

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE ARTS: “THE ARTS ARE NOT THE FLOWERS, BUT THE ROOTS OF EDUCATION”

SUSAN CROWE

In many of today’s schools, the Arts are held to be very low in priority, as teachers do not fully understand how and why they should be implemented. This is possibly why many teachers do not devote much of their teaching time to the Arts—and in particular, the Performing Arts. For this chapter I will define the Arts as creative works and the actual process of producing that work, as well as the body of work in the art forms that make up our intellectual and cultural heritage. These Art forms that I refer to are Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Art—recognising that within each form there are a variety of sub-disciplines. The Arts should assume a particular significance as learning can be done in and through the Arts. In 1959 in England the Crowther Report declared:

‘The Arts are not the flowers, but the roots of education’
(cited in *Dance Education and Training in Britain*, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation,
1980, p. 3).

The Arts can reach students in ways that we cannot reach them in the areas of English, Mathematics or Science. If we do not give students the opportunity to encounter the cognitive, physical, social and emotional experiences offered in the Arts, many of them will become the ‘unreached learner’. ‘Through engagement with the arts, young people can better begin lifelong journeys of developing their capabilities and contributing to the world around them. The arts teach young people how to learn by giving them the first step: the desire to learn’, according to the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, in his statement in *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (2000, p. vi). In Australia, the Committee for National Education and the Arts Strategy (2004) states ‘The Arts provide rich opportunities for students to develop the kinds of skills and capacities

needed to build a viable and environmentally responsible economy and society for Australia in the 21st century' (p.5).

Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) recognized that 'Learning is most often defined in the literature, as a relatively permanent change in behaviours as the result of experience' (p. 5). Gardner (1993) maintains that 'not all people have the same interests and abilities; not all of us learn in the same way' (p. 10). Just as research shows us that there is no 'one way to learn', there is no 'one way to teach' and the debate continues as the social context of each new generation changes. What we do know, is that for students to be successful learners they need a supportive environment, which allows them the freedom to play, to explore, to experiment, to practise and above all to think. Such an environment helps build a healthy self-concept in the students, which enables them to grow in terms of their spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, emotional and aesthetic needs. Over the years the environments in which we live and work will change, and our children will need an adaptive learning style to help them cope with these changes. When we as teachers, observe our students learning in the classroom, we note that they learn through their senses. While they may use all senses as they learn, they tend to 'learn best' through a particular sense. *Auditory learners* prefer to listen and talk about a situation. *Visual learners* prefer to see a situation, and write down what they see to help their learning. *Tactile or kinesthetic learners* need to be directly involved in their learning. For successful learning to occur, students need to be given the opportunity to experience activities that are relevant and purposeful to them. They should benefit from an education that has coherence, relevance and continuity. Students must be fully nurtured, affirmed and enabled by the educational opportunities we provide. Jeanneret (2004) asserts that providing children with unique and multiple ways of forming, exploring, communicating, and understanding their own and other's feelings and ideas is a key learning area of the Arts.

Remembering the different learning styles, we need to carefully think how to impart the skills and knowledge students will need to express themselves, their values, and their feelings. The teacher today has to play multiple roles. No longer is s/he 'the instructor, organizing and supervising students'. Teachers need to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the students they teach. The teacher must motivate students and initiate activities that will encourage and enable students to learn. Teachers ought to model valuable learning strategies, and it is a unique opportunity in the Arts for teachers to do this. They themselves must be lifelong learners as they continue to explore the Arts medium in which they work and teach. A teacher needs to establish a learning environment that is supportive to the

students in the class. Students need to be encouraged to ‘have a go’ at learning and not be afraid to make mistakes. It is through these mistakes that they can learn—especially so in an Arts situation. Risk taking is part of living as an adult and if students have learned to take informed risks in their learning, then they will continue to do so in their lives outside education. Students ought to be presented with activities that will allow them to succeed, when this occurs they will be motivated to continue with their learning. Students need to be challenged. In the area of the Arts, they can be given many problems to solve in a creative, enjoyable and thought provoking manner. This invites learning, especially when they are actively engaged in finding a solution. ‘When you make art you not only produce interesting images and objects you also develop your thinking and reasoning skills and your ability to think creatively when confronted by a problem or challenge’ (Aland & Darby, 1998, p. 1). What better foundation for lifelong learning in adults.

Gardner (1985) believes that ‘From the very first, an individual’s existence as a human being affects the way that others will treat him and very soon the individual comes to think of his own body as special’ (p. 235). As teachers we must give students a variety of ways of using their body to create special Arts works thus achieving this goal of developing self-worth. We must offer our students different Arts forms including Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance. Education using Multiple Intelligences is concerned with the development of understanding rather than the mastery of a defined body of facts. A curriculum, which is balanced and broadly based, promotes the whole development of students, the school and society, and prepares these students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. ‘In the Arts, students learn ways of experiencing, developing, representing and understanding ideas, emotions, values and cultural beliefs. They learn to take risks, be imaginative, question prevailing values, explore alternative solutions’ (Board of Studies, 1995, p. 9). Arts education is the process of teaching and learning how to create and produce visual and performing Arts and how to understand and evaluate art forms created by others. Without the Arts students may not realize their full potential. Therefore, teacher education and training in the Arts, for both new and experienced teachers, is critical to the achievement of a major change in understanding of the importance of the Arts and in the implementation of teaching strategies and learning styles. ‘To ensure quality Arts teaching in our schools, teachers need to feel confident to teach the Arts’ (Bott, 2004, p. 7).

The Performing Arts, (Music, Dance, Drama) and the Visual Arts could be considered universal languages through which we can express our common goals

and beliefs. They are some of the most common forms of communication and understanding between peoples of different cultures. The Arts are a source of human insight and understanding about the world and those who live in it. They connect us to the past and help us imagine new possibilities for the future. The Arts are experienced through the direct use of the senses and engage both feelings and the intellect. The Arts bring humanity, compassion, understanding and harmony to the world in which we live. Aland and Darby (1997) suggest 'Art works can tell us a great deal about how people live, work, play, relax and enjoy themselves, as well as what they imagine and speculate and fantasize and dream about' (p. 13). They share a special capability of penetrating to the very core of human existence, having the potential to deal with every aspect of life, from the most light-hearted and humorous to the most disturbing and profound. The Arts have the capacity to convey ideas and feelings and to represent experience. Pascoe (1998a) says that they 'reveal symbols, forge connections and help prepare students for life' (p. 15). Preparation for life is a continuing process as we are always preparing for new aspects and challenges in our lives. He also asserts that the Arts 'enable us to better understand the complexity of human behaviour and imagination as well as rehearse and explore ways of living in an increasingly changing technological society' (1998b, p. 53).

Art has to do with the awakening of interest, with curiosity and discovery. An artist is one who perceives the world in ways that many of us are not accustomed to sensing it. The Arts stimulate the human spirit. They can help us reflect upon our sense of belonging to something precious and worthy of protection. If we, as teachers can make the beauty and grandeur of the world more observable to others, and if they, as students can recognise how wonderful and worthwhile the world is, then all can learn to feel responsible for it. When we encourage children to use the Arts as a means of expressing their views of and understanding about the environment and the world generally, then they will also develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for the Earth. Fowler (1994) claims 'Instead of telling them what to think, the Arts engage the minds of students to sort out their own reactions and articulate them through the medium at hand' (p. 4).

In the Arts, students experience much as they are active and involved. They have a sense of accomplishment and exhilaration. They work with purpose and energy. They are absorbed in exploring, discovering, creating and learning. These art forms encourage our students to dream, to create, to have beliefs, to have a sense of identity. When we deprive our students of the opportunity to use these gifts in their everyday lives, we can be encouraging mediocrity in the expressing of their inner selves. In most cultures the Arts provide important ways of

expressing and representing ideas, emotions, values and spiritual beliefs and as such are grouped as a key area of learning and human activity. 'The Arts invite students to be active participants in their world rather than mere observers of it' (Fowler, 1994, p. 4). Underlining this thought is that creation is a continuous process—as we create something new we are learning something new. Learning is part of the creating process.

Dance is expressive human movement, which has a variety of forms and purposes ranging from social activities to theatrical and religious rites. According to Snell (1982), 'Dance more than any other form provides opportunity for the whole body to be used as a means of giving ourselves. In dance we use the mind, the will, our emotions, strength and energy' (p. 2). Children love to dance—from earliest childhood they sway to music and express their joy through spinning, jumping, rolling, running and much more. It is therefore only natural that they should express their love of life through dance and movement. We can encourage them to use this expression of life in their school activities. For centuries people have realized that some things can only be expressed through gesture or motion, thus the world's rich tradition of dance and drama in religious celebrations. These are usually formal processions, prescribed gestures used in specific rites and in many religions, ceremonial dance. However, for our students who are still learning to express their feelings in a variety of ways, creative movement is a good place to begin. Bretherton (1995) suggests that 'Creative movement allows children to express praise, love, joy, thanks, sorrow, faith and petition through movement and dance ... [It] helps the children to understand that they can communicate in many different ways involving all aspects of their person' (p. 41).

We must be careful not to 'scare' people off when we talk about dance. Many children and adults will be concerned that they cannot dance. We have to instill in them the idea, says Gribben (1982), that 'Dance must be seen in the broadest point of view, so that it includes posture, gesture, procession and involves music' (p. 6). Most of us can participate in a procession, change our position from standing to kneeling, or use simple gestures; therefore we can 'dance'. Sometimes the gestures we make with our bodies can be words 'in motion'. For example waving a hand to say 'goodbye', shaking our head to say 'no', wagging our finger to remonstrate with a child. Lazear (1991) maintains 'The child is more in touch with his body—his movements, his sensations, his needs and his desires. He moves and expresses his thoughts and his feelings more freely' (p. 81). Knowing all of this, we must allow our students to use these abilities, these gifts in their schoolwork.

Burton (1991) believes that Drama is a way of exploring and understanding the world around us. It aids in the development of essential human abilities of

identification. It is a natural extension of how children learn from the time they are born—through mimicking and playing. He suggests, ‘Children are able to imagine environments, experiences and people they have never encountered and behave as though they exist’ (p. 1). O’Toole and Dunn (2002) reiterate this belief: ‘We can turn the classroom into almost anywhere we choose, and become almost anyone in any human situation real or imaginable, simply by agreeing to pretend’ (p. 3). We should, therefore, encourage our students to use their imagination—to pretend when in the Performing Arts classroom.

When using an Integrated Curriculum approach in our education, we are able to implement and use Performing Arts strategies and tools to assist students’ learning. Through the use of *role-play* students can take on the role of various people, playing out a specific situation or event. Using *improvisation* (acting out a situation spontaneously) students are able to join in the story as a character without having to learn dialogue or know the story by heart. They can be part of the story as they listen to the story being read or told. Students can explore ‘freeze frames’ to make living pictures or sculptures of events in their life, or to retell well-known stories. Using their *imagination* students may be able to go on imaginary journeys and meet characters in role. They should be able to feel the heat of the day, the wetness of the water as they paddle at the edge of the beach in *Samantha Seagull’s Sandals* (Winch, 1985), the smell of cooking as Mum bakes the cookies in *The Doorbell Rang* (Hutchins, 1989). They need to hear the crowds shouting in *The Emperor’s New Clothes* (Daly, 1993). Using the skills of *mime* (acting out stories without words) they (the students) can retell the story by Aesop of *The Wind and the Sun* (Watts, 1992). Teachers can use *puppetry* to assist in the retelling of any range of stories including fairy tales or nursery rhymes. This of course will take time in Integrated Curriculum, but as the students will also be learning these techniques in their Performing Arts classes, then we, as teachers, should be allowing them to use their knowledge across the curriculum, as they work in the classroom.

As Literacy and Literature are of such importance to Primary school students, these Drama activities are all strategies that can be used to encourage children to read. Drama allows students to understand what they are reading/hearing through active engagement. When using mime with students, it is important to keep words and actions or gestures short and simple. Actions can be repeated often—especially with younger students, as they enjoy the security of knowing what they are doing. They are confident when they are familiar with their actions or mimes. The use of *echo-drama* with lower and middle level students may assist in introducing them to this form of learning. The teacher reads part of the story, or

poem, and students 'echo' the reading through movement, mime or gesture. It is important that the teacher stresses the words of the action, as this is where the focus should be. Remembering that students learn best when they are active participants in their learning, teachers can feel quite confident in repeating favourite action songs, mimes or movement sequences.

Moynahan (1984a) has alleged, 'Mime can create the imaginative space wherein the presence of many different relationships can be felt' (p. 88). Actions in mime must be clear, brief and evocative as the mimic is communicating physically with the audience. The mimic should always take the simplest path. Actions must be easily understood. Moynahan (1984b) later suggests, 'the body language of mime restores an important dimension to the total experience' (p. 90). Shape can be not only literal, but also emotive—that is, children can take on a 'squashed shape' or body position that highlights how the character they are portraying feels. As Ashton (1998) maintains 'Size is also an important aspect of shape and form as is the view ... front on or profile' (p. 13). In dramatic presentations students need to be encouraged to use this strategy, as they endeavour to make their bodies large for a strong person, or small for a weaker person.

Music has been a documented part of education since the time of ancient Greece. Plato believed that musical understanding was an essential element of thinking and consequently recommended that children be taught music before any other subjects and if music can develop these thinking skills, so too can the other areas of the Arts. Through to the nineteenth century, music was valued for religious, social and moral reasons and became part of the school curriculum. Music is an expressive art form using the medium of sound. It includes the use of instruments and voice. Music was introduced into Australian schools in the form of singing in the early 1850s (Stevens, 1978, cited in Stevens, 2002) as a school subject, despite the fact that most schoolteachers were unskilled in the area of music.

Inspector Austin Turner despaired of the Catholic Schools in the Ballarat district. Of St Alipius he wrote: 'The natural deficiencies of these children are astonishing. There is not one-third of the whole school that can distinguish one sound from another' and at Buninyong 'So lamentable are the natural deficiencies of these children in music that all my endeavours to teach them the most simple tune from notes or by imitation have utterly failed'. (*Blee, 2004, p. 35*)

However, for over one hundred and fifty years, music has been an important part of Australian schools' curriculum. According to Geoghhegan (1995) 'Music

is considered to be a powerful means for developing the young child's cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth.' (p. 4). Whitehead (1999) in her Report *Advancing Music Education in Australia* states 'Music education should be a lifelong process and should embrace all age groups' (p. 6). Stefanakus (1999) believes that 'Music contributes to students' sense of self, and community and helps shape and contribute to cultural identity' (p. 56).

Current brain research tells us that music can charge and energise the brain, specially selected music has been found to have a powerful energising influence. Jensen (1997) believes that 'when music runs counter to our own natural frequency rhythm, we can feel irritated and stressed' (p. 20). Likewise the use of quiet reflective music can give the students a few minutes to close their eyes, to feel the wonder of life and love, and to whisper a feeling of wonder and awe at all that is around them.

Visual Art is often created to interpret and respond to life experiences in visible form. From the earliest times, humans have made marks and shaped objects. Using any material at hand, useful and decorative objects have been fashioned, and images made to represent incidents and happenings in history. Works of Visual Art provide enrichment and enjoyment through the interpretation of their meanings and an appreciation of their forms. The study of the Visual Arts enables students to understand and enjoy the images and forms they and others make. Through practical experiences, students acquire an understanding of a diverse range of two and three-dimensional media. Students learn to communicate through the images and forms they make, and to develop a sense of pride at producing visible statements of their thoughts and feelings.

Art has many sub-disciplines, ranging from drawing and painting, sculpture and construction to photography and film-making. A variety of media and tools should be available to children to create Art works in the visual form. They can use clay, textiles, paper, metal, or any material they can find, to create a work of art. Mahlmann (1994) suggests that 'Children demonstrate fine motor control ... reaching and grasping ... tearing and cutting' (p. 31) when they explore and create a Visual Art work. Students will exhibit a sense of joy and excitement as they make and share their artwork with their classmates and others. Their Visual Art works reflect their feelings, just as the works they create in Dance, Drama and Music mirror their emotions. According to Emery and Flood (1998) 'Visual Arts are often the mirror of society, they can reflect truth, distort truth' (p. 15). Through exploring and creating Visual Art, students develop an understanding of the meaning and importance of the visual world in which they live. The Arts are providing our students with a much-needed outlet for creativity and self-

expression, as Emery and Flood (1998) claim, 'The maker connects ideas to make meaning and records their response to personal experiences in visual imagery' (p. 14).

As all that we say about school and learning can also be applied to life learning, it is important that the students in our schools are given the opportunity to encounter the many cognitive, physical, social and emotional experiences offered in the area of the Arts. If schools focus only on Linguistic or Mathematical skills, many students are being 'short changed', as they are not being encouraged to develop the many other skills and intelligences that each of us possess. The Arts provide an opportunity for success for many students who have difficulty with the purely academic subjects offered in our schools. Gardner (1993) is convinced that all eight 'of the intelligences have equal claim to priority. In our society however, we have put linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, figuratively speaking, on a pedestal' (p. 8). 'Do we want flowering plants, or are we content with spindly branches? If we truly believe that our young plants can burst forth in flower, then we need to pay attention to the ingredients we are using to mulch the soil' (Geoghegan, 1994, p. 456).

Gardner also maintains that human efforts draw on an array of human talents or abilities, talents that do not always fall within the bounds of the normal classroom practice. Yet these abilities exist, and individuals who possess them continue to improve our lives with the products of their gifts. This opinion explains the wide range of performances that are valued throughout the world. It appears that the linguistic and mathematical intelligences are systematically nurtured in our schools, however, the others, which are also career and life intelligences, are simulated only in passing, if at all. This notion must be changed if each student is to realise his or her own potential. According to Gardner (1993) the intelligences exist in order to make sense of certain types of information. He defines intelligence as "the ability to solve problems, or to fashion products that are valued within one or more cultural or community settings" (p. 7). The Arts represent multiple forms of intelligence and multiple ways of knowing the world. They are the language of a whole range of human experience; to neglect them is to neglect ourselves, and to deny children the full development that education should provide. Gardner (1993) states, 'The Intelligences work together to solve problems' (p. 9). Real world activities inevitably involve a blend of the intelligences and the process of using these intelligences that we instil in children does not cease with childhood, but will continue throughout their lives.

Mahlmann (1994) asserts, 'Arts education benefits the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination

and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication' (p. 34). This too is a continuing process. It is through the Arts that students will be able to discover and rediscover a sense of their own identity and that of the community in which they live. Students' lack of Arts education can inhibit their ability to communicate ideas spontaneously and lessen their response to new ideas expressing feelings or emotions as they do so. Through the Arts, students learn to respect the different ways others have of thinking, working and expressing themselves. Students will be able to access many of the diverse cultures in the community and that of the wider Australian and international scenes. The Arts promote a better general quality of life. The Arts fulfil many roles in our lives and while some art works have a specific function or purpose, others are created simply for their aesthetic qualities. Students need to know how to recognise the aesthetic qualities in works of Art, nature and material environments. They need to be aware that Art has many layers of meaning. Critics use richly expressive language to help analyse, interpret and respond to Art (or the Arts). Aland and Darby (1998) state that 'Using *TALK* to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings about Art works allows you to respond immediately. *WRITING* allows you to take time and plan your response to art work' (p. 93).

The Arts can assume a particular significance from the beginning of a child's school life and throughout their adult life, as learning can be both *in* and *through* the Arts. When well implemented, they can be enjoyed in their own right and for their own sake, and can also permeate other areas of learning with greater relevance and meaning. The Arts can make the most effective contribution to the personal and social education and development of the student, and have an unusual potential to improve the whole school environment. A curriculum that is balanced and broadly based promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students in school and society, and prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Burton, Horowitz and Abeles (1999) claim, 'The Arts are neither ancillary nor core, but rather they are participants in the development of critical ways of thinking and learning' (p. 44).

Some teachers give undue weight to the core or basic subjects. Many believe that the Arts have no significant place in an education system concerned primarily with the concept of knowledge as the 'written word' and the 'academic'. The sheer number of programs of study and achievement targets associated with the core subjects, being the main means whereby schools are to be made accountable is causing distortion of the primary curriculum. Is it surprising therefore, poses Pateman (1991) that some already overburdened teachers, insecure in the Arts due

to inadequate initial training, are inevitably choosing to treat the Arts as peripheral subjects. Unfortunately, current signs show that restrictions are being placed on the Arts due to lack of funding, time, resources, teacher training and interest by academic and education hierarchy.

Current research has highlighted the importance of the Arts in education, yet numerous teachers are still seeing the Arts as an educational frill that is the first to be left out of the timetable when things become too busy. Many of our schools insist that English and Mathematics are to be implemented for up to three hours of a five hour school day and are effectively shutting out students who may excel in the area of the Arts. This is why school can be so difficult for some students. Gardner (1993) tells us that 'the purpose of school should be to develop intelligences' (p. 9). Therefore teachers need to be aware that the Arts curriculum can offer many approaches in other subject areas, in particular experiential activities. These 'hands on' tasks can provide different and sometimes better learning opportunities for low achieving and 'problem' students. Activities and success in the Arts can assist students in finding satisfaction in school. These are two of the essential elements for a successful learning process. Newitt (2000a) in his report on the 'Champions of Change' project states 'Learning in and through the Arts can help less advantaged students to achieve academically in formal schooling' (p. 1). He also states that 'When the Arts become central to the learning environment, a school's culture is changed and conditions for learning are improved' (p. 1). In a further article, Newitt states that it is through implementing an Arts program that we are able to assist 'the development of positive relationships between students through co-operative work, we can promote ethical practices, encourage alternative ways of working and divergent thinking and acknowledge various ways of knowing (intelligences), including tacit knowledge' (2000b, p. 1). They are able to demonstrate student success in many areas of specific knowledge and skills and in a breadth of abilities relevant to a broad range of learning.

Teachers, even experienced ones, are finding that it can be difficult to meet the needs of each student in a class. At all times they must remember that the individual student has been given unique talents, gifts, abilities—whatever we like to call them—and therefore "shines" in his or her own way. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the teacher to help them 'shine' often and more brightly. To do this, a teacher needs to know how students learn and therefore, how they will use their gifts. There are many advantages given to students who are provided with opportunities to study the Arts in any form, while attending school. Students are encouraged to see artistic experience as a means of finding personal, cultural or

spiritual meaning and therefore self-worth. The Arts make statements that are reflecting values, feelings and ideas, which can be defined and mirror the identity of the artist, be it Visual Art, Music, Dance or Drama. 'It is the artist who taps into the consciousness of the community, who makes the connections and brings to the fore the viewer's own prejudices' (Emery & Flood, 1998, p. 15).

An Arts education should 'encompass some discussion and analysis of Art works themselves and some appreciation of the cultural contexts in which artworks are fashioned' according to Gardner (1993, p. 141). Art fulfils many roles in our lives and while some Art works have a specific function or purpose, others are created simply for their aesthetic qualities. The *Curriculum and Standards Framework: The Arts* (Board of Studies, 1995, p. 9) recommends that an Arts program in the school should aim to:

- develop the intellectual and expressive potential of students;
- equip students to use and understand the Arts forms as symbolic language or communication;
- develop skills in Arts criticism and aesthetics; and
- develop students' understanding that the Arts evolve within particular social and cultural contexts.

In all Arts strands, students explore techniques and processes specific to the particular Art form. They are encouraged to present and reflect upon their own work and those of others, discussing, analysing, interpreting and evaluating the different art forms from past and present contexts. According to Wright (1994) an education in Performing Arts requires students to think, not just memorise. The Arts encourage students to celebrate the differences between themselves and others, as they learn understanding, tolerance, respect, self-discipline, self worth, perseverance and co-operation. School Arts programs should highlight the important contribution of the Arts to our leisure time and to the economy through employment. The Arts have a role in various industries, particularly Media Arts where they are often used to advertise products and activities. Large numbers of people visit our galleries, attend performances and use the many aspects of Media and Graphic Communication, which also add to the economy of our country.

When students participate in the Arts as makers, presenters, critics and theorists, they learn to deal with their perceptions through conceptualising ideas and feelings. They also learn to work within a particular medium to transform their ideas into artistic form. Through participation in the Arts, students learn to enjoy, value, discriminate, evaluate, challenge, feel, and respond to artistic

experiences. Thinking skills such as perception, creativity, logical-thinking, metaphoric-thinking, question-formation, decision-making, critical-thinking, concept-formation and memory are all developed through participation in Arts experiences. Arts experiences are active. Students perform actions that need concentration and quite often require practice. Students develop their own physical skills. They learn processes and techniques and come to understand the limitations and potential of the different media they will use in their creations. Participation in the Arts requires students to focus on the use of their senses. They develop their capacities of expression and imagination and learn to give form to sensation. Through the Arts, students develop aesthetic and cultural sensitivities and sharpened perceptions. They learn about themselves and their interaction with others. Students learn to work in groups, to co-operate with others, to express ideas and communicate through the Arts. They begin to examine the role of the Arts in different social and cultural contexts and gain a sense of self through developing personal artistic visions. Through artistic experience they find a sense of style. Students are learning and developing skills and values that they will utilise throughout their lives as learners and as participants in a world they should be making equitable.

All students should benefit from an Arts education that has coherence, relevance and continuity. Students must be fully nurtured, affirmed and enabled by the educational opportunities we provide. Some teachers do not have an understanding of the Arts and all they entail. They do not associate the Arts with 'thinking', not realising that as Cooper-Solomon (1995) claims 'The Arts are not so much a result of inspiration and innate talent as they are a person's capacities for creative thinking and imagining, problem solving, creative judgment and a host of other mental processes. The Arts represent forms of cognition every bit as potent as the verbal and logical/mathematical forms of cognition that have been the traditional focus of public education' (p. 29). Therefore, teacher education and training in the Arts, for both new and experienced teachers, are critical to the achievement of a major change in understanding the importance of the Arts, and in teaching strategies and learning styles. When we balance the Arts with our other key areas of learning it has been demonstrated that students gain academically higher results, demonstrating an apparent relationship between learning in the Arts and other areas, according to Perrin (1994, p. 452). All that has been stated about the Arts and learning in the classroom continues throughout life. We do not want a single flowering of the plant—but multiple and continued flowering, therefore we must continue to water and nurture healthy plants through caring for the roots—the Arts.

When looking to the future, our students will need to be adaptable. The Arts, with their uncommon potential for supporting thoughts with feelings and pursuing individual concepts to their conclusion, are essential to the development and progress of the types of diverse thought and action which will prepare children to function satisfactorily in this changing world. Therefore it is vital that students in our schools are given many and varied opportunities to experience the Arts—Visual and Performing. We need to encourage our students to view the world through Art. If we can reach students and their style of learning through the implementation of Arts programs in our schools, then we can prevent them from becoming the ‘unreached learner’ and ensure they become promoters of lifelong learning, participation and equity.

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