Education_Partnerships/Artists_in_Schools.aspx›.

'It was fascinating to see the children's understanding of artistic concepts and the language of visual theatre develop' (Denise Santamaria, teacher).

'For us as artists this project enabled us to continue exploring ways to encourage children to think visually and to develop artistic concepts and processes' (Rebecca Russell & Ken Evans, artists).

'We discovered that play time with the form is an essential component of the creative process and this will inform the way we will work with children in the future' (Rebecca Russell & Ken Evans, artists).

'Today I learnt that you can make shadow puppets with almost anything' (Yuan Yuan, student).

Water Course: A creative discourse into and through drought: Dimboola Memorial Secondary College with artist Michael Shiell

Dimboola Memorial Secondary College is situated in a township of 1,600 people in the Wimmera region. The school has an enrolment of 200 students. One third of families attending the school receive an Educational Maintenance Allowance.

Project

'Water Course' involved artist, Michael Shiell, working for 20 days at the school with the Year 9 and 10 students to deepen their understanding of their relationship with the environment. This was intended to act as a guide for the students while they journeyed through the project. The first part of the project saw students working directly in the environment as Michael led the students through a series of workshops assisting them to explore and reflect upon their relationship to the changing environment. At this stage Michael gave the students insight into the concept of environmental art and specifically ephemeral works. However he noted that, 'although the creative journey that the students went down was prescribed to some degree the outcomes of those journeys was very much of the students own making. This individualism was readily visible through the breadth and diversity of documentary results'.

The students' reflections took the form of ephemeral art works. The outcomes have had an impact on students' approach to creativity. A student working on the project even noted: 'I've never really seen the point of doing Art but after doing this a few times I find myself thinking about creating things a lot'.

The second part of the project involved students documenting their ephemeral art works. Students created a range of photographs, linocuts, reduction prints, etchings, sculptural and assemblage works, textile works, artists books, installations as well as photo mosaics to document their ephemeral works.

During his time at the school, Michael continued his own environmental art practice alongside the students.

The project culminated in a combined community exhibition of the students' creative responses to documentation as well as some written responses to environmental change that were done alongside the project. In this way each student's work created a dialogue between the changing environment, the ephemeral creative response to that change and an exploration into how people record their response to environmental change.

The project was carefully planned by the teaching staff to ensure it was embedded within the school's learning and assessment processes. The project was integrated into the school curriculum through the Standards and offered opportunities for learning and reporting against the dimensions of Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, Civics and Citizenship, The Arts, English, Communication, ICT and Thinking Processes. The project was also successful in addressing a number of Department of Education and Early Childhood Development initiatives including Literacy, Sustainability Education and Values Education. Importantly, the project coordinator noted that, 'The program was successful at targeting the cohort of students who had been identified as being disengaged from their learning, by creating meaningful learning experiences'.

Artist
Michael Shiell has been creating ephemeral visual artworks for the past nine years. His work is created with natural materials that are sourced from various sites and they are not intended to have a long-lived form. In this regard his works are not driven by the urge to create a finite object rather they simply reemphasise the process of creation as opposed to its outcome. In terms of environmental artworks this process is one of interaction with the land. It is about the experience of forming a relationship to an environment and responding to the specifics of that space. Michael has completed a number of Artists in Schools projects.

This project was supported by the Artists in Schools program which is funded by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and managed by Arts Victoria. For more information, go to: ‹http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/content/Public/Funding_Programs/Education_Partnerships/Artists_in_Schools.aspx›.

'For the Art teacher, Michael's involvement in these classes has been the most valuable Arts professional development she has ever had the opportunity to take part in' (Debbie Moar, project coordinator and teacher).

'The program was successful at targeting the cohort of students who had been identified as being disengaged from their learning by creating meaningful learning experiences' (Debbie Moar, project coordinator and teacher).

'Although the creative journey that the students went down was prescribed to some degree the outcomes of those journeys was very much of the students own making. This individualism was readily visible through the breadth and diversity of documentary results' (Michael Shiell, artist).

'I've never really seen the point of doing Art but after doing this a few times. I find myself thinking about creating things a lot' (David, student).

Community Partnerships program

The Community Partnerships program enables collaborations involving professional artists, arts companies and Victorian communities. The program accommodates different community contexts and settings in urban and regional Victoria.

The Community Partnerships program aims to:

• enable collaborations and partnerships involving professional artists, arts companies and Victorian communities that bring about mutually beneficial and positive results
• provide opportunities for artists and arts companies to develop their professional practices and extend the reach and viability of their activities
• ensure that all Victorian communities are able to access, engage with and participate in a diverse range of artistic and cultural experiences.

The Community Partnerships program has been running since 2003.

Performing Arts and Professional Development: Kensington Primary School with Western Edge Youth Arts

Kensington Primary School is located in the Melbourne CBD and has an enrolment of approximately 230 children. Over a third of the students are from a non-English-speaking-background with a significant number of families from the Horn of Africa. Literacy and Numeracy form the core of the classroom programs and there is a significant focus on the Arts.

Projects

Since 2004, Western Edge Youth Arts (WEYA) School's Program (SCRAYP) has been in an evolving partnership with a cluster of disadvantaged schools in Melbourne's inner west: Debney Park SC, Kensington Community School, Debney Meadows PS, Travancore School and Kensington Primary School. In each of the last four years including 2008 WEYA has produced at least one major performance project with each of these schools.

Over this five year period Kensington Primary and WEYA have collaborated on five major performing arts projects and a number of smaller projects including professional development for teachers. Over this time the sophistication of the practice has developed as the work has become more integrated into the school curriculum. Teachers have also become more experienced in WEYA's collaborative and innovative approaches to arts education. This has raised the profile of the arts within the school community and the WEYA program is actively supported by parents and the school council. Drama pedagogy has become more widely used across the school and WEYA projects are eagerly anticipated by young people. WEYA has made a lasting impact on the school as a learning community and will continue to do so as the partnership develops further.

Quantitative and qualitative data has been collected on the program as part of an evaluation. Of the students surveyed, 92 per cent strongly agreed or agreed that they 'felt better about school when we were doing SCRAYP'. According to the data the SCRAYP program has a significant impact on students' personal and social development; in fact for the students themselves, it is the outcome they mention most readily when asked about what they got out of a program.

A recent project at Kensington Primary School, 'The Last Polar Bear and Other Stories' involved the creation of three short plays exploring global warming. WEYA artists worked with a group of 50 ten- and eleven-year-old students at the school over a semester with a two hour session per week to develop the works. The process combined process drama with interactive presentations on the underlying science and current theories on global warming using interactive, multi-arts pedagogy. The process incorporated physical theatre, creative and reflective writing, ICT, student research, teambuilding and performance skills. The project was embedded into the curriculum for Level 3 through the VELS domains of Science and ICT.

The final performance involved new media, physical theatre, dance, song, Shakespeare text and comedy to explore this crucial issue in terms that were fun and empowering for young people whilst directly addressing the seriousness of the issue of global warming.

Artists

WEYA is an incorporated, not-for-profit organisation that creates original performing arts work with young people from socially and economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse communities in Melbourne's west, in a variety of school and community contexts.

The education arm of Western Edge SCRAYP brings an artistic edge to learning. WEYA's work in schools is based on cross-curricular, collaborative practice between teachers, artists and students and creates high-quality, large-scale, original community performances that link schools to communities and challenge, entertain and inform.

WEYA places an emphasis on pedagogy and empowering students through student-centred processes. Young people research, devise and write materials for performance, working in a dialogic process with teacher-artists to create high quality material that students own and care passionately about. WEYA's work develops deep learning by engaging students in explorations of complex questions, for example, the nature of civilisation or the link between culture and environment. WEYA uses folk tale and classic texts like Shakespeare and Greek tragedy to develop moral and values based education that explores complex dilemmas and cultural identity.

Key findings

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected and documented throughout this project. Teachers and students were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements. The key findings of this research reveal a range of interesting responses:

Of the students surveyed 92 per cent strongly agreed or agreed that they 'felt better about school when we were doing SCRAYP'. Furthermore, 90 per cent of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that students' 'oral language improved'.

Based on a survey of student resilience (PRASE) conducted by the school welfare coordinator, a majority of the cohort of students engaged in the project improved their resilience, confidence and coping skills during the course of the program. In addition to these results, several children in the 4–5 grades also responded in the whole of school wellbeing survey (carried out at the end of each year) that SCRAYP is one of the three things they enjoy most about school.

There is also evidence in this data to show that many of the Year 4–5 students involved in the project are fulfilling the criteria both for the Standards Thinking Processes and Exploring and Responding in The Arts at Level 4, and several are approaching the standards for Level 5.

As such, when surveyed 92 per cent strongly agreed or agreed that they had more self-confidence as a result of the program. Seventy-four per cent strongly agreed or agreed that they now feel happier speaking out about their ideas in front of the group. And 76 per cent strongly agreed or agreed that they had developed their ability to express and put forward their opinions – in other words their ability to *organise* and *communicate* their thoughts was improved.

Partnerships in galleries and museums

Galleries and museums across Victoria provide tours, workshops and presentations related to their permanent and temporary exhibitions. They provide learning and teaching programs designed to support delivery of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Victoria's key arts agencies also partner with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to present the annual VCE Season of Excellence. For more information, go to: ‹http://www.vcaa.vic. edu.au/excellenceawards/seasonofexcellence/index.html›.

Arts about Media: a partnership between Catholic Education College Sale, Frankston High School, ACMI, NGV and Arts Connect9

Schools
Year 9 students from Catholic Education College Sale and Frankston High School.

Arts organisations
The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) celebrates, explores and promotes the cultural and creative richness of the moving image; it is based in Federation Square in the heart of Melbourne. ACMI Screen Education aims to inspire the next generation of moving image makers with special screenings, lectures and innovative hands-on workshops for primary and secondary school students, tertiary students and educators.

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) is Australia's oldest and pre-eminent public art gallery and possess what is generally acknowledged as the most outstanding collection of fine art in the region and one that ranks with major collections throughout the world.

NGV Schools develops programs and resources for students and teachers. Innovative programs including tours and workshops are based on the VELS to engage students with original artworks and are designed to encourage a deep understanding of essential knowledge, skills and behaviours. Teachers are encouraged to participate in various Professional Learning Programs which explore strategies for enriching the school curriculum using the NGV Permanent Collection and temporary exhibitions.

Managed by the Arts Centre, Arts Connect 9 aims to provide Victorian regional students in Year 9 with access to a range of dynamic programs in the Melbourne Arts precinct in partnership with leading Victorian cultural institutions in the state by alleviating the burden of travel costs to Melbourne.

Project
Arts about MEdia was a collaborative program developed and implemented by NGV and ACMI as a pilot project as part of the Arts Connect 9 program. The success of Arts about MEdia has seen the program expand and is now offered to all Victorian Year 9 students.

Arts about MEdia was a highly focussed and in-depth one day program that engaged Year 9 students in an exploration of the concept of identity. It encouraged students to explore questions such as:

How do we define ourselves?
Who are we?
How do we express ourselves?
Where do I fit in?

After considerable discussion in the planning and development phase in relation to curriculum, the interests and experiences of adolescent learners, the resources offered by both organisations in terms of artists, educators and artistic works, it was decided to explore identity in relation to Indigenous Australians. An Indigenous artist and elder with strong connections to and knowledge of the paintings of Julie Dowling, the book, Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence (1996) by Doris Pilkington Garimara and the film Rabbit Proof Fence (Phillip Noyce, 2002) was consulted and he agreed to facilitate key parts of the program with the NGV and ACMI educators.

Students began the program by participating in a comprehensive visual analysis of a significant Indigenous art work, Federation Series: 1901 – 2001, created by Julie Dowling. Analysis was facilitated by the Indigenous artist and elder and an NGV Educator who supported students as they examined the highly decorative and textual elements of key works from the portraits in the series. The knowledge and passion of the Indigenous artist inspired students to explore the stories embedded in the paintings and to consider social, cultural, economic and political issues impacting on the identity of the person featured in each portrait. Together personal interpretations were shared and discussed, helping to extend students ideas about the construction and representation of identity.

These conversations were then built upon at ACMI where students were further challenged to explore themes of identity, by comparing the human stories presented through visual art with those presented through film. After a screening of scenes from the film, Rabbit Proof Fence (2002) students again engaged with the Indigenous artist and elder. The scenes encouraged students to reflect upon the film's depiction of Indigenous children and culture and to think about how and why peoples' relationship with other people and with land and culture is central to their identity. Discussion helped to build students' understanding of citizenship, cultural identity and to question attitudes, ethics and values, both the past and the present.

Finally students were asked to consider how their own lives and experiences contribute to their sense of identity. They were invited to engage in a creative workshop that provided an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings by either creating a 2D or 3D mask with NGV or by engaging with a new media artist with ACMI, to create a contemporary self portrait using a range of digital media as an expression of their own identity. During the workshop students could engage on a more personal level with the Indigenous artist, the new media artist and educators from NGV and ACMI.

Evaluation

Facilitators and teachers have been powerfully affected by this program, not only by the significance of the content explored, but by the quality and intensity of students' thoughtful, challenging, sensitive and respectful responses throughout the sessions. The depth of experience, artistic integrity and honesty reflected in the art work and film clips was revealed during the workshop process. The process of creating art works and the works themselves offered powerful, insightful and individual responses as students revealed their developing sense of identity.

This program has provided students with potent opportunities to learn how visual art and film are employed by artists to communicate personal meaning and identity and to understand more about highly complex aspects of Indigenous life and culture. Students developed a new level of respect and acknowledgement of life from an Indigenous perspective. Students felt confident to take risks and express their innermost feelings and emotions. One Year 9 male painted about the impact of the separation his mother experienced as a result of divorce, another about her tragic war experiences in Kosovo. 'We did not anticipate the depth of this response and acknowledge the role and contribution of the Indigenous artist and elder, that is essential to this program'. Teachers have commented on their new understanding of their students and about how impressed they are with their attitude and behaviour. Peer to peer learning was also significant as students revealed deeply personal views and feelings creating deep bonds and mutual trust.

As an evaluative tool NGV and ACMI produced a brief DVD that describes various aspects of the program and includes interviews with the Indigenous artist, students, staff and teachers. The program indicates substantial learning for all staff, teachers and students involved.

Quotes from one class outlining what the students either learnt or found the most interesting aspect of the day:

'I think the most interesting activity was the explanations of the Julie Dowling pieces. I learnt how cruel the Aboriginals were treated and a lot about the past. I think that's important' (Madeleine W).

'I learnt how bad the Aboriginals were treated. I also realised that an apology from the prime minister would mean a lot' (Ben).

'Watching Rabbit Proof Fence and listening to Brian's point of view because there was so much that Brian told us about that I had no idea had happened' (Astrid C).

5 Why arts/education partnerships are important

This section comprises a literature review of national and international research in the area of school/arts sector partnership as it relates to:

• improving student engagement
• social learning
• personalised learning
• creative skills as a key component of innovation, and
• development of arts-related knowledge and skills.

In the summary below each of these key areas in education research is defined and discussed in relation to the literature on partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector.

One of the challenges of the literature review component of this report was to identify research that *specifically* focuses on a school/arts partnership. As Bamford (2006) notes, recent trends in the arts education field have been characterised in terms of *education in the arts* – learning within the arts domain – and *education through the arts* – the integration of the arts into non-arts curriculum areas. It is often not clear in the research literature which of these are being serviced by a partnership and which are being serviced by a school educator. In other words, the term 'arts education' is not synonymous with 'school/arts partnership'. As Galton (2008), remarks in his work on the creative pedagogy of artists in the classroom, 'there has probably always been a tradition of having artists come into schools to work with children [but] there is little available evidence of the effect that such interventions [have] had on schools'. A literature review for Arts Victoria (Sinclair 2006) also demonstrates that there is more than one model of a school/arts sector partnership.

Bamford (2006) sheds some light on this, noting that late in the twentieth century 'artists-in-residence programs were introduced into schools as a way to foster community interest in aesthetic inquiry and to provide professional models for children'. Hall, Thomson and Russell (2007), in their work on artists in schools, suggest that the contemporary emphasis on 'partnerships' is a recent direction of public policy internationally, often with the aim of promoting the achievement of social goals.

Complicating a search of the research into school/arts partnerships is a trend, also identified by Bamford, which indicates that artists are increasingly taking a role in the delivery of arts education programs. She notes that care needs to be taken as to what constitutes a 'professional artist' in differing educational and national contexts. Bamford states: 'of the artists actively teaching arts education in the schools, 31 per cent receive less than three months or no arts education training'. She does not suggest that artists should be made into quasi-teachers but points out that 'artists bring something unique and valuable to arts-rich education and this would be lost if they were to resemble too closely the formal teaching staff'. The point is simply that there are a variety of tensions and complicating factors in identifying research on school/arts partnerships within arts education literature.

One notable exception is the UK's Creative Partnerships program. Set up in 2002 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Creative Partnerships (CP) aims to give young people in disadvantaged areas across England the opportunity to develop their creativity and ambition by building partnerships between schools and creative organisations, businesses and individuals (Ofsted 2006). The focus in this report is the 'research' literature emanating from this initiative including the:

- National Foundation for Educational Research report titled *National Evaluation of Creative Partnerships* (Sharp et al. 2006)
- Ofsted report *Creative Partnerships: Initiative and Impact* (Ofsted 2006)
- House of Commons Education and Skills Committee report, *Creative Partnerships and the Curriculum* (Sheerman 2007)
- research reports on *Creative School Change* and *The Pedagogy of Creative Practitioners in Schools* (yet to be publicly released).

Arts education research is highly contextual in terms of the specific art forms employed in a project, the nature of the participants and the community in which a project is situated, as well as the particular educational and cultural policy environments. This becomes clearly evident in the section which details the impact of school/arts partnerships on the development of arts-related knowledge and skills, where partnerships are used in some countries in place of arts curriculum. Due to the contextualised nature of research in this field it is difficult to generalise international findings to the Australian context.

Australian research in arts education is still in its infancy. Writing in 2002, Bamford commented specifically on the lack of research into the impact of arts education in Australian schools, stating that there is 'an urgent need for a detailed study of the impact of arts programs within the context of Australian schools' (Bamford, in Gibson and Anderson 2008). The two most notable studies to date are *Evaluation of School-based Arts Education Programs in Australian Schools* (Bryce et al. 2004) for the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER), and *Education and the Arts Research Overview* (Hunter 2005) for the Australia Council for the Arts. Both reports look at the impact of arts programs on the academic progress and engagement with school of participating students. Again there is a lack of clarity around which programs have been developed as a direct result of a school/arts partnership – particularly in the case of the ACER report. There is also some overlap between the two reports, with the results from the ACER study appearing in Hunter's research overview.

A final note regarding the scope of the summary of literature concerns the variable usage of the terms under discussion. A scan of the arts education research literature shows very few reports outlining their findings in educational terms such as 'personalised learning', 'social learning' etc. While 'engagement' is a term often used in the arts education literature, there does not appear to be one common definition. Further complicating the terminology are the permeable boundaries between concepts such as student engagement, personalised learning, social learning and even creativity. These terms share common characteristics (such as risk-taking,

self-esteem, goal setting, and teamwork) and this makes many of the arts education research findings applicable to more than one area. In his literature review on creativity and arts education, Fleming (2008) opts not to repeat the often lengthy theoretical debates on creativity in an endless search for one correct definition. Rather, his approach is to focus on *how* the term is being used and interpreted and *what* this signals for arts education. This review also focuses on *how* terms such as student engagement, personalised learning and creativity (for example), are being understood and implemented in the international, national and Victorian educational contexts and what arts education can offer in terms of their delivery.

Student engagement

School/arts sector partnerships usually specifically aim to enhance student engagement. Engagement can be seen as operating on two levels in the school environment. On a basic level student engagement can be seen as a 'student's willingness to participate in routine school activities, such as attending class, submitting required work and following teachers' directions in class' (Chapman 2003). On a deeper level, however, student engagement is increasingly being used to describe 'meaningful student involvement throughout the learning environment, including students' participation in curriculum design, classroom management and school building climate' (Fletcher 2005). Fullarton (2002) positions these levels as operating in a 'synergistic relationship', which he defines as:

• engagement with learning
• engagement with the school community.

Motivation and engagement are often, mistakenly, treated as the same concept but they are in fact quite different. Russell, Ainley and Frydenberg (2005) describe motivation in terms of energy and direction, 'the reasons for behaviour, why we do what we do,' and engagement as 'energy in action'. As the authors point out, students can be motivated but disengaged, and this is a major challenge for schools:

For example, in a recent large Victorian study, primary and secondary students (Years 5 to 9) recorded high, positive scores on a scale concerning their own motivation to learn, but indicated that they found only a low level of interest in their classroom work. In such a situation, students are unlikely to direct maximum motivational energy into their unstimulating work. This points to the importance of the school factors that affect student engagement.

One of the strategies used to facilitate student engagement is 'student voice'. A review of recent thinking around student voice (Department of Education 2007b) notes that it is being increasingly used to enhance student engagement in and with schools. 'Voice' is understood 'not simply as the opportunity to communicate ideas and opinions; it is about having the power to influence change' (West, in DoE 2007b). At its simplest, student voice provides students with the opportunity to contribute to conflict resolution and problem-solving (at both the organisational level – in terms of identifying school issues and problems – and at the interpersonal level). At its most sophisticated 'young people share their "voice" by collaborating with adults to actually improve education outcomes, including helping to "improve teaching, curriculum and teacher-student relationships and leading to changes in student assessment and teacher training"' (DoE 2007b). Student voice is a key strategy used not only in terms of engagement but also personalised learning (which is discussed below). The Department collects data on student engagement through the Attitude to Schools Survey. Other data collected by the Department that is useful when considering engagement includes: attendance data, parent and teacher opinion surveys, student wellbeing surveys and school level incident reports.

The following discussion of the relationship between student engagement and school/arts sector partnerships focuses on the impact of partnerships and extra-curricular arts activities on: school attendance; motivation and creative pedagogies; whole-school change; and student engagement.

Partnerships and school attendance

Studies suggest that a relationship exists between participation in arts activities and increased school attendance levels. However, in some cases increased attendance may be directly linked to the days the arts program is run, and may not always have a long-term impact on school attendance. Bryce et al. (2004) found that severe disaffection with school can lead to early drop out. About nine per cent of Australian students leave school before the start of Year 11 (Marks & Fleming 1999) and the proportion is higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Northern Territory Music Program – Indigenous Music Education Program, reported in Bryce et al. (2004), was established as 'a secondary level Indigenous instrumental music delivery program for remote community schools. The main objective of the program is to provide literacy and life-skills development through music education'.

This arts education program was driven by a specialist music teacher. Data collected included: interviews with the program coordinator and staff members, observation of classes and student focus group discussions. Analysis of both the staff interviews and student focus groups identified an increased attendance at school on the days that the programs were run. Other outcomes included increased teamwork, self-esteem, engagement with learning – enjoyment of learning in music lessons was mentioned by both the students and teachers – and self-organisational skills. There was an attempt to gather academic and competency-based assessments but the program operated in a culture where traditional assessment methods were not a focus, and so this kind of data was not available.

Tait also reported similar findings from arts partnerships research in the Northern Territory (Tait, in Hunter 2005). A significant feature of this project was that the school/arts partnership was specifically designed and implemented for the purposes of research. The project was an intensive music education program integrated into the Years 5, 6 and 7 curricula delivered through a school/arts sector partnership. Several key findings were related to academic attainment; however a marked transformation in the quality of student-teacher relationships and a perception of improved attendance was also reported. Interestingly, there was a perception that students' attendance had increased but this finding was not borne out in the attendance data. The researchers therefore suggested that 'as a result of their arts participation, the students had become more visible and engaged in the school community'. They also offer the conjecture that 'attendance records are not necessarily a good relative measure of student engagement and participation in learning' and that 'fluctuations in attendance from term to term could be attributed to the complex interaction of many factors … such as … basic needs [food, shelter, safety], stability of home setting, family obligations and responsibilities, individual responses to the demands of the school context' (Tait, in Hunter 2005). Hunter does note, however, in her overview of the six research reports, that students identified participation in the arts programs as a reason for attending school.

Impact on attendance is also reported in the international research

literature (Deasy 2002; Ofsted 2006). The Ofsted (2006) Creative Partnerships initiative was established to give young people in disadvantaged areas the opportunity to work with creative organisations, businesses and individuals such as artists, architects and fashion designers. The evaluation of Creative Partnerships indicates that of the small minority of schools that analysed attendance levels a significant impact was reported:

For some pupils, their involvement in Creative Partnerships proved a turning point: good attendance and participating in learning continued beyond the project. In a small but significant proportion of schools improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour during projects signalled the start of a return to schooling.

Partnerships, motivation and creative pedagogies

There is significant research currently emerging out of the UK that looks at the impact of artists in schools on student motivation, teacher pedagogies and whole school change (the impact of school/arts partnerships on whole school change is discussed in section 2).

Galton's recent UK study of three Creative Partnerships projects (2008) looks at the different pedagogical approaches of teachers and creative practitioners and how this impacts on student motivation. As Galton points out 'clearly one of the factors which influence (motivation) is the culture in which the learning is situated' and as such his study aimed:

• to explore the pedagogy used by successful external partners in bringing about transformations in pupils' attitudes to (and motivation for) learning, particularly those disaffected pupils of anti-school disposition
• to determine in what ways such transformations impact on pupils' creativity and their transfer to other curriculum areas, particularly mathematics and science, where pupils attitudes have declined significantly in recent years
• to examine the extent to which pedagogy used by successful external partners can be transferred to others (both to fellow artists and teachers).

It should be noted that Galton's work focuses specifically on the UK context, and as such not all his findings will relate to the Victorian context. However, a number of interesting preliminary findings can be found in this review.

• **The power status quo:** Teachers often have to establish roles and power relations between themselves and their students for classroom management. The creative practitioners promoted an equal power relationship emphasising students (and their teachers) as co-workers or co-learners in the creative process. Creative practitioners placed an emphasis on exploring students' own ideas as a means of increasing intrinsic motivation even if this meant departing from the main purpose of the activity. In other words, the focus is often on exploration rather than instruction. Galton makes the point that teachers 'are more constrained by the curriculum and tend to avoid wide ranging discussions which don't stick to the topic'.
• **Risk-taking:** Galton observed creative practitioners using a variety of strategies to encourage risk-taking:
  1 Scaffolding activities by allowing students the time and space to sort out their ideas. Again, given curriculum learning outcome constraints Galton observed teachers rush 'to help [students] by making suggestions while the creative practitioner stood back and watched'. In other words, teachers and creative practitioners sometimes have different perspectives regarding encouraging 'pupils to develop and express their own ideas'.
  2 Seeing student responses to tasks as emotional rather than cerebral. Galton argues that students respond to challenging tasks on an emotional level where fear of failure often determines their response. Creative practitioners encourage students to reflect on and share their feelings thus encouraging safer spaces. They also allocate responsibility to students which promotes self-confidence to cope without mishap.

3 Galton argues that two other factors also help students cope with challenge, both of which he observed in the pedagogy of the creative practitioners: 'the nature of the feedback offered and the capacity to match tasks to meet the needs of different pupils'. Creative practitioners ask students to make 'big choices' and they give feedback through extending student ideas rather than offering corrections. Activities also tend to be differentiated by task rather than pace.

Galton summarises the strategies employed by creative practitioners to boost pupil motivation:

Whenever possible, [creative practitioners] present pupils with 'big choices' designed to encourage thinking that is 'outside the box'. They provide the space and time for pupils to undertake this thinking. To this end, they generally scaffold these tasks by reducing the risk of failure while maintaining the ambiguities inherent in the tasks that they set pupils. Because they see avoidance of risk as mainly an emotional response, they also frequently emphasise the part played by feelings (both their own and the pupils') as well as discussing techniques and skills when working on such tasks. In giving feedback they tend to extend rather than change pupils' ideas, so allowing them to retain a strong sense of ownership. At the same time this form of help is designed to produce an outcome, which although sometimes limited in range, is capable of serious scrutiny by their peers and which is likely to result in positive evaluation. In this manner they boost the pupils' self confidence so that they are willing to take on greater challenges on future occasions.

An interesting observation made by Galton relates to the extent to which both teachers and creative practitioners come to a partnership with different expectations of outcomes:

Whereas for the creative practitioner the skills they possess are merely a means of engaging in a process of enquiry and problem-solving, for teachers they tend to be the main reason for supporting the initiative in that they hope that they will acquire sufficient knowledge and technique to enable their students to make films, take better photographs and perform other artistic activity. Thus when creative practitioners initially set up situations that are designed primarily to engineer 'cognitive conflict' so that the pupils are forced to think 'out of the box' teachers are often concerned about the lack of structure which they fear will result in an unacceptable performance.

This observation by Galton, relating to the Creative Partnerships program, emphasises the difference between artists and teachers in the context of school/arts sector partnerships. In the Victorian context however school/arts sector partnerships are often initiated from a shared set of intentions, aims and learning objectives in mind. Furthermore, in Victoria the Principals of Learning and Teaching P-12 (Department of Education & Training 2005) articulate six principles that can be used by schools, teams of teachers and individuals to reflect on practice and support professional dialogue to strengthen pedagogical practices. These principles drive initiatives such as school/arts sector partnerships and focus on the teacher's role in creating and maintaining a learning environment most conducive to meeting students' needs, including the reflection of students' lives and interest in learning sequences and the use of strategies to foster imagination and creativity. However, what is interesting about Galton's work is that it reminds us of the opportunities provided by partnerships with creative practitioners that are (perhaps) different from those of a classroom teacher. The skills he suggests that artists bring into the classroom environment have implications for student engagement, personalised learning and creativity.

Partnerships and whole-school change

A recent focus of research from the UK concerns the impact of Creative Partnerships programs on whole-school change. Jones and Thomson et al. (2007) comment that:

> *according to its website, one of the four aims of Creative Partnerships (CP) is to 'develop schools' approaches to culture, creativity and partnership working'. It 'enables head teachers to realise their personal vision for a school, freeing them up to innovate and succeed' and achieves through 'encourag(ing) an approach designed around the needs of the individual school'. This is a public articulation of an ambitious goal, no less than changing whole schools.*

The evaluation of Creative Partnerships (Sharp et al. 2006) found that schools reported the partnership's impact on their school as a whole in terms of:

• enhancing the school's image/profile
• unifying the whole school in a common purpose
• enabling the school to focus on creativity
• forming cross-curricular links
• broadening the school's approach to teaching and learning
• improving provision for the arts.

Jones and Thomson et al. (2007) are exploring how schools have understood and used Creative Partnerships to construct school change of various kinds. An interim report released in October 2007 mapped CP-supported whole-school change strategies in 40 schools that were considered to be 'good examples' of creative partnerships. It should be noted that the partnerships occurred over time (at least three years).

Interim findings include the following.

• All of the schools in the sample reported some change in teacher-student relationships and the general 'feeling' in the school as a result of the Creative Partnerships projects.

• Many of the schools changed their 'symbolic systems' – 'the metaphors they used to describe themselves, the images they used internally and externally and the narratives they used to talk about themselves'. This was mapped through an analysis of the school's internal and external public documentation, parent opinion surveys, interviews, media etc. (See case study box for the research methodology).

• Most of the schools were engaged in change that could be characterised as:

   1 A rejection of many of the elements of the technicist and rational mode of curriculum in which the teacher is 'deliverer,' the students are passive learners.

   2 The adoption of elements of a 'practical' approach to the curriculum where the strongest students are encouraged to go beyond the basics, but where there is a strong emphasis on vocational and life 'skills' and 'self-esteem'.

   3 The adoption of elements of a 'progressive approach in which the teacher is a facilitator and students are unique individuals who are encouraged to learn through problem-solving, collaborative work and extensions of their own experiences and interests.

• The presence of artists and engagement in thinking about creativity encouraged schools to make changes to their environment. Many schools saw CP as contributing conceptually and materially to how the schools were perceived.

A model for researching arts partnerships

Research questions

1   What kinds of school change are supported by Creative Partnerships (CP)?
    At what levels (whole-school, classroom, etc) are these occurring, and what is
    the relationship between these levels?

    • How are school cultures and structures changing with CP?
    • What teaching and learning practices are emerging in and through CP?
    • Which students and teachers are involved in CP activities and to what effect?

2   What models of partnerships are schools mobilising to produce change? What
    kinds of capacity-building are occurring through partnership? What tensions
    exist between partners and schools, and how are these being resolved?

3   How does CP policy, as it is understood and enacted at national and regional
    levels, support school change?

Data collection and methods

The investigation of schools consists of two phases:

1   Snapshot schools:

40 schools selected using a combination of advice from national CP staff, analysis
of CP evaluations and documentation and where possible, a short telephone
interview with the regional director. Researchers visit each school over two days to
talk informally with a range of staff and students as well as conducting an in-depth
interview with the Head and formal focus groups with the staff and students most
able to speak authoritatively about CP work. Extensive photographic records of the
school environment and documentation about CP in particular and school change
more generally are collected.

2   Ethnographic in-depth case studies

Ten case study schools selected for analysis on the following basis:

• schools in which it is claimed that there is significant change because of CP
• a mix of primary and secondary schools
• a mix of locations, across regions.

These case studies are relatively extensive (12 days, spread across three occasions) and longitudinal – over two school years and one calendar year in duration; overall, 200 days of fieldwork.

The researchers' visits entail: formal observations of lessons; videotaping of a sample of 'creative' lessons; informal and formal observations of break times, dining hall and staffroom; attendance at meetings; additional photographic records; attendance of performance, events or exhibitions; staff and student focus groups; conversations with governors and interviews with CP partners. Ongoing school documentation, including newsletters, school plans, timetables and meeting minutes also collected. In addition, students selected are shadowed for a day (Jones & Thomson et al. 2007).

Impact of extra-curricula arts activities on engagement

There is an important body of national and international research literature that investigates the impact of extra-curricula activities on student engagement and learning within the school environment. Heath's research (in Fiske 1999) is highly respected in this area. However, the discussion of this work is included below in the section on the development of arts-related knowledge and skills. Of more relevance here is Fullarton's 2002 study for ACER which found that students' participation in extracurricular activities (including sport, music, band or orchestra, debating, drama, theatre or dance, community and support work) had an important role to play in their overall engagement with school. 'Strong participation in such activities leads to a student's closer connectedness to the school community, and it is argued in the report that there are 'flow-on' effects to more academic parts of the curriculum' (Fullarton 2002). Macbeth et al. (2001) had similar findings in their UK three year longitudinal evaluation of the impact of out-of-school programs on school academic attainment and engagement.

In 2005, Halewood Community Comprehensive School, Merseyside UK, aimed to build an awareness of the importance of using arts-based subjects as a method for whole-school improvement. To begin this work, Year 8 young people were chosen to trial a new way of working. The Creative Partnerships coordinator explained that these young people were particularly challenging in terms of their behaviour and attitude to learning. Year 8 young people and their teachers embarked on several pilot projects with creative providers, with the aim of introducing new approaches into non-arts based subjects.

For one group of geography students, Creative Partnerships gave them the opportunity to work with a photographer for several weeks. Their teacher was keen to refresh a unit of work based on land use in urban areas, which was seen to be 'very stale' by teachers and young people. It was felt that current resources did not relate to young people's experiences, so the teacher and creative provider decided to base the unit of work on Liverpool's city centre. Each young person was provided with a disposable camera and was invited to take photographs around the city. The teacher and photographer encouraged young people to explore different geographical zones and look at the city in a new way.

Following the pilot projects, the Creative Partnerships coordinator and his colleagues looked for ways to expand on the work. It was decided that working off-site would be a good opportunity to experiment and develop ideas. Therefore, the whole of Year 8, along with 30 members of staff, spent a week at a residential centre in Anglesey. Creative Partnerships contributed to the event by providing creative providers to facilitate the work of teachers. The ultimate aim of the retreat was to create a 'curriculum map' for the young people when they reached year 9.

As a result of their involvement in Creative Partnerships, the motivation levels of young people increased, as had their attitude to learning. A number of teachers commented that young people had begun to work independently of teachers and lessons. They were taking their work seriously and were staying behind after school to finish pieces of work (Sharp et al. 2006).

Social learning

Social learning is a multifaceted and fluid term. It is referred to in the literature variously as social competence, social capital and social pedagogy and is associated with civics, citizenship and wellbeing. From a Victorian education perspective the concept of social learning is captured in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (the Standards). The Standards are designed to be used for whole-school curriculum planning and have three interwoven purposes:

To equip students with capacities to:

• manage themselves and their relations with others
• understand the world, and act effectively in that world
• prepare them for success in education, work and life.

These purposes are achieved through three core, interrelated strands of Physical, Personal and Social Learning; Discipline-based Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning.

The Standards also incorporate the national Statements of Learning which describe the essential skills, knowledge, understandings and capacities that all young Australians should have the opportunity to learn. The Department states that a curriculum designed to equip students for the challenging world of the twenty-first century needs to ensure that students develop as people who take increasing responsibility for their own physical wellbeing, learning, relationships with others and their role in the local, national and global community. Within the Physical, Personal and Social Learning strand of Personal Learning, the domains are Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning and Civics and Citizenship. The following provides a short description of these domains.

Interpersonal Development

The Standards state that in our highly interconnected and interdependent world, students must learn to work with others by:

• building positive social relationships,
• working and learning in teams, and
• managing and resolving conflicts.

Personal Learning

As students progress through school, the Standards suggest they need to be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation at school. This involves developing students as individual learners who:

• acquire self knowledge and dispositions which support learning
• learn with peers, including by seeking and responding appropriately to feedback
• increasingly manage their own learning and growth including by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these, and
• recognise and enact appropriate values within and beyond the school context.

Civics and Citizenship

As outlined in the Standards, students need to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that enable them to take action as informed, confident members of a diverse and inclusive Australian society. They need to understand the political and legal systems and processes and the history that underpins them. This involves a focus on students:

• understanding their identity and roles in the community
• knowing their rights and responsibilities as citizens
• appreciating Australia's role in the global community, and

Photo: Mark Maloney

Partnerships and social competencies

• having the knowledge, skills and behaviours to participate in society and take responsible action in relation to other citizens and the environment at a local and broader level.

Partnerships and social competencies

Most research reports make reference to the positive impact of the arts on improving students' self-esteem, self-confidence and communication – what Bamford (2006) refers to as 'generic social skills'.

Hunter (2005) reports that each of the six commissioned arts education research reports provide evidence that teachers, parents and particularly students perceive that arts participation fosters 'personal growth, group skills and social cohesion'. In the arts programs, arts participation was seen to enhance personal confidence, develop skills of cooperation and collaboration, and help foster relationships of trust and a sense of belonging.

Deasy (2002) comments that throughout all the layers of the compendium, authors provide evidence of the impact of the arts on social competencies. He suggests that a 'fruitful line of future inquiry would be to build on the studies and the suggestions of commentators and essayists to clarify the habits of mind, social competencies, and personal dispositions that are inherent to arts learning and to explore the application of these qualities in other realms of learning and life'. In this regard, Deasy quotes Horowitz and Webb-Dempsey who suggest that 'better and more creative research designs' need to be developed in order to 'probe the complexity of the arts learning experience, and also take into account the contexts in which the learning occurs'.

The research literature on *Creative Partnerships* also supports this contention. The 2006–07 House of Commons Education and Skills Committee report (Sheerman 2007) suggests 'a very high level of support for more creative approaches to teaching among school staff and creative practitioners, most of whom are clearly convinced that a wide range of positive effects follow from involvement in such programs, particularly in terms of developing 'softer' skills such as team-working and self confidence. This evidence should not be ignored, but needs to be more systematically collected and analysed more rigorously'. For example, over 87 per cent of Head teachers surveyed in 2006 believed that Creative Partnerships had improved students' confidence, communication skills and motivation.

Partnerships promoting cultural awareness, cohesion and citizenship

In an international survey of the field, Bamford (2006) references a number of substantial UK studies that address the role of the arts in 'building racial harmony' both within the school environment and wider community, through 'acknowledging identity and cultural difference':

• *Improving City Schools* (Ofsted 2000) reported that the arts curriculum in many of the primary and secondary schools visited was designed to take full advantage of the richness provided by cultural diversity. Strong links with parents and local culturally diverse arts organisations were noted. Supporting, developing and extending local cultures were noted by one teacher to be a feature of their success.

- Downing et al. (2003) asked teachers and head teachers to rank the five most important purposes for teaching the arts in their school. One of the five options was 'understanding and respecting other cultures'. Twenty-three per cent of head teachers and 20 per cent of teachers ranked this in their five most important purposes for arts education.
- Harland et al. (2000) investigated developments in awareness and understanding of the cultural domain, including greater awareness of different cultural traditions. Teachers responded that all art-forms impacted positively on cultural awareness. Both in schools with high proportions of children from ethnic minorities and those with low proportions, the arts were considered important in developing young people's attitudes towards a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. Teachers felt it was important to learn about one's own culture, as well as those of other people. Like teachers, students felt that all art-forms contributed to an awareness of other cultures.

The role of the arts in cultural wellbeing and community regeneration strategies has been a significant feature of community cultural development and community partnerships programs in Australia for some time now. It is not uncommon for these programs to partner with young people both within and outside of the school environment (indeed, there are a number of arts organisations in this field who deliver specialised youth programs).

Partnerships and problem-solving in learning contexts
A number of international studies have attempted to look at the nature of learning that takes place within a school/arts sector partnership. Several characteristics have been identified such as problem-solving, teamwork, working within limitations, task and goal setting. In the research report commissioned for the Australia Council for the Arts Hunter (2005) identified evidence that 'arts participation can foster a positive attitude to learning by helping to develop 'enabling' skills that can be transferred to other learning contexts'. In particular, she reports that arts participation can:

- lead to improved motivation, interest and participation in classroom learning
- foster self-reflective learning
- enhance skills of planning and independent learning
- enhance confidence in learning.

Similar findings were reported in the ACER research evaluation conducted by Bryce et al. (2004). Across the four programs examined, the researchers found that arts participation enhanced students' potential to learn. In particular arts participation enables students:

- to work cooperatively with others. This involves working together as a team to mount a production (musical or dramatic); learning that each person (including oneself) is an integral member of the team; and learning various social (emotional control/behaviour management) and communication skills needed to contribute to the team

Photo: Mark Maloney

• to plan and set goals. At two sites, students' recognition of the need for persistence was noted. Students learn that working hard over a relatively long time can be more rewarding than obtaining immediate results. This was summed up by a Year 4 student who said of drama, 'It was hard, but it was fun'.

Ofsted (2006) commented that students who were given the opportunity to work directly in the creative industries demonstrated teamwork and meeting deadlines. They developed an understanding of 'how creative practitioners resolve the needs of others through negotiation, modification and compromise'. In the executive summary of *Champions of Change* Fiske (1999) reports that the arts encourage self-directed learning:

Students learning in and through the arts become their own toughest critics. The students are motivated to learn not just for test results or other performance outcomes, but for the learning experience itself. According to the ArtsConnection study, these learners develop the capacity to experience 'flow', self-regulation, identity, and resilience – qualities regularly associated with personal success.

Partnerships and resolution

The DRACON project (DRAma for CONflict management) is an 'interdisciplinary and comparative action research project aimed at improving conflict handling among adolescent school children by using the medium of educational drama' (Bagshaw et al., in DRACON International 2005). Developed by researchers from Sweden, Malaysia and Australia, DRACON aims to:

• develop research methods in order to map students' conflicts and strategies for handling conflicts and to study the effects of various drama exercises on individual, class and school levels
• contribute to the development of a theory of conflict processes in different cultures in order to explain the effects of different types of interventions in adolescents' conflicts
• develop and test integrated drama programs giving adolescents in the three different cultures the opportunity of handling conflicts in a more constructive way.

The analysis of the DRACON projects demonstrates that students gained new knowledge and understanding of conflict management on several levels:

• *On a social level*: getting to know each other in new ways, developing feelings of fellowship, empathy and respect, expanding their listening capacity, understanding the importance of cooperation and skills such as listening to others
• *On an aesthetic level*: finding creative ways of expressing feelings and thoughts
• *On a cognitive level*: discovering new understandings of the nature of conflicts and the different ways to handle conflicts, different perspectives on life and society.

Personalising learning

School/arts sector partnerships are a key method for supporting ideas of personalised learning. The research report titled: *Personalising Education: from research to policy and practice* (Department of Education 2007a) notes that a number of definitions of personalised learning have emerged at national and international level. Key terms clustered around personalised learning include: student voice; active and engaged learners; the development of learning environments that promote wellbeing and lifelong learning opportunities; and learning strategies that cater for different learning styles. When discussing personalised learning in the context of the Victorian education environment the report quotes the *Principles of Learning and Teaching P-12* (Department of Education & Training 2005), designed to support teachers working with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards:

> *It is clear from the research that there is no single 'right' or 'best' way to teach and it is important to recognise that the Principles are not an attempt to mandate a single 'one-size-fits-all' approach. However, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of classrooms that can be characterised as 'learning communities'. In these classrooms, there is an emphasis on building rich meanings for ideas rather than completing tasks. Students in these classrooms are intellectually engaged, and they feel a sense of collaborative partnership with their peers and their teachers.*

While there are differing views on the definition of personalised learning, the Department has identified some common characteristics (DoE 2007a) which have strong underlying links to school/arts sector partnership initiatives. In particular, personalising education involves a highly-structured approach that places the needs, interests and learning styles of students at the centre and includes a commitment to reducing the gap in achievement. The learners themselves also need to be informed and empowered through student voice and choice. Personalising education in this way also requires a commitment to lifelong learning, the provision of flexible learning environments and a range of educational pathways to meet the needs of all students.

Information and communications technology (ICT) is also a key enabler of personalised learning that enhances the diversity of learning, interactivity between students and teachers, and provides a space for personalised, flexible learning beyond the classroom walls. ICT also allows students to live locally whilst learning globally – through the use of external resources accessed via the World Wide Web (Hartnell-Young 2008).

Overall, a school embracing the concept of personalising education will promote a 'community of learning' approach and cultivate strong relationships between adults and students, as well as develop and promote networks and create strong links with the home, community, local institutions, business and services. However, it is

important to note that both locally and internationally, personalisation in education is still in its embryonic stages, with research yet to be produced relating to its overall success. Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence that many of the components of personalised learning approaches have been successful in a variety of contexts around the world (DoE 2007a).

The role of school/arts sector partnerships in personalised learning strategies
There do not appear to be any studies that look specifically at how school/arts sector partnerships can contribute to personalised learning. However interestingly, in the investigation of personalised learning approaches by schools in the UK by Sebba et al. (2007), a number of the projects described employed arts programs. The authors make the point that their research was not an evaluation of the strategies employed by the schools; rather their study aimed to identify how schools were defining personalised learning and to map what approaches they were using to personalise learning for their pupils. Projects drawing on the arts included:

• Personalisation through effective use of ICT: In this project the school has its own radio station which broadcasts online at lunchtime. A different group do their show each day. The staff reported that the radio station was highly motivating and having positive outcomes. For example, they described one pupil not only progressing and being part of the radio club from the beginning, but also being one of the key trainers for training teachers how to make radio drama.

• Student-run TV: In this project the students run a television station on the internet called ‹AliveTV.co.uk›. The programs are made and filmed by students on a voluntary basis. In order to do this, they attend school for three hours in the evening and weekends.

• Interactive lessons: In this project use of multimedia presentations that encouraged high levels of interaction were popular amongst pupils. A Year 9 pupil commented that they had been composing music on the computer and created their own orchestra.

• Writing club: In this project a teacher reported that the writing club, which takes place in the evening and is open to any pupils, is not a ‘booster’ session but for any pupil who wants to write. A member of staff gave examples of individual pupils who had benefited in terms of writing, vocabulary and self confidence.

Personalised learning focuses on developing organisational and teaching strategies to ensure every child's education is tailored to their needs so as to support higher levels of student engagement and attainment (DEECD 2007a). Catterall (2006) reported on the findings of a research report measuring the power of a theatre-based program for at-risk junior high school students in California, delivered in partnership with teachers from three middle school sites and six specially trained professional teaching artists including actors, writers, directors, dancers, singers and visual artists. Adopting a treatment comparison study design, the findings indicated that participating program students made meaningful and significant gains on seven out of nine scales of behaviours aligned to personalised learning, including metacognition, problem-resolution skills and self-efficacy.

There is evidence that similar arts-based programs are also being undertaken in Victoria. A survey of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's online Knowledge Bank of exemplary Victorian case studies on student learning identifies a number of projects that have employed the arts. These projects occurred in 2006 and 2007 and the arts strategies ranged from film, radio, creative writing to the performing arts.

The projects described by Sebba et al. (2007), appear to be focused largely on education *through* the arts, that is, the arts are integrated into non-arts curriculum learning areas (this is also referred to as arts integration). As Bamford (2006) explains, education through the arts can be described as 'education which uses creative and artistic pedagogies to teach all curricula'. She argues that this approach, 'enhances overall academic attainment, reduces school disaffection and promotes positive cognitive transfer'. The research in this field seems largely to be focused on the impact of the arts on academic achievement in non-arts subjects (often maths, but also literacy). In contrast, however, is the research on Empire State Partnerships (Baker et al., in Burnaford et al. 2007); a collective of 56 partnerships involving 84 cultural organisations and 113 schools in New York. The authors describe the aims of Empire State Partnerships as:

1 learning through the arts to allow different learners to approach subject matter in different ways, thus providing avenues into the content for more students
2 allowing students to encounter subject matter in a variety of ways – for instance mathematics 'taught at the blackboard' but later encountered again through dance instruction
3 introducing novelty to the classroom through work brought in by teaching artists. This stimulates 'difference' from the typical classroom presentation and also serves to stimulate student engagement in new ways.

The methodology and findings of the study by Baker et al. (in Burnaford et al. 2007) are described as follows:

Through a survey administered to teachers, teaching artists, and program coordinators, evaluators sought to identify changes that benefit students as a result of the ESP [Empire State Partnership] project. Results indicated that students appeared to apply themselves for longer periods of time as well as work more collaboratively in the ESP projects. The results regarding improved reading standardized test scores were more mixed, but generally, the perception was that students were improving while the project was in progress in partner schools. Underachieving students performed better than expected, according to the informants. The most positive results were reported with respect to the project's impact on students' self perceptions of success.

Other subsidiary findings from the research literature about arts partnerships that appear to be of relevance to a discussion of personalised learning include: the relationship between students' arts participation and the increased involvement of parents and families in student learning (Hunter 2005); the ability of arts programs to engage students in authentic learning tasks (Hunter 2005); and, the engagement of students as researchers in their own student learning within arts programs (Bamford 2006). Bamford illustrates this last point by turning to work being done through the *Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education* (CAPE) program, where, 'for example, the young people used digital photography to record and reflect on their learning and the children were encouraged to be active researchers in the learning process'.

Creative skills as a key component of innovation

In a review of arts in education and creativity literature for Creative Partnerships, Fleming (2008) points out that much of the writing on creativity starts from the point of trying to define what creativity *is*, in the hope that, as Allen and Turvey (2001) also observed, a correct meaning will be uncovered. However, as Fleming remarks, 'it is more productive to look at how the term has been used and interpreted, and what it signals about the arts in education'. In the Victorian education context then, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VCAA 2004) describe creativity as 'using imagination to generate possibilities' and innovation as 'developing the skills to solve new problems using a range of different approaches to create unique solutions'. Australia's *National Education and the Arts Statement* also echoes these remarks:

> *Schools that value creativity lead the way in cultivating the well-informed and active citizens our future demands: where individuals are able to generate fresh ideas, communicate effectively, take calculated risks and imaginative leaps, adapt easily to change and work cooperatively (Cultural Ministers Council & MCEETYA 2005).*

These approaches to creativity and innovation are informed by current understandings of a creative or knowledge economy, which privilege knowledge, creativity and innovation as the 'new gold' of a global economy. Oakley (2007) analyses the arts education research literature in light of the skills and attributes said to be required of the twenty-first century workforce (namely creativity and innovation):

> *Business literature and economic policy are increasingly calling for enhanced 'creativity' in the workplace. Creativity is understood to embody generic attributes, including communication, team-work, problem-solving, cultural understanding, and decision making skills.*

Lester and Piore (in Oakley 2007) suggest that the tendencies said to be associated with innovation in the knowledge or creative economy can be found in notions of artistic creativity: 'the capacity to experiment, and the habits of thought that allow

us to make sense of radically ambiguous situations and move forward in face of uncertainty'.

In his observation of creative practitioners in Creative Partnerships projects Galton (2008) identified that underpinning their pedagogy was a view of creativity 'which might be characterised by what the theatre director, Jude Kelly, termed "*promoting flexibility of the mind*" ... This approach to creating has been described elsewhere as *"aesthetic intelligence"'* (Raney, quoted in Galton 2008). Whilst most state-level policies in Australia acknowledge the point made here by Galton there is little empirical research in this area. When one breaks down the idea of creativity into the generic attributes mentioned above (risk-taking, problem-solving, etc) many of the research studies mentioned in our discussion of student engagement, social learning and personalised learning would seem to be of relevance to this understanding of creativity. However, as Bamford (2006) and Oakley (2007) have pointed out there is little research in this area. Oakley suggests that one exception may be Burton, Horowitz and Abeles (1999) but argues that this study is limited as it 'measures association rather than demonstrating a causal relationship'. The study by Burton et al. involves over 2000 children and suggests that those students who had been exposed to arts instruction for at least three years scored significantly better in the Torrance test of creative thinking than students of low arts exposure. Moga et al. (2000) suggest that rather than fostering problem-solving skills, the arts may in fact foster problem-finding skills, although they declared this would need further research. This suggestion is echoed in Galton's current work on motivation where he posits that creative practitioners engender 'cognitive conflict' in arts projects. In other words, creative practitioners continually open up processes of thinking and questioning rather than striving for a 'correct answer'.

Jeanneret (in Sinclair, Jeanneret & O'Toole 2008) argues that the arts have the capacity to engage children 'as active participants in their own learning':

> *When students are presented with artistic problems they are being asked to reflect on their own reactions and engage in critical thinking, analysis and evaluation. Students tend to stay on task, exploring and experimenting with solutions, when they are given the independence to do so. This encouragement to think independently is also the basis for creativity. They are also able to teach divergent and convergent thinking and encourage children to produce different, rather than similar solutions, because the solutions to artistic problems are multiple. Divergent reasoning is far more the case of the real world, where there are often many ways to address a problem and both kinds of reasoning are needed to function effectively in both our social and work lives. As Chapman says, the arts are 'the very subjects where ambiguity, uncertainty, struggles of conscience, and independent thinking are as unavoidable as they are in life beyond schools' (Chapman 2001).*
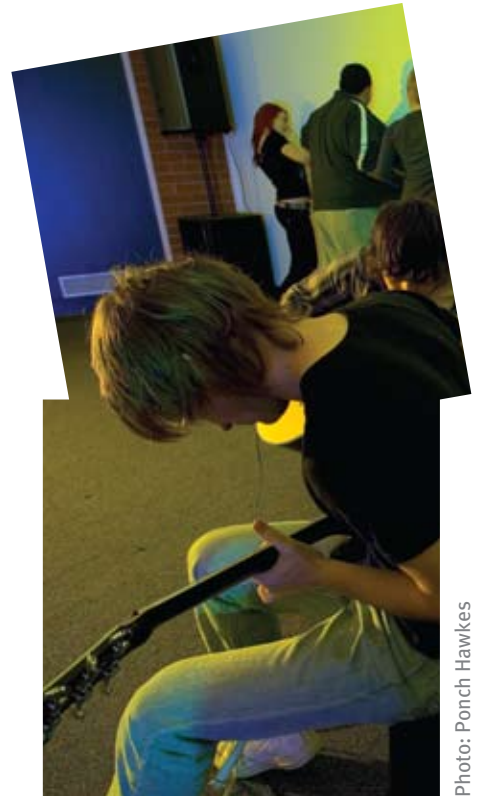

Photo: Ponch Hawkes

The Cultural Ministers Council, in the report *Building a Creative Innovation Economy* (Commonwealth of Australia 2008a), identified brokering partnerships between the creative sector and the education sector as a key priority. The study draws on the work of the ARC Centre for Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation to define a creative economy as 'the human activities related with the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of creative goods and services'. The authors suggest that it is the links between the traditional cultural sector, the creative industries and the non-cultural industries that frame the creative economy. 'Creativity is the distinguishing characteristic that is intrinsic to the creative sector and is embedded in non-cultural industries'. It is worth noting that a significant proportion of creative economy literature focuses on the ICT sector and its role in fostering a creative economy. This sometimes presents a challenge to the traditional cultural industries (performing arts, music, etc.) that are not sure how they fit with a digital, media agenda. A possible answer could be partnerships. The authors of *Building a Creative Innovation Economy* note the importance of building sectoral and cross-sectoral partnerships as a means to 'fostering innovation within the creative sector':

> *Building more and better partnerships is seen as both necessary and desirable, between creative organisations within jurisdictions, across jurisdictions and particularly between the creative sector and other sectors such as education and the digital infrastructure industries.*

The report makes specific mention of the increased use of ICT in Victorian schools and the need for more Australian-developed content in multimedia and interactive digital and media programs, particularly within an educational environment. In a separate section of the report the authors also cite an emerging trend towards user-created Australian content within community-based environments. These two trends offer a distinct possibility for school/arts partnerships. There are a growing number of examples where partnerships are being used to generate digital or media products. For example, the *In My Day* project discussed in the boxed case study below used a partnership between an animator and school students to document the stories of older members of the community. The animation and a behind-the-scenes documentary are now available as an online resource for other students and members of the public.

Bamford (2006) notes a trend in the increased use of ICT within an arts education environment:

> *The quantitative and qualitative data suggests that – where computers are readily available to arts educators and pupils – arts education has contributed significantly to teaching information and communications technology, computer skills and technology skills. In 63 per cent of countries arts education had actively developed ICT literacies and technical competences in their pupils.*

Interestingly, Bamford specifically goes on to point out that 'In Australia for example, computer applications are a core part of arts education'.

Development of arts-related knowledge and skills

In the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (the Standards), The Arts discipline-based strand defines learning from Prep to Year 10 in terms of '*creating and making*' and '*exploring and responding*'. The 'arts' are understood as the disciplines of visual arts, dance, drama, media, music and visual communications. Within the *creating and making* dimension students are involved in imagining and experimenting; planning the application of arts elements; principles and/or conventions; using skills, techniques and processes in relation to media, materials, equipment and technologies; as well as reflection and refinement. In the *exploring and responding* dimension, students analyse and develop understanding about their own and other people's work, and express personal and informed judgements of arts works. Involvement in evaluating meaning, ideas and/or content in finished products is integral to engagement in the Arts (VCAA 2008).

Research is lacking in the area of arts-related knowledge and skills. The majority of arts education research tends to focus on the impact of the arts on non-arts areas, such as academic achievement in non-arts disciplines or the impact of the arts on social or welfare outcomes. As such, there is a shortage of research relating to the impact of arts/school partnerships on students' development of arts-related skills and knowledge. Bamford (2006) makes the point that:

More research is required to analyse the general benefits [of arts-rich education to improvement in the arts] and to interpret the manner in which certain characteristics of arts-rich education may directly or indirectly lead to specified arts outcomes.

A commonly-held assumption is that a positive transference is taking place in these partnerships. Bamford surveyed more than 60 countries, of which 84 per cent saw aesthetic learning as being the main goal of arts education. Indeed, partnerships are used in some countries to boost, or in some instances replace, the arts curriculum.

Bamford refers to the Artist-in-Education (AiE) program in Hong Kong which aims to develop and enhance the existing arts education system through partnerships between artists and schools. She also makes the point that in a number of countries, including Denmark, France and Japan, cultural organisations play a key role as providers of cultural education in schools: 'For example, in Japan the *Program for the Promotion of Activities Enabling Children to Experience Culture and Arts* has been developed to ensure children can experience real arts and culture'. However, she cautions that 'these sorts of programs are not partnerships and tend to be more short-term interventions of – and exposure to – cultural agencies rather than sustained partnerships'. France uses a partnership model – the 'partenariat' – for the delivery of an arts curriculum. Writing on the teaching of theatre in French schools, Winston (2000) explains the underlying ideology of this model in terms of areas of expertise. Actors are regarded as experienced in the skills and knowledge of the theatre and as a result are 'indispensable' for imparting these skills within a classroom context, whereas teachers are viewed as experienced pedagogues and theoreticians. As Winston points out:

The artist and the teacher are understood not only to embody two different roles but also to represent two different systems of thought, those of theatre and those of schooling, the one creative and exploratory, the other institutionalised and authoritarian.

The three-year study by Harland et al. (2000) into the effects and effectiveness of arts education in English and Welsh secondary schools did find an increase in students' knowledge and skills associated with particular art forms as a result of arts-rich education. These results need to be interpreted with caution as the researchers were not solely investigating arts/school partnerships but rather arts education more generally, although the authors do mention artist-in-residence schemes as one of the external support mechanisms for effective strategies in arts education. The following information includes selected extracts from the study.

Arts education in secondary schools: effects and effectiveness

This research report presents the results of a detailed and rigorous examination of the effects and effectiveness of secondary school arts education in England and Wales. The three-year study included questionnaires to over 2000 year 11 pupils; an interview program with employers and employees; and in-depth interviews with pupils, arts teachers and senior school managers, as well as observation of arts lessons at five case-study schools. The aims of the study were to:

- document and evidence the range of outcomes attributable to school-based arts education
- examine the relationship between those effects and the key factors and processes associated with arts provision in schools
- illuminate good practice in schools' provision of high-quality educational experiences in the arts
- study the extent to which high levels of institutional involvement in the arts correlated with qualities known to be associated with successful school improvement and school effectiveness.

Research methods
- case studies of five secondary schools with good reputations in the arts – these included annual interviews with two cohorts of pupils (approximately 79 in total each year) who were performing well in the arts; interviews with school managers and arts teachers; and video observations of arts lessons
- analyses of wider-ranging information compiled through NFER's QUASE project – data on a total of 27,607 pupils from 152 schools in three cohorts of year 11 pupils taking GCSEs between 1994 and 1996 were analysed

- questionnaires completed by 2,269 year 11 pupils in 22 schools, with related information on their GCSE results, prior attainment scores and Key Stage 3 national test results, along with responses to a school questionnaire
- interviews with a cross-section of 20 employers and some of their employees (Harland et al. 2000).

Findings

'The effects of arts education fell into ten broad categories – the first seven dealt with direct learning outcomes for pupils, while the remaining three covered other types of effect. The outcomes attributable to the arts comprised:

Effects on pupils
- a heightened sense of enjoyment, excitement, fulfilment and therapeutic release of tensions
- an increase in the knowledge and skills associated with particular art forms
- enhanced knowledge of social and cultural issues
- the development of creativity and thinking skills
- the enrichment of communication and expressive skills
- advances in personal and social development
- effects that transfer to other contexts, such as learning in other subjects
- the world of work and cultural activities outside of and beyond school.

Other effects
- institutional effects on the culture of the school
- effects on the local community (including parents and governors)
- Art itself as an outcome.

In schools with strong reputations in the arts, numerous and wide-ranging effects were reported by pupils who were performing well in at least one art form' (Harland et al. 2000).

Brice Heath's research 'Imaginative Actuality: Learning in the Arts during Non-school Hours' (cited in Fiske 1999), focuses on the extracurricular participation of at-risk young people in arts organisations in the US. Whilst not in a school setting, Brice Heath does look at the partnerships between young people and professional artists and it is the nature of the learning that takes place inside these partnerships that is relevant to a discussion of arts-related knowledge.

Young people worked in collaboration with professional artists towards the development of an artistic product (performance, exhibition, publication, etc). Brice Heath identifies six strategies of learning occurring within the arts partnership:

- *Theory-building and predicting*: 'What do you think will happen if ...?' 'We could think of this in three dimensional terms, couldn't we?'
- *Translating and transforming*: 'Think about your favourite rap group – how do they use metaphors?'

- *Creating analogies*: 'Okay, so what's this? I mean, can you tell me how what I'm doing is getting at something else?' (demonstrating a short sequence of movements that suggests a furtive stranger)
- *Reflecting and projecting*: 'Write about how you think you did today and don't forget to put down your ideas for the dance program'
- *Demonstrating, explaining, negotiating*: 'Hold it right there. Do that again, Tracey. Now what did you see, Rad?' [he explains] 'Is that right, Tracey; is that how you did it? Tell him.'
- *Displaying (trial and error) and assessing*: 'Don't forget this performance is only six weeks off and those kids in the Parks program (the audience for the program) can be plenty mean when they're squirmy.'

Working in this environment, young people are expected to develop an informed critique of work – as critique and feedback is considered an integral part of the art-making process:

> *As the group moved through its work toward meeting the deadline, they give one another advice as well as work with the professional artists that instruct and guide in their organisations. They look, listen, take notes, compare pieces or scenes, and critique. They ask others to think about their work in specific ways: 'Does this work here?' 'What's not right here – something's bothering me'. The answers of others model good material for similar internal questions and answers of the self: the poet learns to ask herself, 'What is it I really want to say?' She also frames answers to herself on the basis of those she has heard in critique sessions. Males and females alike report the critique sessions as highly important to enable them to know how to raise and address serious questions and how to reframe queries to help young artists see in their work something they cannot see on their own (Brice Heath, in Fiske 1999).*

Brice Heath's work demonstrates the deep learning that can be fostered through an arts partnership. Through the socially interactive processes of arts-making, young people are developing thinking skills, problem-solving, critical analysis and constructive evaluation.

6 Conclusion

This report suggests that student engagement in the arts can have a positive impact on all the dimensions of physical, personal and social learning. Arts partnerships in education can influence students' generic social skills with studies providing evidence that students regard arts participation as fostering personal growth, group skills and social cohesion. These views are also held by teachers and parents.

The need for rigorous collection and analysis of the effects of arts partnership programs is identified as a key issue for researchers.

The report identifies a lack of research in the area of arts-related knowledge and skills with the majority of research focusing on the impact of the arts on non-arts areas.

Of particular interest is Galton's research in UK, which explores the pedagogy used by successful artists in bringing about transformations in students' attitudes to (and motivation for) learning. Galton's research investigates the differences in pedagogical approaches of teachers and creative practitioners and how this impacts on student motivation.

The findings presented in this report have informed and guided the next stage of this project: evaluating the impact of school/arts sector partnerships in an attempt to identify improved student outcomes in student engagement, student voice, social learning, creative skills and arts-related knowledge and skills.

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