Sustainable Arts Education in a Prosumer World

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Introduction

This chapter presents the recent contributions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) and the International Network for Research in Arts Education (INRAE) to international arts education. It discusses several dimensions of culture and explores their implications for sustainable arts education in a prosumer world. It also raises two issues related to education that seem to have far-reaching and broad emphasis today, including education and human capital and the arts as cultural production.

Arts and Culture in a Prosumer World

Our globalized world has been witnessing enormous and rapid socio-economic, political and technological changes that have greatly affected people's traditions, livelihood and lifestyles in what has been called the Age of the Prosumer[1] (Euro RSCG Worldwide, 2011; Leong, 2003; Maseko, 2012; Miller, 2014). Globalization and technology have impacted nearly every aspect of life including communities, communications, business, medicine and education, and advanced and emerging technologies are blurring and even merging boundaries that have traditionally separated disciplines, organizations, structures, and peoples (Kelly, 2015; Leong, 2011).

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As identified by the *Global Monitoring Report 2012* (UNESCO, 2012a), foundation skills, transferable/transversal skills and technical/vocational skills are three types of skills needed by young people in order to secure jobs and enjoy decent lives in today's world. As economies become increasingly knowledge-based and reliant on constant creativity and innovation, there is a growing need for today's educational systems to equip learners with competencies required to innovate societies.

The arts and culture have been central to discussions about developing the "creative economy" (cf. John Howkins and Richard Florida) of world cities, and a 'creative class' has been argued to be the driver of economic growth (Florida, 2012). Advanced and emerging technologies are enabling consumers to participate in creative processes as prosumers—shifting from passive consumption to active cultural production. Thus, user-generated products and content form a valuable reservoir of creativity for the economy. Creativity enhancement is said to involve a transformative process for the individual, whose personality attributes, cognitive ability, talent, environmental factors, motivation and knowledge of the field are necessary in developing a person's creativity (Piirto, 2011). Creative people would stand to "reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys" in the near future (Pink, 2005, p. 1)—these people would be:

> creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers … people-artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers. (ibid., p. 1)

But culture also impacts creativity, which is valued as 'a motor of economic and social innovation' in a world that is experiencing rapid cultural changes and increasing cultural diversity. The impact of culture can be seen in a number of ways, such as the

> development of new products and services (including public services), driving technological innovation, stimulating research, optimizing human resources, branding and communicating values, inspiring people to learn and building communities. (KEA European Affairs, 2009, p. 5)

Culture enables and drives development within a number of cultural sectors including the creative industries, cultural tourism and heritage, both tangible and intangible (UNESCO Havana, 2013). Human creativity and innovation, at both the individual and group level, are considered the key drivers of culture-based industries, and have become the "true wealth of nations in the 21st century" (United Nations/UNDP/UNESCO, 2013, p. 15).

The United Nations has acknowledged that a much greater proportion of the world's intellectual and creative resources are now being invested in the "culture-based industries" (ibid., p. 15), whose largely intangible outputs are as 'real' and as considerable as those of other industries. Culture increasingly

> underpins the ways in which people everywhere understand the world, see their place in it, affirm their human rights, and forge productive relationships with others (ibid., p. 15).

Culture is what makes cities distinctive and competitive on a world scale and is the key to economic success in terms of attracting talent and business in the future (BOP Consulting, 2012). The dynamism, scale and diversity of "world cities" are found to support a range and depth of cultural activity that other cities cannot match—demonstrating their ability to harness the power of culture to contribute to wider social and economic goals (BOP Consulting, 2013).

Global Support for Arts Education and Sustainability

The arts education sector can play a greater role in addressing the four "overarching challenges" faced by world cities, identified by the 2013 World Cities Culture Report (BOP Consulting, 2013):

1. balancing modernity and tradition;
2. maintaining a sense of the local and specific in a globalized world;
3. developing audiences for artistic work by finding ways to link cultural infrastructure and participation;
4. ensuring that cultural opportunities are available to all the city's residents, not just the wealthier or better connected ones.

Arts education has received widespread attention in recent decades. The International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks project (INCA) (NFER, 2000) has found the arts to have been formally established in the school curricula of 19 educational systems across the world. Bamford (2006), in *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education*, highlights the need to consider how the term 'arts education' is "culture and context specific" (p. 11).

Two main approaches to arts education have been promoted by the UNESCO. Both approaches can be implemented at the same time and need not be distinct:

1. The 'learning *through* the arts/culture' approach demonstrates how artistic expressions and cultural resources and practices, both contemporary and traditional, can be utilized as a learning tool. Drawing on the rich wealth of culture, knowledge and skills of societies, it enhances an inter-disciplinary approach to learning in a range of subject areas.
2. The 'learning *in* the arts/culture' approach emphasizes the value of multi-and inter-cultural perspectives as well as languages that are culturally sensitive during learning processes. This approach contributes to engender understanding of the importance of cultural diversity and reinforces behaviour patterns underlying social cohesion.

According to the *Roadmap for Arts Education* (UNESCO, 2006), education *in* and *through* the arts is necessary in an increasingly complex and troubled world "for creating good citizens, for promoting a culture of peace and for ensuring a sustainable future" (p. 4). UNESCO describes the arts as "languages in which individuals construct thought, entertain possibilities, and through which they express what concerns them most" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 52). The arts are recognized as cultural identifiers that involve the languages of reflection, investigation, insight and understanding about the self and the world. Local, ethnic and personal interests are to be taken into consideration by arts curricula that are inclusive (UNESCO, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004). The benefits of introducing the arts and cultural practices into learning environments "showcase a balanced intellectual, emotional and psychological development of individuals and societies" (UNESCO, website). Such education strengthens cognitive development and the acquisition of life skills such as innovative and creative thinking, critical reflection, communication and interpersonal skills. It also enhances social adaptability and cultural awareness for individuals, enabling them to build personal and collective identities, tolerance and acceptance and the appreciation of others. The positive impact on the development of societies ranges from cultivating social cohesion and cultural diversity to preventing standardization and promoting sustainable development (UNESCO, website).

The importance of the arts in communities was reiterated by the *Seoul Agenda* (UNESCO, 2010), which called on member countries to "apply arts education principles and practices to contribute to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing today's world" that would ultimately benefit children, youth and life-long learners of all ages (Goal 3). Arts education should be recognized and supported for stimulating cognitive and creative development, and for its capability to make how and what learners learn more relevant to the needs of individuals and of the modern societies in which they live. In 2011, the 36th session of UNESCO's General Conference (Resolution 36/C55) proclaimed the fourth week of May as International Arts Education Week to emphasize the place the arts deserve at the heart of society. The Conference appealed to all UNESCO partners, in particular governments, educational institutions and citizens around the world, to celebrate the arts and their unique role in stimulating cultural diversity, dialogue and social cohesion.

Since its creation some six decades ago, UNESCO has been supporting educational and artistic activities with the aim of enhancing dialogue and building peace among people in the international community. It has been working closely with WAAE and INRAE to build bridges between people of different cultures, identities and beliefs. Two UNESCO Chairs have been established in the field of arts education—one in Canada and the other in Germany. The Chairs' work focuses on the implementation of UNESCO-related topics in research and teaching as well as international cooperation between professors and researchers for comparative research in arts education through INRAE.

The UNESCO Bangkok office has initiated and coordinated a Network of Arts-in-Education Observatories in Asia and the Pacific, in partnership with six specialized institutions in South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Kazakhstan, Australia and New Zealand. A refereed e-journal, *Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts*, is published by the Melbourne Observatory—serving as a clearing house of research that can be used to support advocacy processes, improve practice, influence policy making and benefit the integration of the arts in formal and non-formal educational systems across communities, regions and countries. Other aspects of UNESCO's work related to arts education have been described earlier in this chapter.

An outcome of UNESCO's first World Congress on Arts Education was the establishment of the WAAE in 2006. The WAAE provides a powerful global voice for advocacy, networking and research for arts education through the combined network and work of four international arts education professional organizations:

1. The International Drama Education Association (IDEA)
2. World Dance Alliance (WDA)
3. International Society for Music Education (ISME)
4. The International Society of Education through Art (InSEA)

WAAE is endorsed by UNESCO and plays a vital role in addressing the UNESCO Roadmap for Arts Education as well as advocates for the implementation of the UNESCO Seoul Agenda for the development of arts education. Regular summits, which attract key international arts advocates, educators and arts practitioners, are held in different parts of the world including Hong Kong, Germany, Finland and Australia. WAAE also works closely with INRAE, an international alliance that promotes high-quality international research in arts education (formal, non-formal and informal), conducts research on the implementation of UNESCO's Seoul Agenda for the development of arts education and serves as a forum for the dissemination of research, the promotion of debates around quality research and the showcasing of exemplary practices.

INRAE has organized conferences on International Monitoring and Comparative Research in Arts Education (2011), the International Polylogue I and II (2012 and 2013) and the International Arts for Peace Research Symposium (2014) in partnership with WAAE, UNESCO Observatories and other organizations.[2] These have brought together key arts education and cultural leaders to discuss the implementation and monitoring of the UNESCO Seoul Agenda for arts education development globally. Polylogue II addressed the three themes of: 'Issues relevant to Evaluating Quality', 'Artistic and Cultural Competencies' and 'Monitoring/Mapping Arts Education'.

INRAE has also initiated the development of the Arts Education Development Index (AEDI) that would be useful for undertaking a comparison of arts education activities in different countries around the world. A key initiative undertaken by INRAE is the publication of an annual Yearbook, from 2013,

that serves as a forum for information sharing and discussion of research issues arising from the adoption and implementation of the UNESCO Seoul Agenda. The Yearbook facilitates an ongoing contribution to international debates on research in arts education.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Observatory in Hong Kong, WAAE and other organizations, an International Arts for Peace Festival was organized to celebrate the UNESCO International Arts Education Week in 2014. More recently, INRAE has advocated for 'Arts Education for Sustainable Development', which seeks to highlight the therapeutic and health dimensions of arts education, the potential of arts education to identify, develop and conserve heritage as well as to promote diversity and dialogue among cultures (cf. Goal 3 of UNESCO Seoul Agenda).

'Arts Education for Sustainable Development' is aligned with a recent development advocated by UNESCO—'Education for Sustainable Development' (ESD)—an approach that addresses the challenge of cultural mismatches, people's values, worldviews, knowledge and creativity—which are inextricably linked to culture—and central to sustainable development (UNESCO, 2012b). Cultural diversity is recognized as a "rich source of innovation, human experience and knowledge exchange which can assist communities and societies to move to more sustainable futures"(Tilbury & Mulà, 2009, p. 2) and the importance of cultural diversity "as a means to build a culture of peace, tolerance, non-violence and human fulfilment"(ibid., p. 2) is also acknowledged.

The realization of education for sustainable development requires the positive engagement of young people with cultural diversity and complexity of social values and ways of life. A goal is to harness young people's creative capacities for innovative problem solving and actions that will help resolve the social and cultural challenges facing today's world. Arts education, which should involve teaching and learning of different forms of cultural and artistic expressions, can be integrated into educational systems for appropriating the potential of the arts to enhance children's intellectual and social development. UNESCO believes that this would improve the quality of education and, at the same time, augment young people's creative and innovative capacities and contribute to the safeguarding of cultural diversity (UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 2013). The arts are therefore fundamental for sustaining creative societies with diverse cultures in a prosuming world.

Current Issues Facing Arts Education

Despite global support for arts education and research findings that show the benefits of arts education in imparting transversal/ transferable skills, there is currently a lack of concerted effort to harness the potential contribution of arts education within educational systems of the Asia-Pacific (Yu, 2013). In many countries, arts education has not received the desired level of support by educational systems, resulting in it being on the periphery of school curricula.

This has not only happened largely under the pretext of achieving international standards in academic ability but also in part due to lack of awareness on how arts education can add value to the cognitive and holistic development of individuals (ibid., 2013).

A recent OECD report (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013) notes that acquiring foundational skills, notably reading, writing and arithmetic, is a major objective of educational systems in many countries. Over and over, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study has found many 15-year-olds possessing only a basic proficiency in understanding texts. The OECD report suggests that one way to foster skills required by innovative societies may well be through the arts. The arts in education allow students to express themselves freely and to discover, explore and experiment. The arts also give students and teachers a safe place to introspect and find personal meaning. In this respect, the arts are important in their own rights for education (Vincent-Lancrin & Winner, 2013).

This chapter argues that the arts should be considered foundational. Rather than only 'value adding' to other areas of the curriculum or only developing 'transferable / transversal skills', the arts release fundamental avenues for knowing, interacting with and producing in the world. Consequently, the next section focuses on two tenets that are related to the place of the arts in education and the impact of this on human capital and cultural production.

Education and Human Capital: Fundamental Global Concerns

The World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) Global Summit was held in Brisbane, Australia, from 26 to 28 November 2014. Just prior to the WAAE Summit, the ninth meeting of the G20 heads of government was held in the same city, from 15 to 16 November. The G20 focused on issues of global concern such as economic and climatic crises and featured slogans such as 'Save the Planet'. One fortnight later, the WAAE Global Summit focused on equally important issues, education and human capital, and featured slogans such as 'Education is the Lifeblood of a Nation'.

On the global stage, UNESCO has identified Education as a significant matter, as described above. Included in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2014–2021 (37 C/4) is the goal of building knowledge societies and encouraging innovation and creativity in the field of education. In relation to 37 C/4, arts-based education addresses the following UNESCO objectives:

1. to protect, promote and transmit heritage,
2. to empower learners to be creative and responsible global citizens,
3. to foster creativity and the diversity of cultural expression and
4. to promote freedom of expression.

Yet, currently, we live in a globalized, neoliberal policy climate characterized by policy borrowing, measurement and ranking. For instance, in the 'No Child

Left Behind' 2001 act, education reform in the USA centred on accountability, raising academic standards and testing. As a result of these and other education reforms, "in many schooling contexts across the world, student success is being increasingly judged by narrow and standardized measures", which subsequently leads to three effects (Rudolf & Wright, 2015, pp. 486–487):

1. the curriculum becomes narrowed to accommodate the focus on the disciplines that are being measured and compared across schools,
2. students who demonstrate knowledge and capacity through means that are not measured are often deemed unsuccessful and
3. intellectual depth is typically missed through the hierarchical positioning of disciplinary knowledge.

As a result of the testing regime, the definitions of what it means to be 'literate', for instance, are becoming increasingly narrowed to include written and spoken texts. They exclude the texts of the arts, such as singing, dancing, painting and playing (Dunn & Wright, 2014; Rudolf & Wright, 2015). Associated with this testing regime is the notion that if something is 'measurable', it 'matters'. Implicitly, because the arts are not easily measured, they don't matter (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013a, p. 640). Yet literacy is a broad concept that applies to a range of symbol systems. As Eisner (2008) describes it, literacy is the "creation and use of a form of representation that will enable one to create meaning"—in diverse ways (p. 17).

Given this more encompassing definition of literacy, representation and the creation of meaning, we need to consider how education and human capital encompass UNESCO's (37 C/4) objectives of promoting heritage, global citizenship, cultural expression and freedom of expression. We need a richer understanding and articulation of how artistic engagement is 'cultural production' (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013a, p. 227). A starting assumption about cultural production (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013b) is that:

> Culture is constantly being made and remade through the symbolic work that pervades people's lives and that it is this making and remaking that lay the prospects for social transformation …[Cultural production] recognizes that every community has a cultural and creative life and takes that life as the point of departure for artistic educational experience. (p. 639)

Meade and Shaw (2007) also define culture "in broad and inclusive terms as the making of meaning through everyday living *and* through more specialized intellectual or artistic processes"(p. 417). The forms of representation that are central to meaning making *in* and *through* the arts are closely aligned with (1) embodied simulation and (2) empathetic intention, emotion, and agency (Wright, in press). These are performative forms of literacy that include extensions of the mind, emotion and body into an artistic artefact. As Merleu-Ponty (1978) describes it, perception and representation are struc-

tured by the acting body—the *embodied agent*—in its purposeful engagement with the world. Empathy, or projection of self into an artistic artefact, provides opportunities for *transformational* processes such as creating, manipulating and changing meaning (Wright, in press). Simulation through artistic representation is highly significant for the exploration of possible selves and *identities.* Our everyday experiences are combined with imagination in a projective-reflective state, which provides a safe 'space' for an *authoring of self* (Edmiston, 2008). This type of thinking and feeling involves *representation*, using signs that stand for specific features or states of affairs, and to express relations. These are forms of cultural production. Cultural production is central to human experience—as an 'evolutionary necessity' (Fyfe, cited in Meade & Shaw, 2007, p. 417).

Within the context of education, Vecchi (2010, pp. 28–29) asserts that cultural production and creative and artistic modes of learning contribute to the construction of knowledge and the development of a collective intelligence. Arts-based approaches offer opportunities for teachers and students to co-construct knowledge, "build collective intelligence and express and explore understandings of self and theories" about the world (Rudolf & Wright, 2015, p. 490).

Such co-construction can promote what Greene (2008) describes as a "sense of possibility, of what might be, what ought to be, what is not yet", which she believes is essential in "moving the young to learn to learn"(p. 17). Greene asserts that this sense of possibility, through imagination, may be nurtured through arts education by awakening the "wonders of authentic appreciation" (p. 17).

Knowledge building through imagination is particularly achievable, powerful and sustainable when it emerges through playful encounters and playful encounters are part and parcel of arts-based education and learning. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that children have the right to relax, play and join a wide range of leisure activities. Closely linked to this article is Article 29, which specifies that education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full.

These Articles seem somewhat at odds within the current, globalized climate, where schools throughout the world are sharpening their focus on academic standards and testing. With such a focus, there is little scope for the development of children's diverse talents or provision for children to demonstrate their knowledge and skills beyond that which is measured in high stakes tests.

As a result of a de-emphasis on creativity and imagination in school systems, there is increasing evidence that education dislocates many children from who they are and who they could become. Part of this disconnect is associated with children having grown up on digital media whereas schools have, in general, not reacted with the same level of enthusiasm to the digital world. Groff (2013) points to how children and youth are 'prosumers' of multi-modal/multi-media content, and notes the impact of this on arts education:

> As a result of new media arts education instruction and DIY digital culture, we are reaching a period where it is just as easy for young people to reproduce that multimodal, multimedia content as consume it. (p. 23)

Prosumer-oriented engagement and learning involve creative forms of knowledge *construction*. This is different to the *transmission-oriented* knowledge that is more easily measured in high stakes tests. As prosumers of the arts, today's children and youth are "visually dominant cognitive processors" but our school systems are "immersing them and assessing them in a verbally dominant environment"(Groff, 2013, p. 23). Groff recommends schools should shift their emphasis to educating children and youth across a range of modalities (ibid., p. 24), where object information and object-abstract representation in various media (ibid., p. 25) are foregrounded. By doing so, we emphasize how learners of the arts are active producers of culture.

The Arts as Cultural Production: A Dialectic Process

Research has indicated the positive effects of artistic engagement in cognitive development and social and emotional well-being (Caldwell & Vaughn, 2011; Fiske, 1999). As expressive cultural practices, the arts "are fundamental to how we relate to and come to understand ourselves and others through creative encounters"(Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013a, p, 640). Gaztambide-Rernández elaborates:

> Cultural production is the doing of something; it is the making of the experience itself. Its products are not simply substances to either behold or preserve but the practices through which the very materiality of the product is accomplished and sustained. (p. 640)

Many have asserted that the most valuable learning occurs when people are engaged creatively. Creative engagement usually involves activities that use their imaginations (Egan, 2005; Eisner, 1999; Greene, 1988; Holzman, 2009). Significant educational theories emphasize the importance of preparing children to be critical, flexible thinkers who can apply these capacities to adapt to a rapidly evolving world (Bruner, 1990; Dewey, 1938; Greene, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978). The recognition of the importance of creativity in the education of today's children and youth has led many to advocate for the arts in education. As stated by Eisner (1999):

> Schools ought to include significant opportunities for students to experience the arts and to learn to use them to create a life worth living. Indeed, providing a decent place for the arts in our schools may be one of the most important first steps we can take to bring about genuine school reform. (p. 86)

However, rather than considering creativity and imagination as things *to bring into* teaching and learning, "educators are urged to look at teaching and learning themselves as creative and imaginative activities that children

and teachers need to be engaged in together"(Lobman, 2010, p. 200). One framework that offers an approach to such dialogic creativity is *Qualities of quality: Understanding excellence in arts education* (Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2009). In this learner-focused orientation, learning itself is described in terms of engagement, acting and feeling like artists, having emotional openness and honesty, and encouraging experimentation, exploration, inquiry and ownership within students. Pedagogy focuses on constructs such as authenticity, modelling artistic processes, participating with students in learning experiences, making learning relevant and connected to students' prior knowledge, and providing transparency, responsiveness and flexibility within the pedagogy. Both learning and pedagogy are closely aligned with community dynamics (e.g., commitment, belief, trust, open communication, and collaboration) and environment (e.g., functional, safe and aesthetic materials and resources, a central place for the arts in the physical environment, and sufficient time for authentic, artistic work).

It is the human capacity to make things—the doing of something, the making of the experience itself—that is missing in many schools. As Lobman elaborates, "the relationship between creativity and learning is dialectical" (p. 201). Creative, improvisational activities allow children and adults—together—to take risks and to support each other to learn new things and new ways of understanding.

It is perhaps because of this dialectical relationship between creativity and learning that the arts are seen to "play a fundamental, if not pivotal role, in education and society" (Marjanovic-Shane, Connery, & John-Steiner, 2010, p. 216). As such, the arts and education can be regarded as a *cultural form of joint meaning making*. Arts education involves the construction of novel ideas, events and artefacts, through collaboration. Marjanovic-Shane et al. (2010) elaborate how, in the arts, there is an indivisibility of multi-modal meaning making and learning. The creative, collaborative processes that evolve from such learning originate from within. In turn, these processes become sustained while, at the same time, they generate "novel purposes in human relationships" (ibid., p. 216)

Greene (2008), in her paper *Education and the arts: The windows of imagination*, identifies several aspects of art and aesthetic education that move people, by "means of participation, to awaken to the wonders of authentic appreciation"(p. 17), namely, embodied cognition, imaginative disclosure, empathetic transactions and metaphoric connection to experience (Greene, 2008). In a similar vein, Eisner (2002) describes 10 qualities of 'what the arts teach', namely:

1. A unique form of cognition,
2. Thinking through and within a material,
3. Symbolizing what is important to the creator,
4. Making good judgments about qualitative relationships (not correct answers and rules),
5. Reaching into poetic capacities to create and describe meaning,

6. Understanding that problems can have more than one solution,
7. Surrendering to the unanticipated as the work unfolds,
8. Celebrating multiple perspectives,
9. Seeing that small differences and subtleties can have large effects and
10. Discovering the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.

Personalizing education by focusing on these ten principles and others described above in relation to the *Qualities of Quality* will engage learners' passions—where an hour feels like a few minutes and where learners feel that their spirits, not just their brains, have been nourished. Education should engage people to their fullest, connecting ourselves with ourselves and with others. As current and ongoing prosumers of the arts, the children and youth today will be the people who will sustain the arts and cultures in our current and future worlds. As teachers, we must see ourselves as co-creators of culture, in partnership with the students we mentor—to provoke and facilitate meaningful learning. The arts have a fundamental role to play here.

Conclusion

The arts and culture are central to the development of a 'creative class' that will drive economic growth and social innovation. The arts and culture underpin the ways in which people understand the world and their place in it. Learning *in* and *through* the arts promotes inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural perspectives that involve reflection, investigation, insight and understanding about the self and the world. Such learning cultivates social cohesion and cultural diversity and promotes sustainable development, because culture is constantly being made and remade through symbolic work and social transformation. Cultural production is central to human experience and contributes to the construction of knowledge and the development of a collective intelligence.

The arts have been recognized as a vital aspect of the development of children and societies by UNESCO and world educational organizations. The arts are fundamental for sustaining creative societies with diverse cultures in a prosumer world and sustainable arts education should engage people in learning diverse forms of cultural and artistic expression, augmenting young people's creative and innovative capacities. This chapter has argued that integrating the arts into education systems will improve the quality of education as well as help resolve the social and cultural challenges facing today's world. Research has indicated the positive effects of artistic engagement in cognitive development and social and emotional well-being and emphasizes the importance of preparing children to be critical, flexible thinkers who can apply these capacities to adapt to a rapidly evolving world.

Schooling should harness the potential of the arts to enhance children's intellectual and social development and move beyond the acquisition of competencies/literacies, emphasized by testing regimes at the expense of skills required in innovative societies. The arts and culture are vital in creating cities

that are distinctive and competitive as well as contributing to their economic success in a sustainable way. As such, arts education leadership should be mindful of two tenets critical for securing a sustainable future:

1. Education that supports the development of human capital, which is as important as economic and climatic concerns
2. Artistic and cultural participation, which develops competencies necessary for life, and its manifold challenges

As Eisner (1999) reminds us, the types of competencies that are promoted through arts, culture and education are material, symbolic, poetic, qualitative, often unanticipated and generally understood from a range of perspectives. In a learner-focused approach to arts education, where pedagogy, community dynamics and the environment are significant features (Seidel et al., 2009), education should celebrate the dialectic processes that prepare students to be critical, flexible thinkers within this Age of the Prosumer. Such coconstruction can promote a sense of possibility—'of what might be, what ought to be, what is not yet' (Greene, 2008). These are aspirations that will truly sustain our world.

Notes

1. The term "prosumer" was first used by Toffler in his book Future Shock (1970) and later examined more closely in The Third Wave (1980). A prosumer is someone who functions as both "consumer" and "producer."
2. An outcome of the Symposium was the signing of the Hong Kong Declaration that supports the arts and education for sustainable development. Available at http://www.arts-edu.org/Events/2014%20-%20Hong%20Kong/declaration.pdf

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