International Journal of Education & the Arts

http://www.ijea.org/ **ISSN: 1529-8094**

Volume 25 Number 2 **January 25, 2024**

Improving the Uptake of Arts Education for Student Wellbeing: A Collaborative Autoethnography That Highlights Potential Areas of Focus

Judith Dinham
Curtin University, Australia

Margaret Baguley
University of Southern Queensland, Australia

Susan Simon
University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia

Merryl Goldberg
California State University San Marcos, USA

Martin Kerby
University of Southern Queensland, Australia

Citation: Dinham, J., Baguley, M., Simon, S., Goldberg, M., & Kerby, M. (2024). Improving the uptake of arts education for student wellbeing: A collaborative autoethnography that highlights potential areas of focus. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *25*(2). http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea25n2

Abstract

In a challenging world, the spotlight on children's wellbeing has strengthened. There is extensive research about the ways in which well-designed arts education programs positively impact children's wellbeing. Despite this, arts education continues to be marginalised in schools. When researchers with arts education and leadership experience teamed up to consider the intransient nature of the resistance to arts education in primary/elementary schools, they conducted a collaborative autoethnography (CAE) to see if this offered new insights. The iterative process of sharing and interrogating personal stories to distil collective meanings (themes) highlighted four features of education programs that provide sustained support for children's wellbeing: centering in a discordant world; effective leadership; experiential processes, engagement, and trust; and harnessing the transformative potential of the arts. The CAE also pointed the team towards conducting future inquiries about the currently under-researched role of the school principal in instigating cultural change that sustains meaningful arts education.

Introduction/Background

Significant world-wide disasters in recent times, including bushfires, floods, hurricanes, racial injustices, war, and the COVID-19 pandemic, have strengthened the spotlight on children's mental health and wellbeing. In 2020, sometime after the onset of the pandemic had confined most of us to our homes and immediate localities, an international team of academics came together online to pool their experience in arts education and leadership to develop research that focused on the value of the arts in sustaining children's wellbeing. The health and wellbeing benefits of arts engagement are well-documented: A body of research describes interventions in clinical settings (e.g., Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Leone, 2021), and another body of research describes the wellbeing outcomes from arts programs conducted with children in classroom or community settings (e.g., Charland, 2011; Secker et al., 2018). Despite robust evidence of the benefits of arts engagement, the arts have remained marginalised in the primary/elementary school curriculum (Cooper, 2018). Therefore, the aim of the team was to look again at the widely observed, intransient, and pernicious resistance in schools to embracing arts education, with a view to uncovering key factors that need to be addressed to bring about change.

The formation of the international five-person research team was initiated by one academic "cold calling" two others. The team members were all in leadership positions in university schools/faculties of education with a lifetime's engagement in the arts and arts education. While we were aware of one another's work, we had not previously worked together, so we

decided to meet online every second week to build our professional relationship and formulate the research project.

We were drawn to reflect on how and why each of us had sustained our engagement with the arts and been dedicated advocates for arts education over the decades. We wondered if our personal experiences might provide new ways of looking at the marginalisation of arts education. This led us to conduct a collaborative autoethnography (CAE), a qualitative research method that draws on shared personal stories to develop broader cultural understandings. Our intention was to examine whether our common but distinctive professional trajectories generated insights that would then inform the direction of our research. Ultimately, the CAE guided the team towards conducting future research on the agency of the school principal in instigating cultural change. Conducting a CAE for such a purpose is recognised as one of the productive applications of the methodology (Lapidate, 2017). Another valued outcome of CAE is relationship building and the development of collective agency (Lapidate, 2017; Roy & Ukase, 2020). Therefore, the methodology served three functions for the newly formed research team.

We conducted the CAE over a period of four months in 2021 to address our research question: To what extent can the personal and professional experiences of senior arts educators contribute to an understanding of significant factors that help sustain programs of arts education in primary/elementary schools that support children's wellbeing? This paper reports on the CAE process and the themes that emerged.

Wellbeing and the Role of the Arts

In the broad field of mental health, the positive effect of arts engagement on wellbeing has been broadly established (e.g. Mak & Fancourt, 2019; Walls et al., 2016) through studies about how arts engagement contributes to (a) alleviating anxiety, depression, and stress (Martin, 2020; Sabol, 2021); (b) emotional equilibrium and self-regulation (Fancourt & Finn, 2019); (c) self-esteem (Bryce et al., 2004); (d) a sense of connection or belonging (Tarr et al., 2014); (e) social capital (Buys & Miller, 2009); and (f) trauma recovery (Jones, 2018; O'Connor & Estellés, 2021).

Studies published in medical, psychology, and art therapy journals generally have a strong focus on remedial interventions or management of clinical conditions (e.g., Fancourt & Finn, 2019). Other studies of arts integration in school settings or out-of-school programs tend to highlight how incorporating the arts into daily practices helps build children's resilience through opportunities to practise imaginative thinking, creative risk-taking, perseverance, and self-regulation (Baum et al., 1997; O'Connor & Estellés, 2021; Rago & Gibson, 2021; Tam, 2020). For example, during the pandemic, preschool children engaged in imaginary play

(drama) and used "magical thinking" (Vasileva et al., 2021, p. 6) to process what was happening and to gain a feeling of control in a seemingly chaotic world. The effectiveness of arts education in relation to wellbeing is attributed to the inherent qualities of arts-making, such as the experience of captivation (McCarthy et al., 2004) or flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997); inspiration (Secker et al., 2018); imaginative thinking (Greene, 1995); the craft of making (Leone, 2021) or grounding ideas in tactile experience (Stanko-Kaczmarek & Kaczmarek, 2015); playful experimentation (Secker et al., 2018); and exploration of emotions "in a safe manner" (O'Connor & Estellés, 2021, p. 1).

The social dimension of arts engagement also supports children's wellbeing (Fancourt et al., 2020). Heinemeyer (2018) highlights how the arts provide time and space for students to engage between themselves and caring adults in dialogue, self-expression, playfulness, exploration, and development of personal initiative.

In recent years, the growth of brain research has provided physiological explanations for the many reported positive effects of arts engagement on participants' wellbeing (Christensen & Gomila, 2018; Mastandrea et al., 2019). Although the arts are not the panacea for all mental health challenges, there is enough compelling evidence to support prioritizing the arts in our education systems (Martin, 2020).

In examining why arts education is not strongly present in the taught curriculum, even though it is a mandated learning area in Australia and the United States and has proven wellbeing benefits, a number of researchers have given attention to the role played by primary/elementary school teachers. Research conducted with pre-service teachers showed they valued arts for primary/elementary school children (Dinham, 2007; Lemon & Garvis, 2013; Oreck, 2004); however, a combination of low self-efficacy (Gurure & Mamvuto, 2021; Lee & Cawthon, 2015), and general attitudes towards creativity and artistic capability (Lee & Cawthon, 2015; Oreck, 2006) contributed to their uncertainty about how to incorporate the arts in the curriculum. This was compounded by limited time devoted to arts education in the teacher preparation course or through professional development once in schools (Hipp & Sulentic Dowell, 2019; O'Toole, 2018).

The school principal has a significant influence on school culture, including shaping educational direction, professional learning, and innovations within the school (Glatthorn et al., 2016; Ramberg et al., 2019; Simon, 2021). Despite this, the role of the school principal in fostering a vibrant, arts-rich curriculum is not well-researched (Ellis, 2018; Peterson, 2016).

Collaborative Autoethnography

Collaborative autoethnography comes from the autoethnography (AE) branch of social

science research that combines elements of autobiography and ethnography (Ellis et al., 2011). AE is grounded in the idea that since the researcher is "as much a part of the social world as anyone else" (Francis & Hester, 2012, p. 35), their personal experience provides a lens through which the socio-cultural world can be viewed and interpreted: "Our lives are particular, but they also are typical and generalizable since we all participate in a limited number of cultures and institutions" (Ellis, 1999, p. 674).

Collaborative autoethnography (CAE), as the name suggests, is a co-construction between two or more researchers and is both "critically self-reflective and dialogic" (Roy & Uekusa, 2020, p. 387). While the voice and personal experiences of each researcher remain the primary sources of data (Chang, 2013), CAE involves researchers "pooling their stories to find some commonalities and differences and then wrestling with these stories to discover the meanings of the stories in relation to their socio-cultural contexts" (Chang et al., 2016, p. 17). A distinctive feature of this research process is that knowledge production or meaning-making remains moored to lived realities (Van Katwyk & Seko, 2017) and is advanced through an iterative, rather than linear, process alternating between individual and group work.

The subjective nature of personal experience is one of the criticisms of AE, but a strength of CAE is that it provides richer qualitative data than can be achieved in AE. This is because the diverse collection of self-narratives is subject to the CAE mechanisms of internal peer review, scrutiny, and interrogation (Chang et al., 2013; Roy & Uekusa, 2020) and generates robust interpretations and understandings through the dialogic process.

CAE is seen as an effective methodology for establishing a democratic community with collective agency (Arnold & Norton, 2021; Lapadat, 2017) and advancing "joint engagement in social actions" (Lapadat, 2017, p. 599). By surfacing elements of collective experience (themes), CAE can facilitate team building, planning, and identification of ways forward in professional situations (Groen & Roy, 2020). It can also assist "a range of invested people to define the research focus" (Lapadat, 2017, p. 598). To achieve these outcomes, the methodology relies on shared vulnerability and relationships of trust (Taylor et al., 2014). Therefore, participants must guard against power imbalances where coercive pressure or acquiescence may undermine the ethical base and effectiveness of the process (Lapadat, 2017).

CAE has been used as a research method in educational contexts to bring the pedagogies of diverse disciplines together for improved educational outcomes (Sochacka et al., 2016), interrogate tensions and dilemmas in academic practices (Arnold & Norton, 2021), and expand and refine understandings of how cultural contexts influence the meaning and process of becoming a teacher (Kim & Reichmuth, 2021). In all cases, knowledge production is

advanced through critical consideration of the participant-researchers' lived experiences.

Methodology

There are four distinguishing features of CAE (and AE) (Chang et al., 2016): self-focussed, researcher-visible, context-conscious, and critically dialogic. In this study, we have been self-focussed or, in other words, "complete member researchers" (Anderson, 2006, p. 378), occupying dual roles as both researchers and participants. We have been researcher-visible by interrogating our own experiences as arts-engaged educators and researchers who are in leadership positions. Discussions about our own experiences within the group have been the focal point of the research (Chang et al., 2016). We have been context-conscious about how a range of social and cultural processes have shaped our personal experiences and identities. Finally, we have been critically dialogic, using discussions to interrogate our personal experiences to draw richer meaning from the combination of our voices and perspectives (Chang et al., 2016).

Each team member accepted full ethical responsibility for their contributions to the process, including being honest and open in their communications and collaborative interpretations to minimise potential issues related to subjectivity, ethics, and bias. We committed to "deep listening or witnessing" (Chang et al., 2013, as cited in Lapadat, 2017, p. 598). We also conducted internal peer review during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation stages through mutual scrutiny, interrogation, and probing to expand, affirm, or challenge ideas (Chang et al., 2016; Roy & Uekusa, 2020). We used synchronous and asynchronous tools to undertake this process, including email communications, regular Zoom meetings, and an online shared folder to lodge files and participate in real-time shared writing.

Considering we all had similar but distinctive career trajectories, this heightened the prospects of the CAE generating rich data. It also engendered mutual respect, which meant any issue of power imbalance was largely ameliorated. Researchers who did not contribute to the generation of data acted as critical friends to sense-check the process and our interpretations in terms of being "clear, coherent and trustworthy" (Arnold, 2020, para. 15). The CAE functioned in three significant ways: team building, generating new insights, and establishing a research focus.

Data Collection

Our approach to data collection was based on the "concurrent model" (Chang et al., 2013, p. 91), where we collected individual data alone but in the same timeframe for the same purpose. The CAE began with descriptive-realistic writing about our personal experiences and then moved towards an analytical-interpretative approach which "incorporates theoretical and

conceptual literature sources … [and] supports socio-cultural analyses and interpretations" (Chang, 2013, p. 119). Through an iterative process, our multiple perspectives stimulated memory recall through different temporal layers (Wansink et al., 2018) and shaped the writing journey as we progressed through the concurrent model's four nominated stages of the process:

Stage One: Preliminary Data Collection

Individual self-writing and reflection/group sharing and probing: Each participant prepared a piece of writing. This began with a vignette of a memorable experience that served as a touchstone for writing a narrative about our life-long commitment to the arts and education, our leadership roles in the arts, and our experience of the arts' impact on wellbeing. These narratives were then read to the group during an online meeting. After each reading, the other participants took turns to acknowledge the story and describe what they "heard" in the narrative. Notes were taken by each participant.

Stage Two: Subsequent Data Collection

Individual self-writing and reflection/group sharing and preliminary meaning-making: Independently, we each reflected on our narrative and the online discussion that had been generated. We each considered how this helped us position our narrative in a broader context and in relation to the research literature. We then completed another piece of writing incorporating these insights.

Stage Three: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Individual data review, group meaning-making, and surfacing themes: We shared our "elaborated writing" and then interrogated these in a subsequent online meeting. In an iterative process, we distilled four provisional themes. To test that these captured all the key data, each of us reviewed the alignment of our narrative to the themes. At the next meeting, we were able to confirm that the themes held true, but we refined their parameters.

Stage Four: *Report Writing*

Individual contributions to group writing and review by colleagues: Each of us chose one of the confirmed themes and then wrote a description of that theme, drawing on and embedding the first-hand experiences across all four pieces of writing. To track the representation of the four narratives, we used the highlighting function in Word to colour-code the sections from the four narratives that aligned with the theme. From this, we could cross-check what had been left out and reconcile the outcomes. The writings from the CAE process were assembled and then given to our critical friends, who reviewed them for inconsistencies or features in the

narratives that had been overlooked. This feedback confirmed the themes and included some fine-grained observations that were woven into the final account.

Analysis

Our process of analysis was recursive, incorporating both independent and collaborative procedures. We took turns reading aloud our initial writing while the other participants listened and then responded by sharing what they heard in the story. What they 'heard' was informed by the tone, language, and content (Norton & Lin, 2021). Later, we collaboratively distilled provisional themes and tested these by independent analysis of our "elaborated writing" (Stage 3). Subsequently, we each took responsibility for a theme and drew threads together from all four pieces of writing. Along the way, we checked that key or underlying concerns were not lost in the process. The review by our critical friends endorsed the four themes generated from this process, which were:

- Theme One: Centering in a discordant world
- Theme Two: Effective leadership
- Theme Three: Experiential processes, engagement, and relationships of trust
- Theme Four: Harnessing the transformative potential of the arts

Findings

The intention of conducting the CAE was to draw on our lived experiences to generate new understandings about factors central to meaningful arts programs and sustaining them in schools. The four themes we generated from analysing our writings form the basis of our findings. Quotes from the participants' writings in the following section are included for illustrative purposes.

Theme One: Centering in a Discordant World

We recognise the significance of aptitude and interest in guiding and sustaining our career pathways, and also contend that our engagement in the arts has centred our lives. "Centering" is the feeling that people have of being their true selves, at peace within the chaos. This concept, which has antecedents in various mystical and religious belief systems and practices, emerges in research studies in the areas of psychology, wellbeing, therapy practices, and creativity, as well as in philosophy, religious, and ontological discourses.

> The trajectory of my own life and the way the arts are threaded through it and form the foundation of my professional life means that this student's experience [outlined in the original writing] resonates at a deep level. I have found the time spent in the studio engaged in art-making projects to be a way of centering myself. On many overseas trips, the visits to arts museums have given purpose to my travels and linked me to a

> deep well of human endeavour. A firm centre in a discordant world.

We have all experienced this centering ourselves. We have also witnessed how individuals and groups of students who may be experiencing difficulties in their lives, along with students who have minimal interest in the arts, have benefited from the centering effects of arts engagement. We agree the factors that facilitate this sense of being centred are (a) the craft of practice and the "inherent satisfaction of making; the sense of being alive within the process" (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 24), (b) the emergent and immersive nature of the creative process where ideas and understandings come "not before or after but within the practice of making" (p. 25), and (c) the encounter with the arts as an audience, which we have experienced as a powerful way of connecting to a deep well of shared human experience: The ineffable, transcendent, triumphant, joyous, desperate and tragic dimensions of the human condition (Leone, 2021; Winterson, 1996).

Theme Two: Effective Leadership

Drawing on our combined experiences in diverse leadership positions, we recognise that the effectiveness of leadership is determined by the way it is constituted and enacted.

> Our dream, two decades ago, when I was the Director of the Inaugural Festival of Arts at [a new school], was to create a range of opportunities for all our students—from Prep to Year 12—to experience and develop a love of the arts which would hopefully remain with them long-term and build a sense of community in a new school. My principal at the college was a strong proponent of this initiative. I saw at once that his support was crucial to introducing something that was both grand in intent, but potentially a great impost on staff time and energies. [Later as a] Principal [myself], I also noted the impact that my leadership and support of such projects and initiatives had on the acceptance of them [arts programs] by all stakeholders in the school. When the initiative had been accepted, developed, and rolled out, the benefits for students were frequently acclaimed.

We see the relationship between the school principal, specialist arts educators, and classroom teachers as a crucial leadership triad that is necessary for the sustained integration of the arts in the school curriculum. For the leadership triad to be successful, it must be underpinned by professional learning opportunities.

The school principal's role relates to their capacity to shape school culture and support educational initiatives through strategic planning, priority setting, resourcing, and oversight. They are the ones who can prioritise the arts throughout their school community and can have a direct impact on the acceptance of arts initiatives by all stakeholders (Fleming, 2015). Arts

education specialists play an important leadership role through their contribution to professional learning by principals and classroom teachers that develops understandings and capabilities. The classroom teacher leads in their direct engagement with students and is the third critical determinant of meaningful arts education over the long term (Carrillo & Baguley, 2011).

If any of the components of the leadership triad is missing, a sustained and authentic arts-rich curriculum is unlikely. In this regard, we acknowledge the "altruism and sense of mission required by school leaders to remain committed to making a difference to the students of tomorrow" (Simon, 2021, p. 2).

Theme Three: Experiential Processes, Engagement, and Relationships of Trust

A key feature of the arts as a learning area is that it requires personal investment in arts praxis. At the core of this is the idea of having a "voice" for expressing personal experiences, feelings, ideas, interpretations, or imaginative inventions. When undertaken authentically, the process is a journey that involves the birth of something new and important and the communication of complex meanings (Dinham, 2022).

Arts learning revolves around self-led, individual, and collaborative meaning-making, expression, and reflection. In the classroom, students are invited to develop their own ideas and tell their own stories. This can present a degree of risk-taking, so trust is a significant factor (Felton et al., 2016). This includes trust in the process, oneself, and the interlocutor.

Pedagogy that builds relationships of trust and supports creative expression positions the educator as a facilitator or co-constructor of learning (Felton et al., 2016). This means adopting a "collaborative and participatory teaching approach [which] fosters dialogue between different voices, traditions and ethnic backgrounds" (Donelan, 2017, p. 43).

Trust also develops in an environment that welcomes students, helps them feel a sense of belonging—no matter their background knowledge or prior experience—and provides a space to just "be." When access to these spaces is extended outside regular classes at lunchtime or for after-school extra-curricular arts programs, the support for students' wellbeing is increased. The choices students make to participate in extra-curricular arts opportunities reveal the satisfaction that students experience from being engrossed in arts-making and having the chance to just "be."

> [I was] asked if a child with autism, Ronald, could be "mainstreamed" in my class for an hour or so a day because my teaching included art integration and he was "good at

> art." One day led to another, and within a month, Ronald did not leave my class; he was engaged in learning every subject with accommodations because he was allowed to express what he knew through his drawings…His innate ability to draw realistically, whatever he saw, was remarkable and amazed the entire class. The amount of self-confidence, trust, and safety Ronald felt in his new classroom, where the students valued his way of learning, was life-changing for Ronald, me, and many of the students.

Theme Four: Harnessing the Transformative Potential of the Arts

Each of the researchers has encountered the transformational power of the arts in our various roles as artists, educators, and leaders. Each of our narratives bears witness to the profound impact that arts participation has on young people by increasing their confidence and wellbeing and awakening their awareness of the power and importance of the arts in life (Fancourt & Fin, 2019; Rago & Gibson, 2021). We have each experienced how the arts can evoke an emotional response and encourage imaginative thinking, often in unexpected ways. The arts languages—incorporating symbols, images, sounds, and movements—represent ways of knowing that support meaning-making through imagination and intuition (Lawrence, 2009). Engagement with the arts can intensify the presence of the world by allowing us to see it "more vividly and more deeply" (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p. 474).

> I have taught a range of students, but because secondary art is an elective subject, I usually had the ones who were really committed to it and worked so hard to create art that expressed often very personal experiences and feelings that could be brought into existence without having to provide a literal explanation. The thought and care evident in their visual diaries as they developed their ideas continually reinforced to me the transformative power of art as a critical form of expression, particularly for young people and their wellbeing. The arts help to make students' learning visible both through their process and outcomes.

As arts educators, we are aware of the transformative potential of the arts and the possibilities inherent in an arts-led curriculum (Ewing, 2010; Goldberg, 2021). We see that, as students find their artistic voice, they also find themselves. The arts provide important opportunities to see something from a different perspective, particularly through new and diverse forms of media, thereby awakening students' social imaginations and enhancing their consciousness towards "democratic values, including multiple perspectives, freedom, responsibility and diversity" (Moon et al., 2013, p. 223). This "wide-awakeness," which occurs through the transformative power of the arts, encourages people to live in the moment, challenge habitual ways of thinking and behaving, and increase critical consciousness (Burnard & Stahl, 2021). We all agreed that COVID-19 has shown the significance and transformative potential of the

arts during this time and has also provided an opportunity to consider centralising arts learning in education (Kerby et al., 2021).

Conclusion

When we embarked on the collaborative autoethnography, we did so without any idea of where the journey would take us. We committed to "learning together" (Sochacka et al., 2016, p. 15). We were trusting of the process, curious, and open to what would unfold. On reflection, we see that our familiarity with artistic processes served us well when navigating this open-ended approach. Through the CAE journey, we experienced the "impact brought on by relationships we may have never even known we had [and the] critical intimacy in a context of care" (Pensoneau-Conway et al., 2014, p. 316).

By facilitating exploration outside the hegemony of traditional research methods (Van Katwyk & Seko, 2017), CAE has the potential to open up new lines of inquiry and action in situations where the circumstances seem intransient and resistant to change. Through undertaking our CAE, the themes that arose from the collective narratives provided lenses for reconsidering the persistent marginalisation of the arts in primary/elementary schools despite the benefits for children's wellbeing. They were:

- Centering in a discordant world
- Effective leadership
- Experiential processes, engagement, and relationships of trust
- Harnessing the transformative potential of the arts

We make no claims that these themes are generalisable but hold to the veracity of these being generated by the CAE process. What we do suggest is that they would resonate with other arts educators and be potentially transferrable. For our research team, the themes bring to the surface the significant factors that are to be kept in play when the aim is to support children's wellbeing through a regular program of arts learning in the primary/elementary school: the experiential nature of arts learning; the necessity for children to explore and express their ideas, feelings, experiences and imaginings, and to have meaningful encounters with the world of the arts; the significance of relationships of trust; and the importance of a leadership triad.

We believe the CAE has served us well in developing a common purpose within the research team and highlighting productive directions for our future research. It has drawn us to focus on and examine the role of the school principal in initiating and sustaining the cultural change required to address the resistance to meaningful integration of the arts in the regular primary/elementary school curriculum.

We have learned that while the critical influence of the principal on the school culture, educational direction, and initiatives within the school (Glatthorn et al., 2016; Simon, 2021) is well-documented, this factor is under-researched in the context of sustaining arts education in the school curriculum. What the research literature does show is that many school principals often lack an understanding of the value of an arts-rich curriculum (Guindon et al., 2014). This has been traced to their own limited experience during schooling, pre-service teacher training, and subsequent professional development opportunities (Baguley et al., 2021; Goldberg, 2021). It results in a poor understanding of how to support the arts in the curriculum or a rejection of the idea entirely (Guindon et al., 2014). While an arts specialist or artist-teacher has the required knowledge and skills to drive arts-led curriculum initiatives (O'Toole, 2018), such initiatives are usually short-term and sporadic without the leadership of the principal (Glatthorn et al., 2016; Simon, 2021). Therefore, as Burrows (2007) argued, sequential and sustained programs of professional learning are required for school administrators and classroom teachers to embed meaningful arts engagement in the school curriculum. From our enactment of the CAE, we have determined that a leadership relationship between the school principal, arts educators, and classroom teachers needs to be fostered to achieve sustained arts learning opportunities for students in primary/elementary schools.

References

Anderson L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *35*(4), 373–95. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241605280449

Arnold, L. (2020, August 20). *Doing collaborative autoethnography*. Lydia Arnold: Learning, teaching, assessment, technology, higher education & action research. https://lydia-arnold.com/2020/08/06/doing-collaborative-autoethnography/

Arnold, L., & Norton, L. (2021). Problematising pedagogical action research in formal teaching courses and academic development: A collaborative autoethnography. *Educational Action Research, 29*(2), 328–345. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2020.1746373

Baguley, M., Kerby, M., O'Toole, J., Barrett, M. S., Grierson, E., Dezuanni, M., & Meiners, J. (2021). In their own voice: The role of the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts paper writers in ensuring equitable access to quality arts education in Australia. *Australian Educational Researcher*, *48*, 795–818. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-021-00489-x

Baum, S., Owen, S., & Oreck, B. (1997). Transferring individual self-regulation processes from arts to academics. *Arts Education Policy Review, 98*(4), 32–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.1997.9936393

Burnard, P., & Stahl, G., (2021). Mobilising capitals and gender performativity within the practice of arts entrepreneurship: A case study. *Australian Art Education*, *41*(1), 27–49. https://search.informit.org/doi/epdf/10.3316/INFORMIT.079687550507639

Burrows, R. (2007). "Reframing-reforming" arts education: Taking bold steps toward radical change in the Los Angeles unified school district. *The New England Conservatory Journal for Music in Education*, *1*(2), 133–135.

Buys, L., & Miller, E. (2009). Enhancing social capital in children via school-based community cultural development projects: A pilot study. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *10*(3). http://www.ijea.org/v10n3/

Carrillo, C., & Baguley, M. (2011). From school teacher to university lecturer: Illuminating the journey from the classroom to the university for two arts educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(1), 62–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.07.003

Chang, H. (2013). Individual and collaborative autoethnography as method: A social-scientist's perspective. In S. Holman Jones, T. E. Adams & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of autoethnography* (pp. 107–122). Left Coast Press.

Chang, H., Ngunjiri, F., & Hernandez, K. C. (2016). *Collaborative autoethnography*. Routledge.

Charland, W. (2011). Art integration as school culture change: A cultural ecosystem approach to faculty development. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *12*(8). http://www.ijea.org/v12n8/

Christensen, J., & Gomila, A. (Eds.). (2018). *The arts and the brain: Psychology and physiology beyond pleasure*. Elsevier.

Cooper, B. (2018). *Primary Schools: The decline of arts education in primary schools and how it can be reversed.* Fabian Society, Children & the Arts, Musicians' Union. https://fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FS-Primary-Colours-Report-WEB-FINAL.pdf

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). Flow and creativity. *NAMTA Journal*, *22*(2), 60–97. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ547968

Dinham, J. (2007). Delivering primary visual arts education: Where rhetoric meets reality. *Australian Art Education, 30*(1), 16–32. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/INFORMIT.203981804167670

Dinham, J. (2022). Signature pedagogies of arts education reflected in the Australian curriculum: The arts (Version 9). *Australian Art Education, 43*(1), 13–32. https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.752710471888162

Ellis, C. S. (1999). Heartfelt autoethnography. *Qualitative Health Research, 9*(5), 669–683. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973299129122153

Ellis, C. S., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1), 273–290. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1589

Ellis, D. (2018). *Principals' perceptions of arts education in public elementary schools in southeastern Virginia* (Publication No. 10829009) [Doctoral dissertation, Graduate College of Hampton University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Ewing, R. (2010). *The arts and Australian education: Realising potential*. ACER Press. https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=aer

Fancourt, D., & Finn S. (2019). *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review*. Health Evidence Network (HEN) synthesis report 67. WHO Regional Office for Europe. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553773/

Fancourt, D., Warran, K., & Aughterson, H. (2020). *Evidence summary for policy: The role of arts in improving health and wellbeing: Report to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport*. University College London. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929773/DCMS_report_April_2020_finalx__1_.pdf

Felton, E., Vichie, K., & Moore, E. (2016). Widening participation creatively: Creative arts education for social inclusion. *Higher Education Research & Development, 35*(3), 447–460. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1107881

Fleming, J. (2015). Arts education and school leadership: A case study. In J. Fleming, R. Gibson & M. Anderson (Eds.), *How arts education makes a difference* (pp. 204–222). Routledge.

Francis, D., & Hester, S. (2012). *An invitation to ethnomethodology: Language, society and social interaction*. Sage Publications.

Gauntlett, D. (2011). *Making is connecting: The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0*. Polity Press.

Glatthorn, A. A., Jailall, J. M., & Jailall, J. K. (2016). *The principal as curriculum leader: Shaping what is taught and tested.* Corwin Press.

Goldberg, M. (2021). *Arts integration: Teaching subject matter through the arts in multicultural settings* (6th ed.). Routledge.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essay on education, the arts and social change*. Jossey-Bass.

Groen, J. & Roy, S. (2020). Meaningful engagement of new scholars at international seminars: Communities of practice as a pathway. *Reflective Practice, International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives, 21*(1), 110–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2020.1712197

Guindon, M., Huffman, H., Socol, A., & Takahashi-Rial, S. (2014). *A statewide snapshot of principals supporting arts integration: Their preparation and current practices*. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/intern-research/reports/arts2014.pdf

Gurure, R., & Mamvuto, A. (2021). Examining teachers' discourses on the visual and performing arts (VPA) in the primary school. *Australian Art Education*, *41*(1), 70–82. https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/INFORMIT.079724816450156

Heinemeyer, C. (2018, September 3). *Mental health crisis in teens is being magnified by demise of creative subjects in schools.* The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/mental- health-crisis-in-teens-is-being-magnified-by-demise-of-creative-subjects-in-school-102383

Hipp, J., & Sulentic Dowell, M.-M. (2019). Challenges and supports to elementary teacher education: Case study of preservice teachers' perspectives on arts integration. *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 15(1). https://doi.org/10.21977/D915144538

Jones, S. A. (2018). *Art-making with refugees and survivors: Creative and transformative responses to trauma after natural disasters, war and other crises*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kerby, M., Lorenza, L., Dyson, J., Ewing, R., & Baguley, M. (2021). Challenges, implications and the future of the Australian Curriculum: The arts. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, *48*(5), 901–922. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-021-00488-y

Kim, T., & Reichmuth, H. L. (2021). Exploring cultural logic in becoming teacher: A collaborative autoethnography on transnational teaching and learning. *Professional Development in Education, 47*(2-3), 257–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1862278

Lapadat, J. C. (2017). Ethics in autoethnography and collaborative autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *23*(8), 589–603. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417704462

Lee, B., & Cawthon, S. (2015). What predicts pre-service teacher use of arts-based pedagogies in the classroom? An analysis of the beliefs, values, and attitudes of pre-service teachers. *Journal for Learning through the Arts, 11*(1). https://doi.org/10.21977/D911119691

Lemon, N., & Garvis, S. (2013). What is the role of the arts in a primary school?: An investigation of perceptions of pre-service teachers in Australia. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(9), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n9.7

Leone, L. (Ed.). (2021). *Craft in art therapy: Diverse approaches to the transformative power of craft materials and methods*. Routledge.

Martin, B. H. (2020, June 10). *Brain research shows the arts promote mental health.* The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/brain-research-shows-the-arts- promote-mental-health-136668

Mastandrea, S., Fagioli, S., & Biasi, V. (2019). Art and psychological well-being: Linking the brain to the aesthetic emotion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, 739. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00739

Mak, H. W., & Fancourt, D. (2019). Arts engagement and self-esteem in children: Results from a propensity score matching analysis. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1449*(1), 36–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.14056

McCarthy, K. F., Ondaatje, E. H., Zakaras, L., & Brooks, A. (2004). *Gifts of the muse: Reframing the debate about the benefits of the arts*. The Wallace Foundation. http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG218/

Moon, S., Rose, S., Black, A., Black, J., Hwang, Y., Lynn, L., & Memoli, J. (2013). Releasing the social imagination: Art, the aesthetic experience, and citizenship in education. *Creative Education*, *4*(3), 223–233. https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2013.43033

O'Connor, P., & Estellés, M. (2021). Shot of love: The art of care in schools post disaster. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *39*(3), 209–220. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2021.1951341

O'Toole, J. (2018). The Australian curriculum for the arts – five years old: Its conception, birth and first school report. *Australian Art Education*, *39*(3), 427–440. https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/ielapa.155199722426134

Oreck, B. (2004). The artistic and professional development of teachers: A study of teachers' attitudes toward and use of the arts in teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 55*(1), 55–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487103260072

Oreck, B. (2006). Artistic choices: A study of teachers who use the arts in the classroom. *International Journal of Education & the Arts, 7*(8). http://www.ijea.org/v7n8/

Pensoneau-Conway, S. L., Bolen, D. M., Toyosaki, S., Rudick, K. C., & Bolen, E. K. (2014). Self, relationship, positionality, and politics: A community autoethnographic inquiry into collaborative writing. *Cultural Studies <–> Critical Methodologies*, *14*(4), 312–323. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708614530302

Peterson, S. E. (2016). *Exploring the leadership role of principals in arts integrated magnet schools* (Publication No. 28316927) [Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University Chicago]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Rago, J., & Gibson, R. (2021). How visual arts can promote perseverance, confidence and creative risk-taking in young students. *Australian Art Education, 42*(1), 50–69. https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.079706183478897

Ramberg, J., Låftman, S. B., Almquist, Y. B., & Modin, B. (2019). School effectiveness and students' perceptions of teacher caring: A multilevel study. *Improving Schools, 22*(1), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480218764693

Roy, R., & Uekusa, S. (2020). Collaborative autoethnography: "Self-reflection" as a timely alternative research approach during the global pandemic. *Qualitative Research Journal*, *20*(4), 383–392. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-06-2020-0054

Sabol, F. R. (2021). Art education during the COVID-19 pandemic: The journey across a changing landscape. *Art Education Policy Review*, *123*(3), 127–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2021.1931599

Secker, J., Heydinrych, K., Kent, L., & Keay, J. (2018). Why art? Exploring the contribution to mental well-being of the creative aspects and processes of visual art-making in an arts and mental health course. *Art & Health, 10*(1), 72–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2017.1326389

Simon, S. (2021). *School principal development: Theoretical and experiential approaches for educational leaders*. Routledge.

Sochacka, N. W., Guyotte, K. W., & Walther, J. (2016). Learning together: A collaborative autoethnographic exploration of STEAM (STEM + the Arts) education. *Journal of Engineering Education, 105*(1), 15–42. https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20112

Stanko-Kaczmarek, M., & Kaczmarek, L. D. (2016). Effects of tactile sensations during finger painting on mindfulness, emotions, and scope of attention. *Creativity Research Journal, 28*(3), 283–288. https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2016.1189769

Tam, P.-C. (2020). Response to COVID-19 "Now I send you the rays of the sun": A drama project to rebuild post-COVID-19 resilience for teachers and children in Hong Kong. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 25*(4), 631–637. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2020.1816816

Tarr, B., Launay J., & Dunbar R. I. M. (2014). Music and social bonding: "Self–other" merging and neurohormonal mechanisms. *Frontiers of Psychology*, *5*, 1096. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01096

Taylor, E. W., & Cranton, P. (Eds.). (2012). *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice.* Jossey-Bass.

Taylor, M., Klein, E. J., & Abrams, L. (2014). Tensions of reimagining our roles as teacher educators in a third space: Revisiting a co/autoethnography through a faculty lens. *Studying Teacher Education, 10*(1)*,* 3–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/17425964.2013.866549

Van Katwyk, T., & Seko, Y. (2017). Knowing through improvisational dance: A collaborative autoethnography. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *18*(2), Art. 1. http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs170216

Vasileva, M., Alisic, E., & De Young, A. (2021). COVID-19 unmasked: Preschool children's negative thoughts and worries during the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 12*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2021.1924442

Walls, A., Deane, K. L., & O'Connor, P. (2016). "Looking for the blue, the yellow, all the colours of the rainbow": The value of participatory arts for young people in social work practice. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work, 28*(4), 67–79. https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.590160542886565

Wansink, B., Akkerman, S., Zuiker, I., & Wubbels, T. (2018). Where does teaching multiperspectivity in history education begin and end? An analysis of the uses of temporality. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 46*(4), 495–527. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2018.1480439

Winterson, J. (1996). *Art objects: Essays on ecstasy and effrontery*. Penguin.

About the Authors

Judith Dinham is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Curtin University. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia. Her books *Delivering Authentic Arts Education, 5th ed*. (2023, Cengage) and *It's Arts Play: Young Children Belonging, Being and Becoming, 2nd ed.* (2022, Oxford University Press, co-authored with Beryl Chalk), are the market-leading arts education university texts in Australia. Her research relates to arts education, teacher education, and online learning. Judith's commitment to education includes national arts education policy research and arts curriculum development, and the roles of D/Chair, Australian Network of Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching (Education); D/Editor for Australian College of Educators; board member of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and the Australia and Regions Artists' Exchange. As a visual artist, Judith is represented in public, corporate, and private collections in Australia and overseas.

Margaret Baguley is Vice President of Art Education Australia and a Professor in Arts Education, Curriculum, and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. She is currently the Associate Head of Research for the School of Education. Dr Baguley has numerous publications and presentations. Her interest in the arts, creative collaboration, leadership dynamics, and historical commemoration underpin her research nationally and internationally. She has been recognised through awards, including the Australian Learning and Teaching Council's National Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning. She has received funding from several sources, including the Australian Council for the Arts, Princeton University, Arts Queensland, and the Ian Potter Foundation. She has undertaken residencies at the Australian National University, the Australian Tapestry Workshop, Arthur Boyd's Bundanon, and was awarded an Australia Council for the Arts New Media Residency to Banff, Canada as Australia's representative. Her work is currently on exhibition at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

Susan Simon has extensive experience leading Australian schools, having been a principal of three Queensland independent schools, including being the foundation principal of one of them. Within academia, Susan became Deputy Head of the School of Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast, served on state and national teacher education program accreditation panels, and specialised in postgraduate leadership studies. With a national Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) Seed Grant 2014 – 15, she undertook and disseminated findings on research into school leadership learning needs. Susan was awarded a national OLT Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning for 2015 for her teaching in leadership education. She has published regularly in highly ranked, peer-reviewed journals. Routledge most recently published Susan's solo-authored text on school leadership development. Now an adjunct, Susan remains actively involved in research into school leadership and directly involved in school governance as an independent school board member.

Merryl Goldberg is Professor of Music at California State University San Marcos and Director of the Center ARTES campaign, ART=OPPORTUNITY. Her publications include Arts integration: *Teaching Subject Matter Through The Arts in Multicultural Settings, 6th ed*. (2021). Research and programmatic grants include Federal Department of Education Arts in Education Program, Fulbright-Hays Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, California Arts Council, Stuart and Panta Rhea grants. In 2018 she was awarded the Wang Family Excellence Award for Outstanding Faculty Teaching in the CSU. Merryl serves on the Board of CREATE CA and is a Trustee for California State Summer School for the Arts. Merryl's undergraduate degree is from New England Conservatory of Music. Her Masters and Doctorate are from Harvard Graduate School of Education. Prior to entering academia and as

a professional musician, she recorded numerous CDs and was on the road for 13 years playing the saxophone with the Klezmer Conservatory Band.

Dr Martin Kerby is Associate Professor in curriculum and pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. His education research explores links between schools and universities, mentoring, and multiliteracies. His historical research encompasses school museums as sites for learning, biography, military history, and artistic and cultural responses to conflict. Kerby's awards and grants include the national ANZAC Centenary Arts and Culture Fund Grant (2015) and Queensland Government Anzac Centenary Spirit of Service Grant (2017). In 2018, Kerby was awarded a QANZAC100 Fellowship at the State Library of Queensland for a 12-month project, 'A War Imagined: Queenslanders and the Great War'. He has published extensively, including six sole-authored research books, and presented nationally and internationally. In 2023, he was a participant in the highly prestigious Gandel Holocaust Program for Australian Educators at Yad Vashem in Israel. Dr Kerby is also the chief editor of the journal Australian Art Education.

International Journal of Education & the Arts

http://IJEA.org ISSN: 1529-8094