Creativity, arts and learning conversation
Stimulating a culture of innovative learning
Acknowledgments

The Department for Education and Child Development thank the following participants:
Dr Lynn Arnold, Dave Brown, Garry Costello, Prof Katie Dawson, Jane Doyle, Wendy Engliss, Margot Foster, Susanne Koen, Brenda Kuhr, Prof Richard Maltby, Christine Morrow, Rosemary Myers, Barbara Pope, Dr Brant Pope, Clare Price, David Price, Judith Rose, Prof Martin Westwell and Helen Wildash.

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The setting

How can we increase creative learning moments for children and young people in and out of school?

How can we strengthen creative arts education for children and young people in and out of school by identifying partnerships?

These were the questions asked by the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) at a lunch time conversation held in May 2013. A unique opportunity existed for participants to listen, discuss and share their experiences, as well as the future possibilities of learning in the arts; learning through the arts; and learning as a creative process.

Three international experiences and perspectives were showcased:
• Austin, Texas: learning in the arts; learning through the arts
• UK: learning in the arts; learning through the arts
• Adelaide, South Australia: learning as a creative process.

Participants from the education, arts and local government sectors included:

Garry Costello
Head of Schools, DECD

Helen Wildash
Executive Director, Teaching and Learning Services, DECD

Wendy Engliss
Director, Australian Curriculum Policy and Projects, DECD

Margot Foster
Director Pedagogy and Leadership, DECD

Professor Katie Dawson
Director of the Drama for Schools Program, University of Texas

Dr Brant Pope
Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Texas

Barbara Pope
Travelling with her husband, Dr Brant Pope, University of Texas

David Price, OBE
Director, Educational Arts, UK

Clare Price
Head of Arts Development, Art Forms, UK

Dr Lynn Arnold
Lecturer St Barnabus Theological College, former SA Premier and Minister for Education

Jane Doyle
Chair of the Carclew Board and Channel 7 news presenter

Professor Martin Westwell
Strategic Professor of Science of Learning, Flinders University

Professor Richard Maltby
Executive Dean of Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law, Flinders University

Rosemary Myers
Artistic Director, Windmill Theatre

Dave Brown
Artistic Director, Patch Theatre Company

Christine Morrow
Director, Australian Experimental Arts Foundation

Brenda Kuhr
Senior Consultant at OzTrain, Member of A>Rich Together

Susanne Koen
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Judith Rose
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The experiences

The Austin experience

Features

- learning in the arts; learning through the arts
- partnerships between schools, arts and cultural organisations, higher education and city of Austin
- commitment to an arts-rich education for all students
- significant improvement in academic achievement of students participating in arts-rich programs across the curriculum
- creative learning framework guides the program
- arts education resource directory allows schools to access arts and cultural organisations
- online resources created for and by teachers
- funding opportunities for schools through ‘creative classroom’ initiative

The context

For over 10 years, the University of Texas at Austin (UT) has collaborated with K–12 teachers, schools, and school districts across the US to research the impact of the arts as a tool to increase teacher efficacy and student engagement across the curriculum through the Drama for Schools (DFS) program. DFS has been nationally and internationally recognised as leader in the innovative field of arts integration. Dr Brant Pope has a thirty year career in both academic and professional theatre and is the Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University. Professor Katie Dawson, Director of the Drama for Schools program, has focused her research on community engagement outreach programs, arts integration, youth and museum theatre, drama and theatre-in-education, and teaching artist praxis.

Austin is a sister city to Adelaide and, like Adelaide, is proud to be recognised nationally as a creative capital. The city boasts a number of arts and cultural organisations.

Research from a range of diverse communities across the US demonstrated that integrating arts across the curriculum led to higher attendance and improved academic achievement for students, with many more likely to attend college. For example, over a three year period, even in high poverty under-resourced campuses, the maths gap reduced by 26% and the reading gap by 14% for those students enrolled in advanced arts classes. Research also demonstrated that low SES students are twice as likely to attend college if they have attended an arts-rich school and that students are more motivated, engaged and challenged when in a creative learning environment.
Research consistently from around the country shows that arts engagement does something to learning—it accelerates it, activates it. There’s a lot of examples that let us know that in fact arts engagement is a catalyst for effective learning.

Eric Booth, author and educator, ‘What is the value of art in our classrooms?’ www.mindpop.org

However, despite an increasing awareness of the benefits of arts-enriched learning and a desire by artists to increase community engagement, there was no connection in Austin between schools and arts and cultural organisations: although there was an interest in forging links with one another, neither schools nor arts organisations knew how to initiate working collaboratively.

Across the city, groups and organisations were eager to encourage partnerships between learning and the arts to create an arts-rich community: university faculties, philanthropic organisations and the city council were all keen to support the initiative through expertise, funding and resources. A flourishing arts community would not only improve learning for young people and quality of life for all citizens, but would also attract incoming businesses and transform the culture of the city. The opportunity was ripe: the missing ingredient was a key player to connect people and organisations together by establishing a coordinated and collaborative community to foster arts-rich learning.

Early development

Mindful of the convincing research that demonstrated the benefits of integrating arts more fully into learning, leaders from arts and education communities gathered to consider how they might collaborate to ensure each child had access to an arts-rich education.

In 2011, Austin was selected by The Kennedy Center as an Any Given Child site. The Any Given Child initiative ‘seeks access, balance and equity to each child’s arts education’.

A Community Arts Team was formed, led by MINDPOP—a partnership between 40 arts and cultural organisations and higher education. The team included the Austin Independent School District (AISD), the University of Texas at Austin, the City of Austin, and philanthropic and business leaders. MINDPOP believed that ‘all students should have access to the powerful benefits of arts-rich schools that foster innovation, imagination, inquiry, hard-work and strong community’.

MINDPOP, through the Community Arts Team, began gathering local evidence to map arts involvement in Austin public schools by surveying school principals, classroom teachers, community arts partners and fine arts specialists. The survey highlighted the gaps and, more particularly, the inequities in access to the arts, particularly at the middle school level.

If we can prepare our children to be creative thinkers across the spectrum—in technology, in medicine—we can provide a creative economy here in the city of Austin.

Chiquita Eugene, Youth and Family Outreach Program Manager, City of Austin, ‘What is the value of art in our classrooms?’ www.mindpop.org
Establishing the initiative

The Community Arts Team, as the lead partner, established governance and steering committees allowing all interested parties to collaborate in the same agenda, including strategic plans, professional development, communications, resources, documentation and evaluation. The focus of the work was to provide ‘sequential arts education, integration of creative learning across the curriculum, and the support of arts opportunities during out-of-school time’. Sub-committees, representing different partners, focused on professional development in schools; professional development for artists; and development of strong communication strategies across the community network.

MINDPOP was selected to manage ‘Creative classroom’, a ten year initiative providing Austin with arts-rich opportunities, both in and beyond the school, that foster innovation, imagination, inquiry, hard work and community. The initiative is based on five goals:

- **Increasing creative learning moments for students in and out of school**
- **Creating arts-rich schools for each and every student** by developing individualised campus arts plans in each school; integrating arts-based instructional strategies across the core content curriculum; and delivering professional development to schools
- **Creating a community network that supports and sustains the arts-rich life of every child** by maintaining a creative learning website directory and map of available creative learning opportunities; engaging neighbourhood stakeholders to increase access to them; establishing partnerships with community organisations; and offering professional development to community artists
- **Developing leaders and systems that support and sustain quality creative learning for the development of the whole child** by creating formal partnerships with the city, the school district and the arts community; developing infrastructure and a work plan to support the initiative; engaging leaders as effective advocates; aligning educational priorities; collaborating with higher education institutions to promote arts integration; and increasing and coordinating resources
- **Demonstrating measurable impacts on students, families, schools and our community** by using common evaluation tools to assess student achievement, school engagement, teacher engagement; measuring community engagement; demonstrating creative learning through performances and exhibitions; and communicating the research findings of the impact of the arts on teaching and learning.

To support the initiative, MINDPOP also developed a creative learning directory, evaluation tools, and professional development, in partnership with the University of Texas at Austin, for all teachers to ensure that school communities across the district shared a common language about the power of the arts. A creative learning framework guided the program implementation, both in and beyond school.

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**Arts-based instruction is a constructivist approach to teaching and learning that uses the strategies of the arts to engage learners in a variety of forms and cognitive demands.**

**Arts integrated curriculum is an approach to curriculum design that supports learning goals in both arts and non-arts curriculum, often using one or more arts-based instructional strategies.**

MINDPOP, Drama for Schools
PowerPoint Presentation, Slide 27
A year on

The creative classroom initiative is now in its second year. Schools are funded to foster partnerships with community arts organisations and artists, and to develop arts-rich schools through research-based professional development, which trains every teacher to support creative learning across the curriculum. Priority is given to schools with a larger disadvantaged cohort.

nowplayingAustin is an online resource listing arts and cultural information for Austin and Central Texas, with a database of arts, culture and sports events; arts organisations and venues; business patrons; and public art. The arts education resource directory also allows teachers to find an arts education program by program type, year level, learning area, artistic discipline and cultural origin, connecting them up with professional producers and presenters from community arts organisations.

Drama-based instruction, an arts-based learning methodology developed by Professor Katie Dawson at the University of Texas, is a collection of teaching tools to activate learning through the arts. Drama creates an environment for focused inquiry and supports a variety of learning styles. The Drama-based Instruction Network is an online resource for drama-based instruction. The website offers a range of teaching strategies, lesson plans, resources and videos to support teachers in providing creative learning opportunities across the curriculum through drama.

Drama for Schools (DFS) is a collaborative professional development program model in drama-based instruction in association with the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas at Austin. DFS:
• creates intentional partnerships between the University and interested communities/school districts
• collaborates with K–12 teachers and curriculum specialists interested in exploring the potential of drama-based instruction to increase teacher efficacy and student engagement across the curriculum
• facilitates full day, half day, and after-school trainings for teachers, administrators, and community members interested in the application of drama-based instructional strategies (role play, improvisation, active learning techniques) across the curriculum
• provides partnering school districts with ongoing data on projected outcomes
• shares program outcomes with community stakeholders, and at related state and national conferences.

Arts-rich learning isn’t just about painting, pottery and plays… it can be about science and maths too. Let’s say students are struggling with understanding how to calculate area; instead of yet another worksheet, get them to role play. For example, task them with laying the carpet in a rock star’s home… a wealthy rock star, who has an architecturally designed home, where all the rooms are irregular in shape. How will they do it?

Links to further information

Artsedge is the Kennedy Centre’s free digital resource for teaching and learning in, through and about the arts; www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators.aspx
MINDPOP: www.mindpop.org
Drama-based Instruction Network: www.utexas.edu/cofa/dbi/
Drama for Schools: www.utexas.edu/linearts/tad/graduate/drama-schools
nowplayingAustin: www.nowplayingaustin.com/education

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...imagination is the high-octane fuel of learning...

Garth Boomer, 1999, p.15
The context

The UK Arts Council recently devolved their responsibility to foster the arts for children and young people to ten regional ‘bridge’ organisations. CapeUK, has taken on this role in the Yorkshire region. CapeUK began in 1997 as a not-for-profit organisation and has led national and regional creative partnership programs, as well as playing a key role in advising Government on creativity and learning. In their bridge capacity, they are working with the arts and cultural sectors to ensure that children and young people have access to great arts experiences.

Leeds, in Yorkshire, is a culturally diverse arts-rich city, with the largest dance community in the UK outside London, a large theatre network, strong visual arts and a large number of music providers.

‘ArtForms’ is the music and arts service for over 250 primary and high schools in Leeds and has built trusted relationships with schools and the arts and cultural sector in the city over many years.

Clare Price has more than 20 years experience as a practising artist, lecturer and artist in schools and communities and as a strategic manager and consultant.

She was Head of Arts Development for ArtForms until recently and now works as an independent consultant, regularly working as an associate consultant for CapeUK. Clare has been responsible for leading and developing the training programs, resources, toolkits and networks.

The role of ArtForms has been powerful in supporting schools to build effective partnerships with arts organisations and individual artists to provide high quality learning in and through all forms of arts. ArtForms does this in a variety of ways, including training teachers in how to use the arts to support learning, and training artists to help them work more effectively with schools. They offer regular ‘exemplar’ projects to connect schools to artists and creative professionals.

ArtForms has also developed an online directory at a city-level, where schools can select artists or organisations and access workshops that are art form subject-specific or cross-curricular. This ‘virtual’ network is mirrored by regular meetings in the city, supported by ArtForms, where practitioners from different fields of artistic expression get together in discrete art form-specific network groups to provide coherence and strategy to program delivery.

Features

- learning in the arts; learning through the arts
- collaboration between schools, arts organisations and individual artists
- high quality learning in and through all forms of arts in schools
- online directory of artists and creative professionals
- training for teachers in using arts to support learning
- framework guides evaluation of arts provision
- principles foster partnerships

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There are six networks, covering a range of art forms, including dance, drama, film and visual art, as well as networks catering specifically to the early years and children with disabilities. ArtForms also works closely in partnership with CapeUK in their ‘bridge’ capacity and have jointly developed toolkits and resources, including frameworks for defining and creating arts-rich schools and best practice principles for both teachers and artists.

The Framework Arts make a difference—school policy, strategy and improvement provides an evaluation tool for schools to assess their arts provision and develop an arts policy that contributes to whole school development. It asks schools to reflect on their:

- overall vision and aims for the arts, for example, how the school defines the purpose and learning aims of the arts; how they contribute to other learning areas and to the wider community; and how they reflect the diversity of the school’s population
- staffing and the arts, for example how responsibility for staffing is communicated and promoted by leadership
- support for the arts in the curriculum, for example, whether sufficient curriculum time is provided; how well the arts are resourced; and how they are assessed
- differentiating arts provision, for example, whether support is provided for gifted and talented students as well as those with special needs and how well cultural diversity is responded to and catered for
- out of hours and extra-curricular arts, for example, how schools work with other agencies to extend arts provision
- accessing cultural venues and creative practitioners, for example, how well the school partners and makes use of opportunities with cultural organisations.

The Eight Best Practice Principles to support effective working in the arts with children and young people are designed to foster collaborative arts partnerships between teachers and practitioners in the arts and cultural sector to support high quality cultural activities for children and young people. The eight principles ask partners at each stage of the arts project to:

1. Share the vision and agree on aims and objectives, for example, by developing democratic relationships with partners and students
2. Discuss partnership roles and how partners will work together, such as leveraging skills and experience through collaborative approaches
3. Decide how to measure if the activity has been a success, such as who determines if objectives have been met and what evidence is required
4. Be both well prepared and open to the unexpected, for example, by considering practicalities, avoiding assumptions and inviting experimentation
5. Ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people, for example, by taking approaches that respect and value all partners and promote the wellbeing of young people
6. Take a creative approach to all activities, for example, by creating a safe climate for young people to take creative risks and explore ideas
7. Reflect on the activity as it happens, for example, by inviting reflection and responding to feedback
8. Look back and identify next steps, for example, by assessing, valuing and sharing the learning and adapting future activities.

We believe creativity is the wider ability to question, make connections, innovate, problem solve and reflect critically. These are skills that are demanded by today’s employers. Creative learning empowers young people to imagine how the world could be different and gives them the confidence and motivation to make positive change happen. This helps young people to engage with their education and to achieve.

Creative Partnerships, 2011
Musical Futures is flourishing, from 60 early adopting schools to over 2000 schools participating in England and many others internationally, including in Australia. A subsequent initiative, Learning Futures (2009–2012), drew on the successful pedagogical practices of Musical Futures, but applied to whole school transformation.

David Price OBE, was the original project leader of the Musical Futures and Learning Futures projects for the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. As a former musician, he has led arts projects in high schools and was Director of Learning for seven years at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, established by Paul McCartney. David is a Learning Futurist, focusing particularly on finding innovative ways to engage learners through more democratic and relevant forms of education.

Early beginnings
Musical Futures began with a simple question: Why is the most popular hobby for kids—participating in music—the least popular subject in schools? Although music is compulsory for 5–13 year olds, only 7% of students were choosing to continue music when it became optional at age 14.

Musical Futures set out to find new and imaginative ways to provide engaging and relevant music making for all young people in schools. It interrogated the pedagogies of music teaching and questioned what made them so unappealing to young people, despite their interest in music. It meant working sensitively with teachers to change their classroom practice to create another way of teaching. The program is as much about pedagogical practice as music, based on practical and authentic, non-formal and informal teaching approaches.
Creative learning is simply any learning that develops our capacity to be creative. It equips young people with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's world, nurturing ways of thinking and working that encourage imagination, independence, tolerance of ambiguity and risk, openness, and the raising of aspirations.

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/teaching/inspire_creativity/what_is_creativity

It was clear that if the program was to be sustainable, there had to be more than just seconding artists to schools for a brief period and then expecting the success to be extended by music teachers. Through establishing long term partnerships with Prof. Lucy Green from the Institute of Education (informal learning) and leaders from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (non-formal teaching), resources were created to enable the initiative to be teacher-led.

Musical Futures kick-started the program by providing free teacher packs online. But to foster ownership, the program also insisted that teachers needed to build on the resources, by producing their own to share with others. All material is open-source, accessible through the website.

Revitalising pedagogy is significantly more successful when the teacher becomes a learner and Musical Futures took a novel approach by taking teachers out of their comfort zone in training sessions. They asked teachers to identify their instrument of choice, then gave them another, entirely different, instrument to play, inviting them to understand and identify with the role of the novice player.

Establishing the program

Scaling up from small beginnings has been the success of the program. Teachers that have already developed Musical Futures in their schools provide training and professional development free of charge to their peers, community musicians, students and other arts professionals. Each school can adapt the program to suit their own individual school.

Resources are provided free of charge through the website. They include recommendations on getting started; implementing non-formal teaching and informal learning; case studies, research reports and articles; together with advice on specific skills, such as warm-ups and band instrument skills.

Through a Ning—an online social media platform—teachers communicate their school’s achievements through the Music Teachers’ Network, posting and sharing videos, experiences and resources, such as lyrics and music. A weekly ‘live chat’ brings teachers together to compare issues and to promote their own achievements, leading to a spirited musical rivalry across continents between schools and students! The network is testament to the success of the program, with over 350 members from not just the English speaking world—UK, US, Australia and Canada—but also Cambodia, Spain, Poland and China.

Student voice is the fundamental reason why there is no one ‘typical’ Musical Futures project in any school – good teachers adapt and personalise the models as appropriate.

‘Curriculum Co-construction’,
www.musicafutures.org
The outcomes

Whilst critics might argue that the arts and culture are context-dependent, Musical Futures, because it maintains a uniform and universal format, works in all contexts, demonstrated by the uptake internationally, from Singapore to Brazil. Recognising the success and benefits to their own local music program, teacher champions for Musical Futures relate their own experiences through the website, convincing further teachers to join the program.

Independent studies of outcomes from Musical Futures have been very positive, reporting improvements in student motivation, behaviour and attendance and an increase in independent learning skills, self esteem and leadership. Furthermore, young people involved in Musical Futures gain exam results about 18% higher than the national average.

Building on the success of Musical Futures, pilot programs are exploring how to trial music and technology strategies, for example, by combining vocal work and mobile technology to create new musical sounds and increase student confidence by exploring the voice as instrument.

Learning Futures

Learning Futures was a subsequent initiative from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which developed out of the success of Musical Futures. The initiative sought to trial innovative teaching and learning approaches through Learning Futures schools to increase student engagement. The approaches were:

- Project-based Learning: students designed, planned, and carried out extended projects that produced a publicly-exhibited output, such as a product, publication or presentation.
- Extended Learning Relationships, which took account of (and utilised) every student’s extended learning relationships (peer-peer, student-teacher, involving parents or external mentors or businesses), so that learning became something that could happen at any time, in any place, and with a wider range of coaches, mentors, and experts.
- School as Basecamp: treating school as a basecamp for learning, rather than as a final destination and sole source of knowledge.
- School as Learning Commons: transforming school into a common ground for which teachers, students and the local community share responsibility, where they share authority, and from which they all benefit.

Learning Futures: A Vision for Engaging Schools, p.10

Although no longer funded in the UK, a similar program, based on the aims of Learning Futures, will be launched in Australia.

Links to further information

Musical Futures: www.musicalfutures.org
Musical Futures intro film: www.musiceachersnetwork.ning.com/video/musical-futures-intro-film
It's time to create the kind of culture that won't hold us back...

Lehrer, 2012, p.247
For more than a decade, the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) in South Australia has been developing a leading-edge pedagogy for the 21st century that challenges the industrial model of schooling and urges teachers to encourage creative thinking in the classroom.

Margot Foster is DECD’s Director of Pedagogy and Learning. She has brought leading international education experts and thinkers together with teachers and leaders in South Australian schools through the Learning to Learn project to develop the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) Framework, the mandated pedagogy for South Australian schools.

The context
Adelaide is also a culturally rich city, home to a number of arts festivals, including the world-renowned Adelaide Festival and Fringe. There are a large number of professional and amateur theatre groups, including theatre companies such as Patch and Windmill that specifically cater for young audiences. Carclew Youth Arts invites young people under 26 to try different art forms through workshops, events and arts projects. Carclew also supports emerging artists through program funding and development opportunities, and holds a wide and varied register of artists who run programs in schools. Although the education sector has worked closely with Arts SA, what is currently missing is a coherent strategy to connect the universities, government, schooling community and arts sectors to support arts-rich and creative learning.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, which describes the learning entitlement of all students in all states and territories, brings a new challenge for teachers. For example, the Arts learning area, which will be implemented in both primary and secondary schools in 2015, has discrete achievement standards for Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. For many teachers, particularly at the primary level, this is daunting, especially when it comes to assessment.

However, DECD believes that creativity and creative thinking do not belong solely in the domain of the arts: they are critical in all learning areas. What interests South Australia is how to create learning environments in which creative and critical thinking are fostered in all learning areas, across all schools, for all children and young people.

Early beginnings
In 2000, the Learning to Learn team began exploring how to improve learning outcomes for students by supporting innovative education. How could teaching and learning be reconceptualised to meet the needs of an unknown future?

Simultaneously, it was clear that engagement was a major issue. However, what was puzzling was that in schools with chronic attendance issues, students were turning up unfailingly to after-hours rehearsals for Rock Eisteddfod and music performances. What was the ‘x factor’ that lured these kids to cultural programs but not into classrooms?

Like many other countries, Australia “measures” students’ progress, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science. But the Learning to Learn team felt there were other characteristics, either of successful learning or that led to successful learning, that were not being measured and were therefore being ignored.
The research findings

In early research, the team looked at how learning outcomes were influenced by pedagogical approaches. For example, how did traditional approaches, in which teachers were handing out worksheets and students were copying from the board, compare with high-end constructivist student-focused classrooms? In these classrooms, the learning focused on students’ interests, either those they brought with them into the classroom, or interests that were ignited and fostered in the classroom. What the team found was that when teachers worked with students’ passions and interests, not only would students be more involved, but they’d persist far longer, even through the ‘boring bits’! This was clear evidence of student engagement.

Engagement in learning has often been misunderstood: many teachers believe that if students are quiet and comply with instruction, they are therefore engaged. The team could now demonstrate what they called the ‘lean in factor’: a way of teaching that gets students to say ‘Wow..... how does that work? How did you do that? How can I do it?’ It’s a way of creating a strong vibrant learning culture that permeates everything in the classroom.

In the example above—where students were turning up after school but not at school—there were clearly factors at play that were not being measured, but that were having a profound effect on attendance and engagement. How could they begin to measure what mattered?

Students were also being consulted about their views of school. Frequently they’d respond by saying they felt like they were being talked at, either by the teacher or through the text book page or worksheet. Often they said they were ‘sitting and bobbing in a sea of talk’: sometimes they would check in and on occasion they were interested. Frequently they were bored, disconnected and disengaged.

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The team saw this as a legacy of the industrial model of schooling, with deeply held messages about expertise being synonymous with knowing. In this model—still favoured in many education systems and schools—success is rewarded when the answer is deemed to be correct: it is not a model that rewards students for taking risks, for experimenting, or being creative in their thinking. It is a model that devalues and repudiates thinking and creativity. This culture is what Learning to Learn was keen to contest and, ultimately, change.

Establishing the framework

Working with large numbers of teachers, leaders and academics to build learning communities, learning circles and practicums, they explored what is known about learning, neuroscience and pedagogy. The result was the Teaching for Effective Learning Framework, the pedagogical approach that guides South Australian schools.

The Framework is built on three big ideas:

- **Create safe conditions for rigorous learning:** Do kids feel safe enough to really have a go? Do they feel safe enough to say ‘I don’t get it—show me another way’? Do they feel safe enough to negotiate the learning, to interrogate their own experience and that of others?

- **Develop expert learners:** Whilst students have a learning entitlement enshrined in the curriculum, aren’t we doing something wrong if, in the process of delivering that learning, we diminish students’ capacity for thinking?

- **Personalise and connect learning:** If we ignite students’ passions by connecting the learning to their lives and aspirations, don’t we engage them and thereby foster deeper learning?
Learning as a creative process

As with any major change, there are often early adopters, but the challenge is how to mainstream the change: how to unravel, un-weave and undo the notion that the teacher has the power and is the controller of the learning in a classroom, a classroom in which there is only one acceptable answer and in which deeper, more creative thinking is neither cultivated nor encouraged.

Many teachers argue they are constrained by the curriculum. In response, the Teaching for Effective Learning team have developed a resource to support teachers in designing the learning by adopting new lenses through which to look at the curriculum, at teaching, and at the construction of knowledge. When a high-challenge pedagogy is used to deliver the curriculum through learning design, and when there is permission and encouragement to question, to negotiate, to reconceptualise and to challenge yourself and others, learning becomes a creative process.

The resource ‘Leading Learning—Making the Australian Curriculum work for us’ provides tools and resources which encourage teachers to deconstruct the curriculum and establish an inquiry way of working, in which they ask questions of students and encourage them to do the thinking.

It supports teachers in recognising ways of thinking, for example, ‘thinking like a scientist’— a way of thinking dependent on phenomena, patterns and relationships. The resource supports teachers to see the curriculum as an evolving story in which the big ideas grow in complexity over time. It urges teachers to turn the learning over: to challenge and engage students with the big questions.

The challenge

Whilst early adopters have embraced the TfEL pedagogical approach and are actively transforming their teaching and learning approaches through learning design, many teachers are still using traditional teaching methodologies. The challenge is to make widespread ‘hearts and minds’ change that convinces all teachers that learning is a creative and collaborative process that must foster inspiration, imagination and creativity to prepare young people for an unknown future.

Links to further information

Teaching for Effective Learning: www.learningtolearn.sa.edu.au/tfel
Leading Learning — Making the Australian Curriculum work for us: www.acleadsresource.sa.edu.au/
Table conversations over lunch allowed participants to share their thinking and to identify the possibilities and shifts required to maximise young people’s opportunities in the arts and creative learning.

What do we mean by the arts?

- Need to be clear that the discussion is not around arts as a form of entertainment, but as a vehicle for creative thinking
- Arts and creativity: more than just a craft
- The arts can be a vehicle for learning—a set of tools for physical and mental approaches—to expand creative learning.

The arts encourage risk taking and thinking outside the square.

- In Australia arts and sciences are siloed, divorced from one another. How can we make a link between the silos beyond the tokenistic and superficial? How do we find a common language that would bring them together?
- The arts build soft skills which are less highly valued. However, they address important issues, such as social skills and wellbeing.
- Increasing arts opportunities should not be restricted to within the school walls—for many young people a large proportion of the day is in after and/or before school care.

The arts in South Australian schools

- In secondary schools, the arts are regarded as something for the gifted and talented, delivered in specialist schools.
- Music is considered the most supported of the art forms by many.
- Music programs are expensive, but elitist and only available to a few. Resources could be spent more equitably by taking a Musical Futures approach.

Creative learning

- How do we imagine and define ‘creativity in learning’?
- Need to be quite clear and differentiate between learning in the arts; learning through the arts; and creative teaching and learning that don’t necessarily involve the arts.
- Thinking creatively is about re-invigorating teaching practice and learning environments.
- Australian learning is very structured, with learning areas delivered in enclaves, less so in primary schools.
- Opportunity through creative learning to break down the enclaves and see learning in a holistic way
- Austin and UK experiences show that creative learning can be applied across the curriculum.
- How do I see this in my curriculum area? What would it look like?
- Increase teacher buy-in by talking about creative learning in relation to maths and science rather than just the arts.

Our kids are growing up in a world of constant change. There is no test for the future that we can teach to. What we do know, however, is that being able to make new things is still going to be the way to succeed. Creativity is a skill that never goes out of style.

Rosenstock in Lehrer, 2012, p.235

Children from birth are divergent thinkers trying to make sense of the world.

Carla Rinaldi, 2013

Rosenstock in Lehrer, 2012, p.235
Ways of thinking

• Kids have a natural capacity to think divergently.
• Convergent and divergent thinking are needed in equal measure in all learning areas: in pragmatic contexts, eg problem solving and in esoteric open-ended contexts, eg creating arts pieces.
• Schools favour convergent thinking: school is all about knowing, with teachers as ‘experts’—is this because this is an easier way to teach?
• Is ‘the right answer’ more highly valued than creative thinking?
• Students are not encouraged to be divergent and creative thinkers because of the risk of getting the answer wrong.
• How can we bring ways of thinking that are typical of one disciplinary area into another in which that way of thinking is not traditionally used?
• It is possible to construct creative learning opportunities even in the context of standards and testing regimes.

The Australian Curriculum

• Most approaches to teaching the curriculum are mechanistic: interpretation and judgment, which are central to the arts, are practices that should be valued in all learning areas.
• Creativity is embedded in the Australian Curriculum but one needs the lens to unpack it: this can be hard for teachers, given the mechanistic model with which they are familiar.

Measuring learning

• Can divergent thinking be assessed?
• The high stakes nature of NAPLAN drives the pedagogies in classrooms.
• NAPLAN tests require both divergent and convergent thinking. Students do not score well in solving problems requiring divergent and creative thinking: teachers do not teach to this part of the test.
• NSW is moving to grading science on structure of thought rather than (just) the right answer.
• How do we measure learner resilience so we can report it and use this to strengthen the message of the need for creative thinking?

Partnerships

• What partnerships do we need to create and how do we do this?
• Creating a connected arts infrastructure has to be the first step.
• Many small projects are occurring in SA, but without coherent and connected approaches through an umbrella organisation like MINDPOP.
• An umbrella organisation could raise awareness, foster wider approval for the arts, and generate the state’s artistic capacity.
• Now is the time! The new school-community partnerships offer an opportunity to map, survey and collect data to build arts networks across the state and act as a lever to bring creative and critical thinking into every learning area.
• Opportunity through these partnerships to share TIEL thinking about teaching and learning with arts and creative organisations and create common language and thinking.
• Flinders University will replicate a Sydney pilot project, working with State Theatre Company and eight SA schools. In the Sydney pilot, Sydney Theatre Company worked with Sydney University to support teacher actors in providing skills to teachers for creative learning through drama: co-delivery by teachers and artists. A report will soon be released.
• Flinders University opportunities: Is there an opportunity through double degrees to improve integration and cross-fertilisation of philosophies and methodologies? Could drama students work as teacher artists in schools? Could this be stimulated by DECD?

…imagination is the high-octane fuel of learning…teachers must know how to stir imaginations, to excite a search for possibilities, and to encourage reflection and imaginative hindsight.

Garth Boomer, 1999, p.15

The thing about ideas is that they naturally inspire new ones. This is why places that facilitate idea sharing tend to become more productive and innovative than those that don’t. Because when ideas are shared, the possibilities do not add up. They multiply.

Romer in Lehrer, 2012, p.222

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Romer in Lehrer, 2012, p.222
Fostering partnerships

- Audit and review current structures for arts and culture sectors—what are your current structures? Can you review and refine them to create greater coherence and empower groups and networks? Can you tap into the energy of groups and individuals to move things forward?
- Strategic: ensure that voices are heard—strong communication networks are essential that connect the central and the local. When people at the local level feel they are heard, they will participate.
- Deep sophisticated dialogue between artists and scientists should be encouraged: artists and scientists dual ‘in residence’ programs of co-discovery?
- Hierarchies present challenges in developing partnerships: big theatre companies have more clout than local small experimental groups.
- Partnerships offer opportunities to apply for joint funding instead of seeing one another as competitors.

Learning cultures

- Many teachers are still delivering learning and assessing using worksheets and text books.
- Instructional methodologies are convenient and easiest for teachers.
- Have we lost the richness in teaching? If what we teach in science is restricted to a ‘how to’ approach, are we just teaching a craft?
- Are early years teachers more confident in delivering arts-rich teaching and creative learning because they are more familiar with play or project-based learning? Or do most early years teachers focus more on preparation for ‘big school’ and society?
- It is a challenge for artists and teachers to unpack the pedagogies of engagement and art-based work and transfer to other teachers.
- Analysing your own practice is hard: both teachers and artists need to improve the way they understand and explain what they do.
- Could the university offer the opportunity to double degree undergraduates to explore different perspectives as artist and teacher?

Changing hearts and minds

- How can we capture hearts and minds?
- How do we get teachers to look at old problems in new (creative) ways when they are the products of a system that values a transmission paradigm?
- What are the drivers and supports for teachers to teach the curriculum creatively? Where is the feedback, recognition and reward?
- Teachers recognise a mismatch between espoused and enacted values.
- Teachers argue they are constrained by the curriculum.
- There is a risk of teachers seeing this as another attack on them.
- How do we mainstream the message beyond the early adopters?
- We can’t tell teachers to be creative and think differently, but we must give them multiple entry points.
- Get early champions to articulate how creative teaching approaches advantage them and their students.
- Relationships are a vital component of the change process, particularly when changing habituated practice.
- Awareness-raising is essential—within and beyond the Department. DECD do this badly.

Using social media and technology

- How do we use technology to get people on board?
- Teachers have always wanted to share ideas.
- Teachers are voyeurs and like to watch other teachers’ practice: the key is about making it visible and possible.
• Is social media the right tool for changing hearts and minds? Is it self-limiting? Is it only effective when groups have shared values? Can it incite change if it dissents from the ‘group think’?
• Websites are useful for sharing learning through open-source teacher-authored examples: see Musical Futures and Drama-based Instruction.
• DECD does not use social media creatively.

Professional development
• If teachers are to engage with and implement creative learning experiences, they must first see themselves as creative beings (MINDPOP research). PD must convince teachers through experience of the fun and playfulness of arts-rich teaching and creative learning—they must be aware of their thinking and the pedagogies they are constructing through the arts.
• Create learning triangles of artist, teacher and student to dispel teachers’ inadequacies in the arts
• Cognitive apprenticeships—teachers and artists working together as partners and co-constructors—reciprocity in learning
• A UK program, in which teachers worked with musicians in classrooms to develop skills to run a school orchestra, left teachers feeling inadequate to do so when the program finished after a year.

Teachers as learners
• Teachers need to remember what it is like to be a learner and experience the fear and unfamiliarity, just as students have to do every day.
• Ask teachers ‘How would you go as a learner in your own classroom’? (Garth Boomer)

It’s time to create the kind of culture that won’t hold us back…we should look in the mirror. What kind of culture have we created? Is it a world full of ideas that can be connected? Are we willing to invest in risk takers? Do our schools produce students ready to create?…We have to make it easy to become a genius. Lehrer, 2012, p.247

Everyone agrees that creativity is a key skill for the twenty-first century. But we’re not teaching our kids this skill. We’ve become so obsessed with rote learning, with making sure that kids memorize the year of some old battle. But in this day and age that’s the least valuable kind of learning. That’s the stuff you can look up on your phone! If our graduates are going to succeed in the real world, then they have to be able to make stuff. Wedberg in Lehrer, p.231

Furthermore ‘How would I feel as a participant in my arts activity? How would I engage if I were in this space? How would I react as an audience member?’
• Teachers can be both fragile and fearful when it comes to being a learner: the system has rewarded them for knowing and for transmitting and sharing. Whilst getting kids to lead the learning is a really powerful way to work, teachers have a lot of fear around this.

Learner-centred teaching
• How do we recognise what we need to understand about learner identity?
• The disassociation between what’s happening in school in the formal contexts and what excites kids is increasing.
• Too much teaching is about ‘stuff’ that kids may need to know at some point in indeterminate future, but could equally look up on their smart phone.
• Kids need to be valued as creative citizens: kids need to feel they are valued and taken seriously. This cannot be tokenistic student voice: eg Brazilian students participating in youth parliament and being given their own budget.
• Student voice is right at the heart of learning.
• Kids respond well when taught in friendship groups (Musical Futures).
• Kids enjoy sharing their learning (see Facebook).
• Children are good at telling you how to teach: they ask the questions they want to know.
• Base the school around the express needs of the kids: ask them what they want.
• Schools should teach anything and everything that kids want to learn (John Dewey).
• A challenge for schools: ‘This place must be so fascinating that it makes you want to come here each day, but you need to tell me what it is that you want.’
References


If we are to prepare young people for a future we can’t yet imagine, we need to inspire them to be creative, imaginative, innovative and adaptable. How do we do this as schools? How do we increase creative learning moments for young people? How can we provide these opportunities both in and beyond school through partnerships?

Practitioners from education, the arts and local government gathered to share their practice, their thinking and their insights to explore and identify ways to maximise arts and creative learning opportunities for young people.

Creativity is intelligence having fun.

Albert Einstein