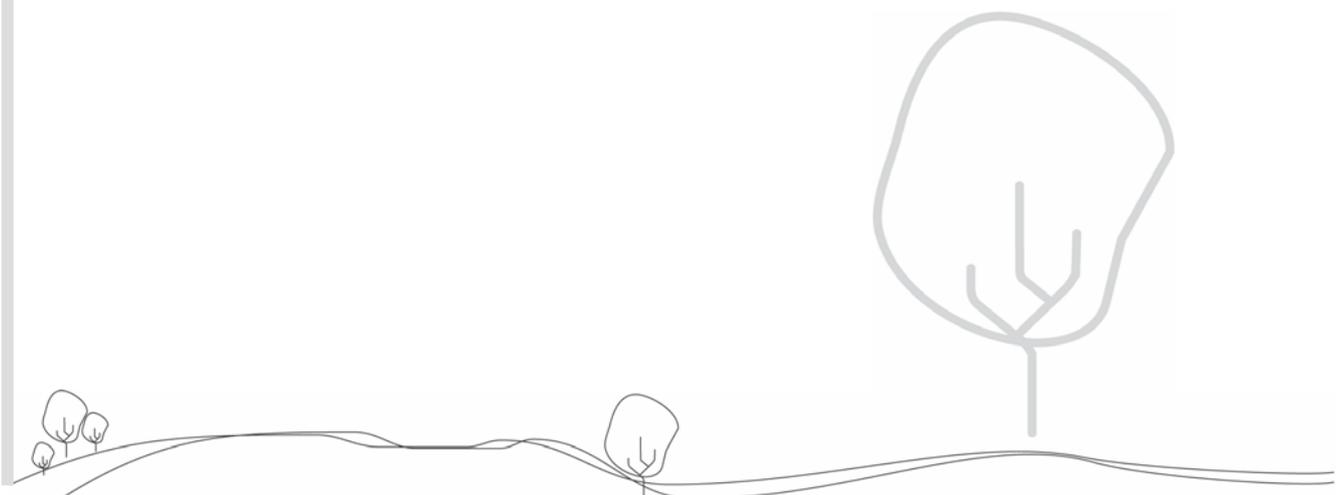




The Art of the Matter: The development and extension of ways of knowing in the Arts

**Deborah Fraser, Clare Henderson, Graham Price, Fiona Bevege, Gay Gilbert,
Andrea Goodman, Olive Jones, Amanda Klemick, Shona McRae,
Francis Pye, Lisa Rose, Kelly Thompson & Shirley Tyson**

2007



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University of Waikato**



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Teaching and Learning Research Initiative

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1. Aims, objectives, and research questions

There is very little documented research information about New Zealand teachers' and children's attitudes, knowledge, and values regarding the Arts. There has been a major change to the school curriculum (with the Arts becoming one essential learning area) and there are reported difficulties in the teaching and learning of the Arts within primary classrooms (Education Review Office, 1995, 1999). However, there is also evidence that a curriculum leadership model allowing teachers to selectively develop discipline knowledge according to needs works well in instances where schools have committed themselves to a climate that supports a learning culture (Beals, Hipkins, Cameron, & Watson, 2003).

In the international context, there is growing evidence of the importance of learning in the Arts. Richard Deasy (2002), introducing a compendium of 62 studies entitled *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic Achievement*, noted that: "All of the essayists agree that future research needs to define with greater depth, richness and specificity the nature of the Arts learning experience itself and its companion, the Arts teaching experience" (p. 6). This was locally reiterated by O'Connor, Brodie, Dunmill, and Hong (2003).

There is some New Zealand evidence that teachers lack confidence in teaching drama and dance, but indicate more comfort with the teaching of visual art and music (Hipkins, Strafford, Tiatia, & Beals, 2003; McGee, Harlow, Miller, Cowie, Hill, Jones, & Donaghy, 2003). However, there is no fixed relationship between teacher confidence and teacher efficacy, so the issue of confidence itself may not be the pedagogical issue of concern. Moreover, research by the National Educational Monitoring Project (NEMP) and the Education Review Office (ERO), found that just over half of the schools sampled had adequate visual art programmes and only 13 percent of schools had music programmes that met children's needs (Ministry of Education, 2006b). There is also local and international evidence that some teachers over-rely on certain "ritual patterns" of practice (Efland, 2002; Nuthall, 2001) in teaching and that these formulaic ways of framing professional knowledge can impede teaching and learning. Such issues warrant further research to examine their veracity and to provide the basis for the trialing of approaches that build capability in teaching and learning in the Arts.

In a dual focus, this project investigated what children bring to the Arts areas with a focus on development of ideas and related skills in each of the Arts disciplines (Craft, 2000). The indication from adviser reports and curriculum reviews is that there is little understanding by teachers of learning progressions in the Arts, particularly in dance and drama (Ministry of Education, 2006b). By focussing on children's learning in the Arts, one is in a stronger position to ascertain the ways in which teachers can effectively facilitate children's learning processes (see "Developing ideas in the Arts" strand of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, Ministry of

Education, 2000). Second, it investigated what key, selected teachers teach and what children learn in each of the Arts disciplines. It examined the nature of any “ritual patterns” of teaching that support or constrain Arts education, and by doing so, considered ways of developing pedagogical processes that deepen children’s experiences and understanding in the Arts.

As a major outcome, the project provides an insight into how teachers can deepen and extend children’s experiences, understanding, and engagement when they are learning in the Arts in primary classrooms.

The overall aim of the project was to investigate how the development of ideas in the Arts can be promoted, enhanced, and refined in primary classrooms, and in doing so, build knowledge related to Arts pedagogy and research. There was also the associated aim of capacity building for Arts research amongst university and teacher partners.

Objectives

In order to achieve this aim, University of Waikato (UoW) researchers, in conjunction with teacher–researchers:

- compared and contrasted the particular processes and skills that children employ in classroom programmes in developing ideas within music, visual art, drama and dance, and in the process identified differences, contrasts and concerns
- reviewed the literature on Arts education and Arts educational research
- interrogated learning and teaching in the Arts in respect to children’s development of ideas
- ascertained the pedagogies and philosophies that enhance the development of ideas and related skills in and through each of the Arts disciplines
- trialled and evaluated some interventions (designed in collaboration with schools) that aimed to extend ways in which teachers can deepen children’s learning when they are working in the Arts.

Research questions

In order to achieve these objectives, the following research questions guided the project:

1. What features characterise the classroom practices/processes of a sample of teachers engaging children in activities aimed at developing ideas and related skills within one or more of the Arts disciplines (music, visual art, drama, and dance)?
2. What are the children’s perceptions of their own idea formation when engaged in developing their ideas in the Arts?
3. What factors and related discourses shape child and teacher understandings of how ideas and related skills can be developed in the Arts through a range of classroom practices/ processes? How do these discourses relate to each other and to the larger context of the school and the national policy environment?

4. Taking into account current research and literature and the professional knowledge of participating teachers and researchers, what pedagogical practices might be expected to enhance the development of children's ideas and related skills in and through each of the Arts disciplines?
5. What specific interventions, at either school or classroom level, appear to enhance the development of children's ideas and related skills in and through the various Arts disciplines?

2. Research design and methodologies

The project drew on ethnographic, case study, and action research traditions of educational research. In keeping with naturalistic inquiry, this project recognises that “meaning arises out of social situations and is handled through interpretive processes” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 138). Teaching and learning practices and the meanings one attaches to them are also context-related and socially constructed. In this respect, the project’s aim to deepen understanding and extend practice can be related to an aim to identify those salient features which underpin teacher and child understandings, and Arts-related classroom activities and practices in general.

The design of this study is responsive and open to the unexpected, the unpredictable, and the expressive as is particularly relevant in the Arts (Eisner, 2002). This two-year study richly documented, but also critically scrutinised in a collaborative way the lives and experiences of teachers and children as evidenced through Arts education. As a result, it aimed for a deeper understanding of what students know, what they need, and what constitutes effective Arts pedagogy. Eisner argued:

What we need are empirically grounded examples of artistic thinking related to the nature of the tasks students engage in, the materials with which they work, the context’s norms and the cues the teacher provides to advance their students’ thinking. (2002, p. 217)

The project included three university staff and 10 generalist teachers (Years 0–6) across eight schools as co-researchers willing to focus on at least one Arts form and specialist/lead teachers working across syndicates within the primary school setting. At the proposal stage, a number of local schools expressed interest in examining and extending the potential of the Arts in education. Some had been involved in Arts teaching development work and were interested in research that helps them to understand more about the teaching-learning nexus in the Arts. This research partnership, therefore, met the needs of both schools and TLRI goals in that the inquiry focussed on questions of practice of importance to teachers and the profession.

The partnership schools have Arts education practices that show commitment to delivering successful Arts programmes by staff in a supportive school context. Indications of commitment have been validated by recent Arts professional development, adviser advocacy, and supporting Education Review Office (ERO) reports. Supportive principals in a range of schools (see Table 1) confirmed their interest in their staff participating in the project as a way of building on their already existing relationships with the University of Waikato. The sample is inclusive across decile ranges, distinctive ethnic populations, teacher strengths, and urban and rural contexts around Hamilton and the wider Waikato region.

A) University of Waikato researchers and practitioners

Project director/researcher: Dr Deborah Fraser

Project researcher: Clare Henderson

Project researcher: Graham Price

Project manager: Carolyn Jones

Consultative Reference Group members: The School of Education at UoW has a consultant team with expertise in researching, learning, and teaching in the Arts. These people contributed to this project: Associate Professor Terry Locke, Dr Viv Aitken, Dr Karen Barbour, Sue Cheesman, and Cathy Short.

B) Original 2005 group of teacher–researchers and buddies (see Table 1)

Table 1 Participating schools

School	Frankton	Ham East	Hukanui	Hillcrest	Pukete	Piopio
Decile	3	4	10	10	7	4
Ethnicity	50% Pākehā 42% Māori 5% Pasifika 3% Asian	42% Pākehā 29% Māori 11% Somali 10% Asian 8% Other	81% Pākehā 13% Asian 3% Māori	71% Pākehā 19% Asian 6% Māori	75% Pākehā 19% Māori 6% Other	77% Pākehā 20% Māori 3% Other
Art	Francis Pye (lead teacher arts) Year 4	Olive Jones Year 4 Maggie Frost Year 1	Shona McRae Years 5/6	Marianne Robertson	Judith Blake Year 4	
Music				Philippa Defluiter Years 5/6	Kelly Thompson (lead teacher arts) Years 2/3	Fiona Bevege Year 0
Drama	Irene Cheung Years 3/4		Shirley Tyson	Gay Gilbert DP Years 5/6	Judith Blake Year 4 Liz Amoores Year 4	Amanda Klemick Years 1/2
Dance		Olive Jones Year 4 Jude O'Neil	Shirley Tyson DP Years 5/6			Fiona Bevege Year 0 Amanda Klemick

The school partnerships arose through the University of Waikato's awareness of longstanding relationships with Arts innovation and practice with supportive administrative leadership. All of the schools had participated with in-depth models of Arts professional development provided under Ministry contract from 2001–2004. Key practitioners emerged as Arts curriculum leaders and operated within syndicates or across their school. Of the eight initial teachers, four held arts leadership responsibilities within their school and two were teaching deputy principals who lead the Arts development in the school. Four of the teachers operated within a semi-specialist role for teaching an Arts discipline beyond their own classroom. Two teachers were Arts informed generalist teachers who have more than one arts discipline as their strength. All were reflective

practitioners with an expressed interest in participative research. They also indicated an existing “critical friend” or buddy relationship within their school. They have much to offer the “blue skies” edge of current arts education practice in primary settings. Collectively, their student communities represent a spread of student ethnicities, decile rating, urban-rural communities, and levels of schooling from Years 0–6 (see above).

C) Teacher–researcher changes

As is inevitable in any classroom-based study spanning two years, there were changes to staff, and as a corollary to schools, involved in this project. Phillipa Defluiter was unable to start the project due to a serious family illness. She was replaced by Fiona Bevege at Piopio who initially was Amanda Klemick’s buddy. Shona McRae left Hamilton at the end of 2005 to live in Dunedin. She was replaced by Lisa Rose of Tauriko school (Bay of Plenty) in 2006. Kelly Thompson left Pukete school to go on parental leave at the end of 2005. She was replaced in 2006 by Andrea Goodman of Cambridge Primary. Olive Jones left Hamilton East at the end of 2005 as a result of winning a research fellowship to study at the University of Waikato. She was initially replaced by her buddy Trish Bush who moved to Fairfield Intermediate. However, Trish was unable to continue in the project. So, in the end the project involved eight different schools and 10 teacher–researchers.

The children involved also changed as teachers had new classes in 2006. Therefore, informed consent processes needed to be repeated with hundreds of children and their parents/caregivers. For schools new to the project (Tauriko and Cambridge Primary) project agreements and ethical consents had to be negotiated with principals and boards of trustees at the commencement of 2006.

D) Methodology

This project employed an eclectic research methodology, tailored to address the above research questions and described briefly as follows.

Case study

Case studies allow for an in depth investigation into specific instances with a view to developing or illustrating general instances (Stake, 2005). In the case of this project, the specific instances are classes and schools. As Yin (1989) pointed out, case study research can be:

- exploratory (description and analysis leading to the development of hypotheses)
- descriptive (providing narrative accounts and rich vignettes of practice)
- explanatory (offering causal explanations of the impact of various interventions).

Case study methodology is particularly pertinent to questions 1 and 4. In addition, aspects of ethnographic research (rather than a complete ethnography) were used for descriptive analysis to achieve insider case studies that are both story-telling and science (Fetterman, 1998). Fetterman's reference to insiders is pertinent here, in that this project methodology collaborated with children and teachers in ways that collapse the insider/outsider distinction that characterises "them/us" research.

Action research

Unlike positivistic research models, action research is adaptive, tentative, and evolutionary (Burns, 1994). This research model has also been undertaken because of its commitment to self-reflexivity, collegiality, and critique. "Action research is an enquiry by the self into the self, undertaken in company with others acting as research participants and critical learning partners" (McNiff, 2002, p. 15). Action research, given its cyclic nature and focus on the trialling of interventions, is particularly pertinent to all of the research questions. Action research is particularly suited to the empowerment of teachers as researchers. Moreover, in line with issues of validation (see McNiff, 2002), teacher-researchers used critical friends, research buddies in their respective schools and validation groups—all of which are potential aids to quality assurance and dissemination.

Self-study

Finally, in order to examine these questions, the staff involved (both university and school staff) drew upon self-study methodology within this action research framework. In this respect, McNiff's statement above regarding critical self-reflexivity is most pertinent. As Carr and Kemmis observed: "practices are changed by changing the ways in which they are understood" (1986, p. 91). Self-study encompasses a belief that who one is, is significant both in the teaching and researching process (Loughran, 1999). The fact that the assumptions that support and/or constrain one's practice and experience are examined within the educator's work context is an important facet of self-study. Such an approach clearly positions the researcher as part of the social world at the heart of the study and leads to a focus on the "researcher-self" (Alvesson, 2002, p. 171) and to varying degrees either the researcher's personal experience, or explorations of the experiences of those with whom the researcher is involved in a day-to-day basis, are placed at the centre of the study. Self-study is particularly pertinent to questions 3 and 5.

University and teacher-researchers inevitably faced issues (including ethical ones) given the insider/outsider tensions, the familiarity all have with classrooms, and the associated difficulties with reconceptualising how things might be done. These will be discussed in more detail later on in this report. Throughout the project, collaborators needed to exercise caution in their examination of practice and strive to resist premature closure. All parties needed to hold the tension of apparent contradictions, being both interested (in effective Arts pedagogy) and

disinterested (in order to heighten perception) so that they might “surprise themselves in a landscape of practice with which many are very familiar indeed” (McWilliam, 2004, p. 14).

E) Methods

An eclectic range of methods were employed to capture rich, triangulated data. These included:

- surveys
- classroom observations (of e.g., teachers, class, focus groups of five children, individuals—through timed running records, video and audio-tape)
- work samples (e.g., self-assessments, matrices, digital camera shots, audio and video of ideas-in-progress, children’s interactions and work completed/performed)
- interviews (with teachers, with children in focus groups of five, informally with individual children while working and sometimes after their lessons)
- document analysis (e.g., teachers’ planning, school policy statements)
- reflective self-study comments (e.g., emails, field notes, musings ‘journal’ entries, phone conversations).

Case studies of teachers’ existing practices were produced by the team of teacher and university researchers and these highlighted themes and issues related to how children develop their ideas in the Arts and what appears to support or constrain this process (see project findings section). The case studies were devised from an amalgam of classroom observations, work samples, surveys, interviews, and reflective self-study comments. Perspectives from teachers, university staff, children and school policy documents helped to build rich, triangulated sense-making accounts of current practice (Stenhouse, 1985). These case studies provided a platform upon which to base the action research phase wherein teacher–researchers devised questions of concern to explore problems, issues, and possibilities. Ongoing discussion amongst all the research team enabled the refining of both questions and methods. Teacher–researchers were assisted in this process by the university-researchers acting as critical friends as well as joint investigators (see also Ewing, Smith, Anderson, Gibson, & Manuel, 2004). This action research cycle formed the majority of the 2006 focus. The questions included:

- What effect does nonverbal feedback and feedforward have on the exploration and development of ideas in dance?
- What effect does children working as individuals, and as pairs, have on the development and refinement of ideas in music?
- What is the impact of symbolic representation on the development and refinement of children’s ideas in music?
- How are students currently exploring, generating, and developing their ideas in the visual arts? What supports or constrains students’ self-directed imagery using learned skills and strategies?

- What is the influence of teacher-in-role on children developing and refining their ideas in drama? In what ways can teacher-in-role contribute to deepening the drama and children's ownership of ideas in drama?

These questions provided direction for ongoing data collection that enabled a close scrutiny on learning and teaching in the Arts. They represent the authentic or felt questions, issues, and concerns of the teachers themselves (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004) as they strove to scrutinise and extend their current practice. Teacher ownership of their questions is vital during collaborative action research and it affirms their knowledge as practitioners and as developing researchers.

F) Analysis

Initial data were shared after each lesson with each teacher–researcher and a summary was co-constructed on what seemed to support and what seemed to constrain learning in the Arts. Any other salient points that neither supported nor constrained were noted as “interesting”. The strength of this analysis was its immediacy (as close to the action as possible) and the co-constructed nature of it in order to capture multiple perspectives. The analysis also helped to identify any “rituals of practice” that were part of each teacher’s practice.

Second, teacher–researchers were involved in analysis alongside Arts educators, consultants and a lecturer in human development (all whom comprise the Arts project team) at regular roundtable meetings. Specific data, such as video clips from the classroom teachers’ rooms, were shared and analysed initially through a process of description, in order to avoid premature judgement, based on what each person sees. After each person spoke one-by-one, the same data were discussed a second time based this round on what each person interprets from what they and others saw. This describe-then-interpret process (Feldman, 1973) has helped the team withhold initial judgements, avoid defensiveness and minimise the biases that leaping to judgement usually entails (Claude, 2005). The teacher whose class was being viewed was asked to record what each person says, a role that also helped to minimise defensiveness. This process does not guarantee freedom from bias, but rather, helps to mitigate and counter seeing what one chooses to see. Hearing each person’s interpretation often provides contrasts and refinements and any agreements help build analysis that is robust and reliable.

Both inductive and deductive processes were used. For example, in a deductive fashion, theories such as the notion of “rituals of practice” were drawn upon to illuminate and organise data. However, empirical data grounded in observation and so forth were inductively used to determine categories.

G) Ethical considerations

Justification

The obvious implications of the research evidence to date, coupled with the motivation to focus on implementing the Arts in the New Zealand curriculum in greater depth (Beals et al., 2003), precipitated the imperative to conduct New Zealand-based research specific to the context of Arts education in New Zealand. This research study is significant in that it acknowledges the need for quality research on the Arts in New Zealand schools that investigates, first, how children learn in the Arts, and, from this, the factors that contribute to effective teaching in the Arts.

Access to participants

Ongoing discussions with schools, school support services, and colleagues identified teachers who participated in this project. The University of Waikato's School of Education's ongoing relationship with these schools and teachers laid a sound foundation for the further development of collegial relationships around the research process. A partnership agreement outlining roles and responsibilities for project partners was discussed and signed which confirmed involvement.

Once the project was approved, access to schools and classrooms was confirmed officially through the boards of trustees of the schools involved. The teachers on the research team assisted with this process and contributed to the full ethics proposal required by the School of Education's ethics committee at the University of Waikato. The teacher-researchers were also responsible for ensuring that the ethical guidelines of their particular schools were adhered to.

The children concerned were those taught by the teacher-researchers. However, it was clarified, through introductory letters to parents/caregivers (via the boards of trustees of each school) that children were not obliged to provide data in any form if for any reason they did not wish to be involved. Given that the data collection was complemented by the classroom programme, there was little cause for concern. However, a couple of parents/caregivers specifically requested that data were not collected about their child/ren and this was respected.

For those parents/caregivers for whom English is not a first language, and for whom written letters may have been an obstacle for clarity, the school was consulted with regard to alternative and culturally appropriate means of communication, preferably in parents'/caregivers' first language.

Informed consent

With the teacher-researchers concerned, it was hoped that since they were part of the research process they were unlikely, given their collaborative role in this project, to withdraw. However, this possibility cannot be precluded and there were a number of teacher-researcher withdrawals

and changes for circumstances outside the realm of the project (see *C) Teacher–researcher changes* for details under *Research design and methodologies*).

Included in an introductory letter that outlined the purpose of the study was a consent form that all participants are asked to sign and return. It reinforced that participants have the right to decline or withdraw with no questions asked, but did clarify that once the project is underway it is preferred that commitment be ongoing. The introductory letter also explained what the collected data could be used for in terms of milestones, publications, and presentations.

A special consent form was designed for the children of each class. This included visuals of what they might be involved in, alongside simple descriptors, with a place to sign and date. It also outlined that they were under no obligation to participate and that they would not be cited without their consent. All but one child gave their consent to participate and that child changed his mind (not due to any coercion) and did decide to sign. All the children's and parents/caregivers' consent forms were marked off against a roll by the teacher–researcher and the originals were kept safely at the University of Waikato.

Care was also taken during all preliminary stages that teachers and schools were fully aware of the commitment involved so that expectations were shared. This was addressed to a considerable extent by the teachers' involvement in planning some of the specifics and the ongoing evolution of the project as a result of joint roundtables, research analyses, and the action research cycle of plan-evaluate-plan. Obviously, there were times when the schools involved were committed to other important events, such as parent interviews, so care was taken to time research activities around such events to maximise opportunity. Care was also taken to negotiate roundtable meetings months in advance to help schools with booking relievers and maximise teacher–researchers' attendance.

Potential harm to participants

It was important that no participant felt that they were being judged on their efficacy as an Arts teacher or learner. The aim of this study was to ascertain what the current situation is in the teaching and learning of visual art, music, dance, and drama and then to jointly plan interventions that intend to further the development of ideas in the Arts. Care was taken to ensure that teacher–researchers recognise that issues that arise are of direct interest and importance to the project, not a problem or criticism of any person. Processes that were employed to minimise harm are further outlined in the section on contribution to building capability and capacity.

Ongoing dialogue between all staff involved (university and school) highlighted the nature of action research and consolidated mutual understanding of the project's aims. When necessary and appropriate, consultants were invited to support staff as they jointly pursued research tasks.

Other

Quality assurance was ongoing through consultation with external experts in the field (both academic and professional) who provided invaluable feedback (see the list in *Acknowledgements*). Cognisance was also taken of the feedback that the children provided and teacher release was necessary at certain crucial stages (in addition to the roundtables) so that teacher–researchers had the uninterrupted time, energy and focus to discuss data collection processes and scrutinise and comment on emerging findings.

H) Project timetable

Project team roundtable meetings included teacher–researchers and University of Waikato (UoW) research team, buddies and often consultants.

M.1: is Milestone 1 due date.

Table 2 **Project timetable**

Phase 1	
Dec 2004	<i>Initial project team round-table:</i> Initial discussion cycle surrounding problem definition and planning of initial data collection.
Feb–May 2005	Ethical consent procedures.
M.1: 31 Mar 2005	Initial sound and vision checks plus data collection round in schools by teacher–researchers and UoW researchers. Identification of initial issues arising in data collection and the research partnership.
Phase 2	
Jun 2005	Three rounds of data collection in schools by teacher–researchers and UoW researchers—refining of observations.
M.2: 30 Jun 2005	<i>Second project team round-table:</i> Collaborative analysis of data extracts and identification of emerging categories/themes for case studies.
Jul–Sep 2005	Co-construction of case studies.
Mid-Sep	Further collaborative analysis of data collection and refining of observation schedules.
M.3: 30 Sep 2005	Teacher–researchers trialing research in buddies' classrooms.
Oct–Nov 2005	<i>Third project team round-table:</i> Co-construction of final case studies; teacher–researchers sharing with buddies. Discussion of research questions for the action research phase.
Nov–Dec 2005	<i>Fourth project team round-table:</i> Refinement of research questions and methods for the action research phase. Preparation for 2006.
M.4: 31 Dec 2005	Initial dissemination period (Teacher Research Symposium, UoW).
Phase 3	
Dec 2005–Feb 2006	Bringing on two new schools and teacher–researchers. New round of ethical consents for all parents/caregivers and children.
M.5: 31 Mar 2006	Trialling methodology to scrutinise new questions. Teacher–researchers working in their own schools, with UoW researchers, to examine questions, leading to trial of interventions.
Mar–Apr 2006	Trialling interventions in schools and collection of intervention-related data.
End of term 1	<i>Fifth project team round-table:</i> Report-back of intervention-related data, refinement of interventions. Second dissemination period (Dialogues & Differences Conference, Melbourne).
May–Sep 2006	Trialling interventions in schools and collection of intervention-related data by teacher–researchers and UoW researchers.
M.6: 30 Jun 2006	
Phase 4	
Sep 2006	<i>Final project team round-table:</i> Analysis and evaluation of interventions and discussion of overall project findings.
M.7: 30 Sep 2006	
Sep–Nov 2006	Summary of commonalities emerging from each Arts discipline. Implications for current practice and further research.
Phase 5	
Nov 2006–Dec 2006	Final analysis, conclusions, and report writing by UoW researchers. Third dissemination period of project findings and conclusions (NZARE, Rotorua).
Final Report due 31 December 2006	

3a. Project findings: research questions

The initial research questions are listed again here and each of these is discussed under the themes that emerged to follow:

1. What features characterise the classroom practices/processes of a sample of teachers engaging children in activities aimed at developing ideas and related skills within one or more of the Arts disciplines (music, visual art, drama, and dance)?
2. What are the children's perceptions of their own idea formation when engaged in developing their ideas in the Arts?
3. What factors and related discourses shape child and teacher understandings of how ideas and related skills can be developed in the Arts through a range of classroom practices/ processes? How do these discourses relate to each other and to the larger context of the school and the national policy environment?
4. Taking into account current research and the professional knowledge of participating teachers and researchers, what pedagogical practices might be expected to enhance the development of children's ideas and related skills in and through each of the Arts disciplines?
5. What specific interventions, at either school or classroom level, appear to enhance the development of children's ideas and related skills in and through the various Arts disciplines?

Rituals of practice

In terms of the features of classrooms that characterise teachers' pedagogy in the Arts the initial case studies, co-constructed in the first year of the project, provided a wealth of detailed material including a number of "rituals" or common practices that were a largely unconscious part of teachers' repertoires (Efland, 2002; Nuthall, 2001). These rituals or largely taken-for-granted assumptions, could either support or constrain what happened when children were learning through and in the Arts, depending on the context and goals of the lessons, and the children's needs. These rituals included the following:

- An emphasis was on the teaching of practical knowledge, with minimal attention or time given to the teaching of artistic idea development and structuring.

- Group work in dance, drama, and music was a common practice for both management and pedagogical reasons.
- Visual art was usually undertaken individually even if children were placed in groups.
- Teachers chose the topic or theme to be explored and this was usually framed by narrative. While these were open-ended enough to allow children to locate their experiences, deviation from the set brief was rare.
- Resource choice was usually made by the teacher; children chose from a pre-selected range of resource material.
- An emphasis was on brainstorming ideas, explaining, sharing, and interpreting art skills and processes in words, mostly spoken and sometimes written.
- While the value of process was recognised, explicit valuing of subtask completions, presentations, and finished work was often foregrounded.
- In the performing Arts, feedback on work was given mostly at the end of a session and if time limitations prevailed, was vulnerable to being foreshortened or eliminated.
- Reflection and evaluation of work produced was generally through an adult lens; perceived “best” Arts practice drew on a limited range of adult Arts paradigms and genre.

Overall, the initial case studies revealed a main emphasis on practical knowledge or the teaching of Arts skills and elements, determined and defined by the teacher. This emphasis on skills and elements tended to take priority over clarifying and deepening how ideas might be developed in the Arts. However, there is a distinct and important relationship between practical knowledge (PK) and development of ideas (DI) and *both* are necessary in the creative process. The relationship between these two, therefore, requires careful consideration. Too little PK lessens the quality of DI exploration and the communication of ideas. Skill development is necessary and essential in learning as greater grasp of skills offers greater opportunity for exploration, refinement, and flexibility to express one’s ideas. But PK can also constrain and dominate to the extent that DI is minimised or overlooked. Too much PK conveys the message that skills and elements are paramount, including the meeting of learning outcomes which are often based on that which is observable and measurable. PK that is tightly scaffolded by the teacher can easily become a management strategy, more than a pedagogical technique. Such PK provides children with skill progressions and a sense of accomplishment from seeing growth in their ability to create in the Arts. However, PK by itself does not take thinking very far and too much PK can hinder, even annihilate thinking, if compliance to conventions becomes a paramount goal.

Development of ideas is a much more elusive concept wherein possibilities are considered, explored, tested, rejected, resurrected, and pushed in directions that are not wholly determined at the outset. Eisner (1994) maintained that the Arts need to allow for flexible purposing and expressive outcomes. Behavioural objectives with their clearly defined learning outcomes can be too closed for the unknown directions that Arts creation needs. This freedom to explore is necessary if Arts programmes are to go beyond the information given (Bruner, 1974) and enable children to bring their imaginations to the task at hand. Noteworthy was the fact that the initial

case studies often revealed that exploratory play was marginalised in favour of carefully defined criteria such as “we are learning to” lists.

Moreover, DI requires ongoing qualitative assessments where the development is towards something better. This does not preclude setbacks and regressions which are part and parcel of the messiness of learning. Learning does not proceed smoothly in a linear, staircase fashion (Barker, 2001; Claxton, 1999) despite what some models of human development have claimed. Good learners, according to Claxton (2002, p. 18), like a challenge, know that learning is sometimes hard, are not afraid to make mistakes, and like the feel of learning. It seems that development of ideas requires the elements of “good learning”. This good learning is invariably aimed towards improvement; something that is qualitatively better than before.

The initial case studies showed that children’s *first* idea response to a challenge or task in the Arts was often accepted and considered the *best* response. There were few and sometimes no opportunities given to repeat, refine, review, and revise. In contrast, skills were often built upon through revision and extension, especially in the skill dominant classrooms. A slightly different tension emerges for teachers using a process drama approach where first response is often valued as better or at least “truer”. In “lived through” process drama, the emphasis is often on the spontaneous and the authentic response, rather than reworking towards a polished product. Even in a process drama approach, however, there are times where responses may be reworked and refined, thus, the spontaneous and the more polished can co-exist.

The initial case studies showed that little cognisance was taken of what children brought to the Arts in terms of their existing knowledge, preferences, and interests beyond the classroom. The theme or topic of a lesson or unit was usually chosen by the teacher and largely driven by a narrative and the skill conventions of the particular art form. A wealth of rich contexts were used to explore the Arts in classrooms such as: school camp experiences; the kiwi icon of fish and chips; re-enactment of Jack in the Beanstalk, Maui Catches the Sun, and The Three Little Pigs; winter weather; storms; The Gruffalo; a Waitomo caves trip; field trips to dairy farms; and bush walks. Children’s meaning making seemed to be enhanced by contexts that were familiar to them, as well as appealing. Sometimes children brought their particular cultural expressions, images from popular media, or Arts knowing to their lessons, such as known vernacular dance moves or musical sound motifs. When and if they did, it was often in incidental and marginal ways. For example, during Jack and the Beanstalk, when the giant is charging down the beanstalk after Jack, one of the young Māori boys turned his charge into a haka with great gusto. These findings concur with Glover (2001) and Dogani (2004) who argued that stories and cues such as words are widely used to give structure to children’s musical work. However, they maintained that this appears to be an adult led phenomenon and, if given creative freedom, did not appear in children’s work in the early stages. Indeed, they argued that an over-emphasis by teachers on narrative may actually be stunting composition.

Aligned to this is the question of permission seeking for including personal content and discoveries; children sometimes shared creative ideas in the interviews that did not surface in the

lessons. For instance, children in a dance interview revealed that they had a myriad of ideas that could be used as a means of developing their dance, but that they did not volunteer them within the class devising time, because they would not fit the theme, or the teacher might not like them.

The influence of policy, paradigms, school culture, and structures

A range of factors and related discourses shape and inform child and teacher understandings in the Arts. School programme structures and rationales effect the possibilities and limitations for development within arts experiences. Wider Arts discourse result in influential paradigms and historically preferred arts pedagogies (Efland, 2002, 2004; Eisner, 1972; Kerlavage, 1992; Price, 2005). These discourses influence policy and curriculum and the ways in which these influences are played out in classrooms is elaborated upon later in this report (see *Multiple paradigms in art education and children's imagery*). Alongside resources and the teacher's own voice, these ultimately manifest within the choices teachers make when constructing programmes. For generalist teachers in particular, the initial case studies revealed some dominant discourses that underpin teaching in the Arts; the Arts are usually driven by linguistic and narrative ways of knowing and apart from visual art, are usually taught in groups. The teacher and university researchers were open to further examining these assumptions.

Primary children's development of ideas in the Arts is a neglected fields-based research niche, both nationally and internationally. This project helps to address this gap and, in doing so, promotes ways of knowing that fall outside most studies in classrooms. Gardner (1983, 1993) has successfully challenged traditional notions of intelligence, proposing that schools have long over-looked a range of intelligences that are undervalued and underserved. The dominant discourse surrounding what counts as knowledge in most educational institutions is the emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Other ways of thinking are often marginalised, such as the visual/spatial, the musical and the bodily kinaesthetic; these ways of thinking are emphasised in the Arts. Williams (2004) and Claxton (1997) pointed out that intuitive intelligence is similarly undervalued. Williams suggested that visual intelligence is the primary intuitive intelligence used to make sense of our world. This study challenges the existing dominant discourse to raise the status of that which may be overlooked in traditional "measures" of school success. Valuing Arts-related intelligences effectively reduces the inequality of a system that privileges the linguistic and the logical-mathematical.

A project such as this is inevitably influenced by the culture and philosophy of the school in which the teachers work, a finding which is evident in the wider literature on school-based research and teacher change. Interest and support by colleagues and school leaders makes an obvious difference when it comes to a) advocacy for the Arts and b) support for the research project. Research indicates that the principal has a critical influence on the success of curriculum implementation (Ministry of Education, 2006b) and a similar claim can be made in regards to our

research. Those teacher–researchers who felt supported by their school found much greater interest in what they were doing and greater value placed on research. Those who did not experience the same levels of support found it rather isolating and lonely at times. They spoke of the crucial importance of having: ongoing collaboration with the Arts project team; the regular visits of the university-researcher; and the generative nature of discussions at the roundtables. For all project members these aspects made a key difference for cohesion, momentum, and progress, both professionally and psychologically.

Aligned to school culture and philosophy is the way in which schools structure learning opportunities. This project comprised schools with very different approaches to teaching the Arts from: eight week elective blocks where children were drawn from numerous classrooms; to formal structured whole-class lessons led by the teacher; to programmes fostering a “community of learning” approach that encouraged peer teaching and seldom saw children working on the same thing at any stage of the day. The variations from school to school were marked and effected the ways in which the Arts were taught, learnt, and assessed. In contrast to Holland and O’Connor (2004) who claimed that the Arts provide co-constructed learning environments in which teachers and children learn from each other, this project found that the culture of the school and the philosophy of the teacher were the factors that influenced how the Arts were taught. The Arts as disciplines do not dictate the pedagogical approaches teachers will employ. (Neelands, 2004, for example, noted that it is not drama but what we do with it that makes it efficacious.) Rather, teachers develop distinct pedagogical content knowledge, and this, along with the particular culture of each school, influences how the Arts are interpreted and experienced by children.

From a sociocultural perspective, learning and teaching in classrooms can be considered a dynamic, participatory process that occurs and is influenced by the personal, the interpersonal, and the institutional (Rogoff, 2003). These three “lenses” are mutually responsive and cannot be neatly separated (Sewell, 2006). In other words, studying children’s learning in the Arts cannot be severed from the social and cultural context in which that learning takes place. Those classrooms that foster a community of learning convey a seamless and dynamic relationship between teacher, learners, and the Arts media they are working with. Moreover, the social and cultural context in which learning takes place, both transforms, and is transformed by, the way in which people interact and participate within that context.

Enhancing children's learning in the Arts

For me the initial delight is in remembering something I didn't know I knew.

Robert Frost

The final two research questions aimed to examine what enhanced children's development of ideas and related skills in and through the Arts disciplines. A number of findings surfaced in the project which are identified below. As a result of the identification of a range of rituals of practice, or taken-for-granted assumptions and approaches, the teachers set themselves challenges through their action research questions to trial some different ways of teaching, aimed at enhancing children's learning. The following questions (listed earlier under methods) were refined through discussion between teacher- and university-researchers and helped to frame the investigations:

- What effect does nonverbal feedback and feedforward have on the exploration and development of ideas in dance?
- What effect does children working as individuals, and as pairs, have on the development and refinement of ideas in music?
- What is the impact of symbolic representation on the development and refinement of children's ideas in music?
- How are students currently exploring, generating, and developing their ideas in the visual arts? What supports or constrains students' self-directed imagery using learned skills and strategies?
- What is the influence of teacher-in-role on children developing and refining their ideas in drama? In what ways can teacher-in-role contribute to deepening the drama and children's ownership of ideas in drama?

Each of these questions formed the action research phase of the project and enabled teacher-researchers to trial some interventions in their classrooms. These interventions were trialled and refined through the cycle of reflection, planning, implementing, evaluating, and subsequent retrialling, taking into account what was gained from the first cycle (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Mills, 2003). Findings from these action research cycles are reported and discussed to follow.

Using nonverbal ways of knowing to teach and learn in the Arts

When I have talked for an hour I feel lousy-
Not so when I have danced for an hour:
The dancers inherit the party
While the talkers wear themselves out and
Sit in corners alone, and glower.

Ian Hamilton Finlay

The initial case studies revealed that teachers relied mostly on spoken, and to a lesser extent, written language to convey to children key ideas, sequences, and lesson moves. This reliance on the linguistic was a feature of all classrooms and a predominant mode of operating in one room in particular. While there were advantages in using talk to direct process and dialogue to check understanding, there was a tendency towards question-answer patterns of communication from teacher to children in a relatively uni-directional fashion (a common and well documented phenomenon, see e.g., McGee, 2001; Sewell, 2006). In contrast, the fostering of a “community of learners”, wherein discussion ranged more broadly between children, their peers, and the teacher was noticeable in one classroom in particular. In this class, the whole school emphasised a philosophy of peer teaching and negotiation of learning alongside self-direction.

As a result of the initial case study, and the viewing of her teaching on video, one of the teacher–researchers recognised the ways in which her talk tended to dominate what occurred in dance lessons. Thus, her verbal language had supremacy over the movement of dance. Through discussion with her university colleagues, she set herself the challenge of incorporating more dance gestures and movements to provide increased nonverbal guidance in dance. This did not mean that she did not speak at all, but rather, that she consciously built in specific dance ways of communicating (gestures, movements, bodily expressions) within feedback stages of the lessons. She initially gave feedback on aspects she liked through a danced reflection to her class and using nonverbal moves which she checked verbally, to see if they had understood what she was communicating to them. When the children accurately interpreted the nonverbal message the teacher–researcher felt encouraged by her innovation. After three demonstrations of nonverbal dance feedback, a child in the class asked if he could give nonverbal feedback to his peers. The teacher–researcher quickly agreed that this was a great idea and watched with interest as the children developed their own dance feedback responses. Periodically, she would check in verbally with groups to gauge whether they had understood what their peers were communicating to them (e.g., “What was the person telling you?”) and she assisted with clarifying any confusions or mixed messages. Her “checks” were to confirm children’s understanding rather than to provide verbal explanations. She was surprised to find though, that quite a lot of their communication was clearly conveyed and received.

The teacher–researcher noted that the more confident children used dance moves to communicate their ideas and the less confident used mime. Both forms of nonverbal communication were accepted and encouraged. Over time, however, more children incorporated dance rather than

mime, as their skills and confidence grew. She also noted that using dance movements as feedback was easily understood by the children as well as inclusive. For example, children who had English as an additional language were not disadvantaged by nonverbal feedback to the same extent as the giving and receiving of the verbal. When interviewed about the innovation, children commented that, “I like it because I could see what my dance looked like [to someone else]” and “I found it better than being told because it was a surprise.” Moreover, the degree of dance participation time was arguably increased as children kept working on and using their movement repertoire rather than having to anticipate what they were going to say verbally.

Once the children became *au fait* with giving and receiving nonverbal feedback in dance, the teacher–researcher wanted to extend the process to the giving of suggestions for improvement or “feedforward”. This formed the basis of the next cycle of action research with her class. The lessons still featured some verbal discussion especially when recapping main ideas with the class, outlining changes groups had made to their dances, and refining ideas. The children volunteered dance pointers such as: the importance of using different levels in dance; the need to spread out to give group members room; and to vary individual moves amongst group or unison moves. As with the nonverbal feedback, nonverbal feedforward was offered by children to their peers and checks were made to ensure those receiving the suggestions were clear as to what was meant. It seemed that nonverbal communication required a sharper attention to the message by the children. This was implied by their stillness, lack of fidgeting, and absorbed silence while watching their peers. It was also evidenced by their ability to verbally interpret and adopt or adapt what was conveyed. As a result of these trials, nonverbal peer feedback, and feedforward through dance became a regular part of the dance lessons with the class buying into the culture of nonverbal communication. The children also considered the timing of giving feedback and feedforward by sharing during lessons when groups specifically asked for it, and not just at the end, so that ideas could be developed further in class. Moreover, the children often danced their responses to the feedback and feedforward, creating an intriguing nonverbal dialogue.

Put simply, dance is a nonverbal domain. Bannon and Sanderson (2000) explained that “dance offers a distinct form of communication separate from the expressive statement of direct speech” (p. 16). While some have argued that verbal language is necessary for working in the medium of movement, Bannon and Sanderson (2000) questioned whether it is appropriate to assume that dance experiences can be translated into verbal language in any authentic sense. And while dance researchers agree that reflection and feedback are important in order to inform future action (Chen, 2001; Cone & Cone, 2005; East, 2005; Gibbons, 2004; Lavendar, 1996; Lavendar & Predock-Linnell, 2001), there is little documented evidence related to nonverbal gesture or movement being used as a means of feedback in dance. It also appears that the nature of verbal feedback given in dance can be problematic. Williams (2002) found that teachers when giving dance feedback tend to leave little room for student voice to contribute to the conversation and that the subjective nature of criticism can lead to defensiveness over perceived personal attacks. In addition, Gough (1999) warned against feedback being an activity that only occurs at the conclusion of class.

Lavendar (1996) developed structured approaches to developing critical reflection in dance which included strategies for fostering both objective and subjective feedback. However, the emphasis is on oral and written practices. The case study findings in this project corroborate that verbal language tends to dominate and have supremacy over the use of movement as a communicative medium.

Patterns of verbal interaction in classrooms and the ways in which discussion can influence learning have long been the subject of study. For example, Barnes and Todd's (1977) seminal study provided some of the best examples of socially constructed knowledge in the research literature and many others have carefully scrutinised verbal dynamics in classroom interaction (e.g., Cazden, 1988; Good & Brophy, 2000; McGee, 2001; Mercer, 1995; Nuthall, 2001). Rather than add to an already extensive literature on this topic, this study offers a contrasting and equally important view on how ideas are constructed and communicated in classrooms. Instead of privileging the linguistic (see earlier under *The influence of policy, school culture, and structure*), the Arts offer multiple opportunities for learning in and through the unique, largely nonverbal languages of the Arts: through music, dance, drama, and visual art. Arguably, drama is the most 'verbal' of these art forms given the speech aspects of teacher-in-role, hot-seating, spoken thoughts, and the like. However, all four art forms are rich in nonverbal ways of communicating, such as gesture, shape, movement, sound, rhythm, tone, pitch, colour, use of space, layering, texture, position, levels, facial expression, body language, perspective, and many more.

It is well established that children make sense of new knowledge in the light of their existing ideas and experiences. However, the claim is often asserted that "essential to this process is language, since *talk* aids the organization of experience into thought" (emphasis added, Bennett, 1994, p. 63). This assumption about the centrality of talk underpins much of the work in social constructivism wherein knowledge is jointly constructed through dialogue in social contexts. It is important, though, to interpret dialogue broadly, as not just talk but as communication in all its varied forms (Shields & Edwards, 2005). And the Arts provide a wealth of communicative forms, many of which are nonverbal.

Each art form has a rich nonverbal way of knowing that enables the learner to express things in ways that words cannot, or in ways where words are not adequate. Smith-Autard (1994) argued that "not only are there never adequate words, but there is a tendency not to notice that for which we have no language" (p. 32). When we *do* notice the nonverbal, this gives children the freedom to explore in ways not driven by linguistic structures. We can speculate that removing the emphasis on "talk" was enabling for children as they had no need to convert actions into words for feedback purposes but could stay in the medium of expression. Using the ways of knowing of the Arts helps to build capacity and greater fluency in the Arts as children become more confident and knowledgeable about how the Arts convey meanings and nuances. This assumes, however, that teachers appreciate the value and subtlety of each art form as a discipline in itself and not purely as a set of skills to master and tasks to complete. It also calls into question the amount of talk that teachers use to convey Arts concepts and ideas. Similarly, this finding suggests that asking children to explain what they are doing or attempting to achieve can be limiting and even

misleading. It can be more instructive and fruitful for teachers to ask children to “show me”, rather than “tell me”, about your dance, drama, or music.

By attending to the Arts through the nonverbal, we extend and enhance sensory awareness. Eisner (2000) argued:

... learning to see and hear is precisely what the arts teach; they teach children the art, not of looking, but also of seeing, not only of listening, but also of hearing. They invite students to explore the auditory contours of a musical performance, the movements of a modern dance, the proportions of an architectural form so that they can be experienced as art forms. Seeing in such situations is slowed down and put in the service of feeling. (p. 9)

This attention to the Arts through nonverbal means, heightens perception beyond the linguistic. And for many children, their expression in the Arts outstrips their verbal abilities. They are able to “show” stories, convey feelings, capture moments, compose images and sounds that have expressive power in their own right. The Arts enable those children for whom English is an additional language to participate fully alongside their peers, as long as spoken and written language does not dominate how the Arts are conveyed and interpreted. Moreover, teachers often report surprise at the abilities a range of children reveal in dance. Dance (along with the other art forms) can be a place where teachers see their children in new ways. The Arts do not exclusively rely upon fluency with literacy or numeracy and, therefore, in many ways, it could be argued that the potential for inclusive pedagogy is thereby enhanced.

However, it is not enough to recognise the inclusive potential of the Arts. The ways of knowing that the Arts encapsulate need to be valued and explicitly taught. This includes the processes by which children learn to see, hear, feel, touch, move, express, and gesture. This is not to say that the reception of Arts forms should not, at times, lead to rich verbal dialogue. Interpretive dialogues are *further* opportunities for children to share their own unique views and construct understanding of the richness of what the Arts offer.

Individuals, pairs, and groups

I walked abroad in a snowy day;
I asked the soft snow with me to play;
She played and she melted in all her prime,
And the winter called it a dreadful crime.

William Blake

Nuthall (2001) found that children:

... already know at least 40–50% of what teachers intend for them to learn. Consequently they spend a lot of time in activities that relate to what they already know and can do. But this prior knowledge is specific to individual students and the teacher cannot assume that more than a tiny fraction is common to the class as a whole. (p. 11)

He went on to argue that the sheer numbers of children in any one class means that teachers tend to focus on teaching the whole class (a feature encouraged in the United Kingdom in recent education policy) and only focus on individuals for brief periods of time. The other common structure or ritual employed by teachers is the use of groups, and this helps teachers to again manage the numbers of children in their classes. The use of “ability” groups is intended to help teachers target particular needs of children clustered around similar levels of attainment.

In order to find out what individual five-year-olds brought to music, one teacher–researcher decided to explore what happened to children’s idea development when they worked as individuals or as pairs, rather than as larger groups or the whole class. Her motivation for this focus was kindled by the initial case study which revealed mostly whole class and group teaching. In music, this can be a convenient management structure, especially when dealing with the sonic properties of music. As a class, and as groups, the children can be instructed to play, and then to cease, so that the sound is controlled and not overwhelming. However, a child’s ability to hear the actual sound he or she is making in such settings is difficult when surrounded by others also making sound. This is certainly lessened by individual and pair work. The challenge remains, however, of providing sufficient space for children to work musically alone or in pairs, without disturbing everyone else.

Another reason for exploring individual and pair work was that within groups, one child tended to dominate the idea generation and dictate to others what to do. The ability (or inability) to negotiate, rather than the quality of musical idea generation, seemed to dominate what happened in groups. As this Arts project was not focused on group work *per se*, it was beyond the scope of the study to address these dynamics.

As a regular ritual of practice, the teacher–researcher provided a music table in the classroom on which were a variety of objects and instruments for making sound. Her class of five-year-olds were invited informally to “play” at the table before school if they wanted to. To capture this activity, a video camera was set up in the corner (all consents from children and parents were sought in advance). The teacher did not intervene during this free time and went about her usual before school tasks in preparation for the day. A number of children took up the invitation and began experimenting at the table. After an initial play with various objects, each child seemed to settle on an instrument or object to use for sound making and played with gusto.

On viewing the video afterwards, the teacher- and university-researchers observed a number of things. Noteworthy was the fact that the children brought more musical prior knowledge, absorption, and gusto than was first assumed, and more than had been detected or developed during the regular class music programme. Obviously, their technical mastery of instruments influenced their creative music making possibilities, and some were more adept than others. What was noticeable was the skill some did have (e.g., a boy drumming like a band member; the subtle ensemble awareness of some children even when doing their own thing; the nonverbal interchanges; fascination with beat and simple rhythm patterns; recall of known song motifs; and the exploration of pitch). There also appeared to be considerable sensory pleasure in the

generation of distinct movements arising from music making, as much as their interest in the sound they produced. The kinaesthetic and auditory were closely linked, and, in addition, there appeared to be pleasure in repeating favoured sounds and moves which was given free rein in the context of the informal setting (Burnard,1999; Glover, 2001; Swanwick & Tillman,1986).

Teachers often complain about the lack of time in the school day to “fit in” all that needs to be covered. This simple intervention is a useful way for children to have valuable exploration time; time which is often constrained in the regular class programme. Teaching can easily be dominated by measurable outputs and scaffolded learning which can result in the neglect of the vital incubatory play/improvisation that is needed in creative process. Such exploration is inevitably noisy, takes up space and invariably looks like nothing is happening. To many teachers it may seem like an indulgence that can be eliminated. However, such freedom for idea and technical experimentation is a critical foundation for idea development in the Arts and demands place and space within Arts teaching. It is also supported by the emphasis on exploration in the Arts curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 1999).

In the second cycle of research, the focus moved to children working individually and in pairs. The teacher–researcher was fortunate to work adjacent to a hall space which was convenient for this initiative. Obviously, there are safety issues involved if young children are working alone, so the adjacent space with a shared door into the classroom enabled the teacher to be in close proximity.

As with the music table, individuals spent time exploring sounds and the properties of their chosen instruments. However, they lost interest and momentum more quickly than at the table surrounded by peers. Significantly, individuals often tried to play more than one instrument at once, signalling a preference for sonic layers. This is of course more easily managed by pairs or small groups. When they worked with a partner though, they persisted for longer, imitated each other’s musical ideas, made subtle adaptations while playing in parallel, and showed some ensemble awareness. However, one child in a pair tended to just follow what the other child did, but at times added his or her own innovations and variations. One pair not only played their instruments together, but also sequenced several sounds together, layering these. Movement seemed integral to the experimental process and several pairs set off around the room dancing as they played. The physical properties of the instruments tended to influence the musical outcome: drums resulted in pattern and beat; glockenspiels resulted in glissando slides and notes sequenced together. Predictably, bells were shaken.

Significantly, pairs and individuals recalled rhythmic patterns and repeated these unprompted. These sound motifs appeared to be part of their sonic repertoire; their personal vernacular. Little is known about what makes pair work effective. Some argue that each child in a pair provides opportunity for mutual growth; some claim that there is more equality in the relationship compared with larger groups (Kutnick & Rogers, 1994); and others state that pairs encourage persistence (Fraser, 1998). Certainly, the smaller the group the less argument there tends to be

about whose turn is it and who has access to what resources (Fraser, 1998; Kutnick & Rogers, 1994).

These observations highlighted what children bring to learning and how useful it can be to give them the time and uninterrupted opportunity to explore sonic properties and the feel of their instruments. Free exploration at a music table appears to foster young children's interest, as does playing music with a partner. This is not to suggest that other approaches to music are not valid and nor to suggest that pairs are invariably "better". Rather, this cycle highlighted what individual children could do musically which can get obscured in whole class and large group teaching. There are limits to adults viewing children's creative outcomes through adult lenses of supposed best Arts "practice", which has an influence on what is valued in creative production (Glover, 2001; Lavendar, 1996). This in turn, can blinker us to what children are really doing and can distort our perspective as to what children intuitively bring to a creative activity.

The initial case studies revealed that set group work is an accepted ritual of practice in dance, music and drama creative work in primary classrooms, arguably for pragmatic and management reasons, rather than for pedagogical reasons. Some of the group work clearly helps children to grow ideas and negotiate various aspects of their Arts making, especially as a solo or paired context may limit the range of combinations, contrasts, and variations that can be achieved in a work. For instance, for ideas to be developed or "realised" in music, layers of instruments may be required which demands group input if presented live. What we are less clear on is what is the *best* use of group work in the classroom creative process and whether group work should be unchallenged practice.

The findings show that group dynamics effect the idea development pathway and creative outcome as of necessity, it requires compromise. This means that individual idea generation and development may be thwarted by the collective power of the group. One questions whether group work is necessarily the only way for children to develop their music ideas, as it takes a level of skill to verbally and nonverbally negotiate a desired group outcome (Kutnick & Rogers, 1994; Ota, 2006). The purpose for using group work needs to be considered carefully, for the social skills required may over-shadow the desire for a quality, creative outcome.

It was interesting that dynamic difficulties became less obvious in dance and music. specifically when groups were improvising with minimal verbal interaction. Within this generative mode, where imitation and building off others' ideas as an ensemble dominated, creative flow appeared more productive. Conversely, we frequently saw productivity stymied and offers blocked when verbal interaction dominated the idea generation.

Aligned with this, group work may also influence the quality of creative idea development and imaginative possibility thinking of which an individual child is capable, and may be particularly damaging for the highly creative child. It is likely that there are times when the skills an individual brings may far outstrip those of the group and the child concerned may have to dumb down their skills to match. Such children deserve opportunities for full extension in music classes and it is debatable whether, as a ritual of practice, mixed-ability group work necessarily allows for

this. It could be argued that the group should merely be a mechanism by which music ideas, generated by an individual or pair, can be “realised” or arranged for performance. Nankivell (cited in Glover, 2001) suggested that in music composition, invention of ideas is often individual, whereas the group is used for arranging and sonically realising ideas.

If Arts teachers are to foster creative idea-generation and development in groups, unchallenged rituals of practice may need to be changed to accommodate such things as: the manner in which groupings are contrived; the mechanics of giving and receiving offers and what may block offers; and the purpose for the use of group work in the first instance.

The strengths and limits of symbolic representation

If music be the food of love, play on.

William Shakespeare

This action-research phase centred on how Years 5 and 6 children might adopt, or invent symbol systems to code sound events in a sound scape and how they might develop and refine their ideas using these. A sound scape is defined as a piece of music, which sonically captures an event, image, mood, poem, or narrative of some kind. In other words, the children were expected to evocatively “paint” with sound. The research question arose from an earlier block of creative music making based around a theme, where in both process and product, the teacher–researcher felt that the children had not developed their work to the full. She had a hunch that the use of symbolic representation might aid the process of development and refinement.

The motivational context for the sound scape was “winter weather”, a theme carefully selected by the teacher–researcher in the aspiration that all children would have some experiential knowledge to bring to the compositional process. The teacher was working on the premise that productive generation and development of sound ideas is best embedded within children’s world of knowing, a position substantiated by Efland (2002) who maintained that learning is most meaningful and lasting when related to a person’s life-world.

There had been extensive class discussion related to winter weather, the sound events that this theme might evoke, and the qualities of sound embedded within these. The class explored, shared and reflected on related sounds using conventional, untuned percussion and environmental sounds. As a means of recording their work, symbols were also introduced and examples of graphic notation (icons to represent variations in sound such as wavy lines and swirls) and conventional musical notation were explored. They became aware that symbols could be used: to indicate the structure of the piece; to start and stop; to add dynamic variations; contour or pitch differences; duration (length of sounds); and layers sound (texture). Conventional notation, such as bars and bar lines, and rhythmic notation symbols, were also introduced.

Groups were then given time to develop a sound scape representing a weather condition. Honouring the enactive mode of experimenting with sound, the focus group collaboratively

generated their sound ideas through repeated nonverbal improvisations showing heightened ensemble awareness of visual/body cues and listening acuity. These improvisations were interspersed with verbal discussion and at times, heated debate, and negotiation. The devising process and musical output was arguably compromised at times by some unresolved group dynamic issues. After numerous improvisations, they notated their work on a large sheet of paper, overlaying and attaching additional strips as they made alterations to any line as they selected and rejected efforts.

We used skill theory as a means of looking at the detail of their sound scape. Skill theory characterises cognitive development as the skill of regulating or co-ordinating one, two, or two sets of two dimensions of a task within a domain. Developmentally, children as young as 4 or 5 years of age can map discrete musical events within a phrase and by 7 they can map two relational dimensions in a phrase such as pitch and rhythm (Davidson & Scripp, 1989).

The focus group's (a group of five children of mixed ability and ethnicity) work clearly showed that they could manage at least two relational dimensions at once. They represented: how the sounds were to be played by their symbols (such as strokes or swirls); indicated how often these occurred (e.g., spaced out or close together); and how long they were to continue. At the same time, they showed they were aware of dynamic variation, adjusting the size of the symbols to indicate louder or softer. There was little effort to show pitch variation; rather, their agenda seemed to be sound quality.

Their score showed where they individually started and stopped and also that different lines of the score represented different sound sources, or people playing. In fact, each line sometimes had multiple layers indicating that a child was playing more than one instrument during the piece. However, the score showed no cognisance of the interrelationship in temporal nature of each line operating on the score. That is, each child wrote their own line and where they started or stopped did not necessarily match with the actual, sonic events in other lines. This inability to decentre from the self when writing their cues is interesting given that developmentally, 9–10-year-olds are generally less egocentric. However, they became aware of this when it was pointed out:

Researcher: Your symbols show you do not play with the others at the end. Is this what you actually do?

Child: I do drips ... I would make it longer so I finished with Tara's rainbow sound.

It seemed as if the child only became aware of this score/sound mismatch when discussing the score.

The focus group's use of symbols explicitly showed their ability to sequence sound events visually, capturing changing chunks of sound as they occurred in relationship to each other within each line of the score. These acted as cues for sonic events to occur in the sequence, but did not match in figurative detail to the exact number of sounds required *within* a chunk. For example, rain was symbolised by many strokes overlaying each other, but this represented the sound to be

played only, not the exact number of strokes to be played consistently, each rendition. This chunking of sonic events indicates that the children's composing as novices is rooted more in the holistic elements of music, such as form or texture, or qualities such as mood style of affective intent, rather than minutiae of detail, such as exact rhythmic groupings or the like. This concurs with Wiggins (2003) who found that children's conversations and actions in composing reflect a holistic vision of the work in progress: "They think in chunks of sound ... just as verbal thought takes place in verbal ideas, not single words"(p.150).

Bruner (1973) offered three kinds of representational processes based upon motor actions, images, and language systems. These representations express qualitatively different types of knowledge ranging from the first sensor-motor responses to fully functioning symbol systems. According to Bruner, "the more advanced symbolic representations enrich rather than replace the initial action orientated stages" (p. 63).

Certainly, use of notation appeared to raise the children's awareness of certain elements in their music. They clearly used symbols as a means of refining the quality of sounds as they had to think through how to make a symbol to represent their sound. Arguably, this is enriching their thinking and cognitive engagement in music .However, it seemed that the children's process was more about getting the right icon and adjusting this to represent what they had done, rather than adjusting their sound as a result of what they had discovered from the notation. Put simply, it was more a reflection of what the children could actually write down as opposed to what they actually created in sound. Taken further, rather than enrich what they are creating, the complexity of mastering the notation system itself may mitigate against the quality of the musical ideas being generated; rather like the young child's ability to write their ideas down prejudicing their ability to express themselves or compromise the quality and complexity of how they say something.

Such a premise is argued by Davidson and Scripp (1973) who maintained that "there is yet little evidence that untrained musicians can engage in formal compositional problem-solving using standard notation" (p. 73). They go onto say that while there is rapid development of notational systems in young children, there is "little evidence that this growth continues without the support of musical training" (p. 65).

While the children were aware of editing their symbols to represent what they had created sonically, it is debateable as to whether they used the symbols to develop or grow their ideas further. In fact, the structure of their piece was cemented at the early improvisational stages and at no time was this altered on paper, or in the 18 live, improvised repetitions that followed. Such adherence to a structure conceived very early in the process was apparent throughout this Arts research in dance and music and may reflect that a narrative structure can dictate the creative sequence, if the narrative is adhered to in a strictly representational sense.

According to Davidson and Scripp (1989), reflective thinking is an important dimension of musical development that arises from the core enactive stages, where skills are first manifest and are later linked to symbolic literacy skills of musical cultures. The reflective discussion that arose as the children negotiated their use of symbols was rich in informing us of their thinking

processes. There is clearly an advantage in using symbols as a visible cue system to prompt the teacher and children to recall sound ideas, which would normally be lost in time, given the temporal nature of music (Bamberger, 1991). In this regard, symbolic representation is a valuable reflective tool. Later in the research cycle, the children utilised a method of overlaying paper strips of their changed versions over their previous effort which provided a record of their trajectory, and was a rich visual documentation of their pathway.

When asked why they had used symbols on the score, the children's comments were telling and ranged from compliance with what the teacher had asked, to:

So you can tell who is doing what part...

So people who are looking will know...

It can help when you get lost and you don't know what to do ... if you get all freaked out...

It might help if you came back in a few weeks to do it again.

However, when playing their piece, the focus group made no reference to the score as they played. They performed together as an ensemble using sound cues from one pivotal instrument, which gave them their cue to move on in the sequence. The intensity of their ensemble listening and watching skills was significant and they were the only group of eight performances who created an evocative sound piece that communicated their ideas as a connected, holistic whole. When asked why they did not use the score, their response was:

We don't need to ... we sort of have it in our heads

When Tara starts playing the sun I know I get lighter then she starts ...

Interestingly, other groups performed with slavish attention to their score, following it in minute detail to the exclusion of ensemble connection. Their outcome was arguably stilted and lacked spontaneity or awareness of communicating a holistic whole. Put another way, they were aware of the parts, but not the whole. Some of these scores were organised according to metre and bar lines, which may have contributed to this effect. Conceivably, traditional musical notation systems with emphasis on metre and beat within these, are less suited to sound scape creations evoking imagery that is not tied to strict beat. Arguably, teachers need to be aware of the variety of symbol types available and encourage use of the most appropriate one to undertake the compositional task in hand. Notation is retrieval to be used as cue, not the compositional stimulus or focus.

The study signals that the use of symbols has several purposes in the compositional process, but the best use of symbols in the teaching learning process is less clear. If it is to recall and refine work that could be lost in time because of the temporal, sonic nature of sound, then it clearly has efficacy, especially if a teacher can use it as a discussion tool for reflection and further development. If it is for performance retrieval of long, complex works, then it has an essential part to play to aid memory. If it is for performance, retrieval of a simple sound piece quality of sound making is vital. Slavish adherence to a score may jeopardise the holistic nature of the sound

making and draw away from essential ensemble skills needed to communicate a whole. In addition, it cannot be assumed that children's symbolic representation necessarily matches their sonic intent. Children's ability to conceptually and physically make the marks may limit their ability to represent their ideas, unless they have had formal instruction.

It is important to acknowledge the underlying assumption embedded within this research question: that musical notation is necessary within musical composition. It can be argued that notation is merely a cueing or retrieval system to capture complex music events. Until recently, much music teaching has been driven by the hegemony of this Western European tradition. In fact, according to Oehrl (1993) and Terry (1994) it seems that there is a misconception that Western culture represents the pinnacle of musical achievement towards which other cultures strive. Many music teachers have been steeped within this tradition and, arguably, measure progress most comfortably within this mind-set. However, children of today are immersed in MP3 files, multi-tracking, and reproduction through aural processes. They are comfortable with this arena and indeed it is the norm.

It appears timely that teachers question the hegemony of musical notation driving the composition process and challenge the myth that what is written down is most valuable. The overt honouring of aural processes in composition, such as improvisation for idea generation and development, and aural retrieval for recording of ideas would give a viable range of skills for novices or experts alike to operate in our contemporary musical society.

Multiple paradigms in art education and children's imagery

If I could only live at the pitch that is near madness
When everything is as it was in my childhood
Violent, vivid, and of infinite possibility:
That the sun and the moon broke over my head.

Richard Eberhart

The literature of the history of art education theory has clearly signalled dominant pedagogies advocated in the United States (Dorn, 1994; Efland, 2002, 2004; Eisner, 1972; Lowenfeld, 1947) and in the United Kingdom (Abbs, 1987; Hickman, 2005; Read, 1943; Taylor, 1992; Witkin, 1974). New Zealand art education practice has drawn heavily on constructions of art education theory in the Anglo-American literature (Bell, 2000; Collinge, 1978; Duncum & Bracey, 2001; Grierson & Mansfield, 2003; Henderson, 1998; Langton, 2002; Price, 2005).

Efland (2004) summarised four dominant visions of 20th century art education that are also reflected in the New Zealand experience: *Academic Art*, which favoured mimetic aesthetics; *Elements of Design*, which favoured formalist aesthetics, *Creative Self Expression*, which favoured expressivist aesthetics and subjective experience; and *Discipline Based Art Education* (DBAE), which based activities upon the modes of enquiry used by artists, art critics, and art

historians. Postmodern critique challenged art education practices explored in Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr (1996). The shifts in art theory and practice from modernism to postmodernism signalled creative and critical reflection of a broader range of visual culture beyond the modernist canon. Not surprisingly, all of these major views of art align with the eclectic rationales for a primary art education demonstrated by our sample of generalist teachers: mimetic, expressive, formalist, discipline-based, and potentially the postmodern. These dominant visions of art are briefly described and illustrated here in order to make explicit their influence on curriculum and observed teacher practice within our research.

A mimetic tradition places strong emphasis on the resemblance of the artwork to known or knowable natural phenomena, that is, *paint/draw what you see!* Freeland (2001) observed: “E. H. Gombrich described the history of Western art as a search for progressively more vivid renderings of reality. Innovations aimed at more perfect semblances” (p. 23). The persistent valuing of a mimetic purpose for art amongst contemporary audiences is grounded in its recognisability and the equating of artistic virtuosity with the ability to produce a “worthy” semblance of any natural phenomena. Mimetic art has its origin in a known world that is accessible to an audience, and that known world is often seen to be the guarantee of the artworks’ authenticity. Success is defined around the recognisable.

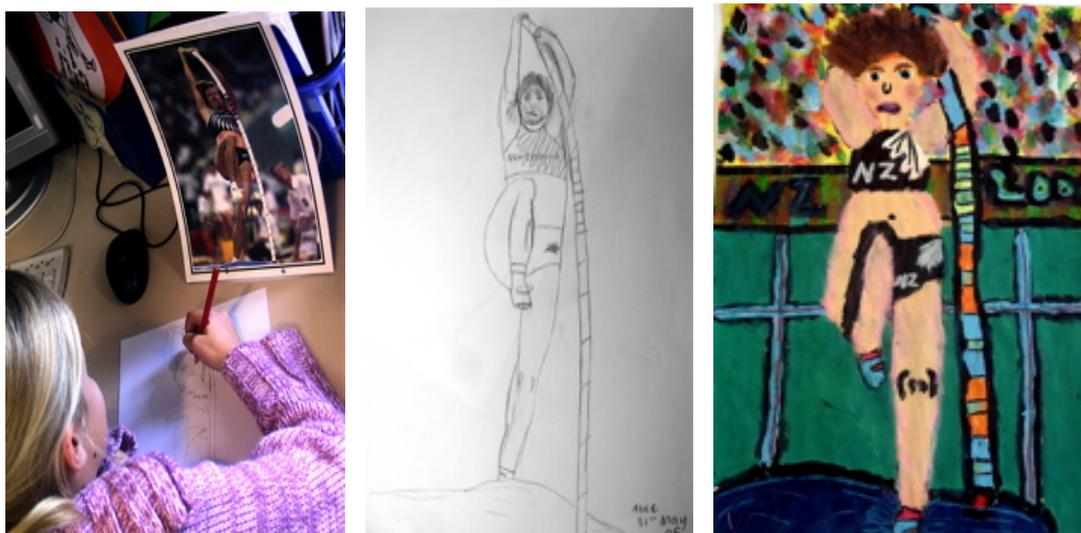
Figure 1 **Observational drawing from published sports photo (Year ?)**



Figure 2 **Observational drawing based on pupil's gymnastics photo (Year ?)**



Figure 3 **Alice developing second painting (Year 6)**



For example, Alice had a memorable experience of climbing Mauao (The Mount) which was the subject of her earlier painting. Her comment was both metaphorical and disappointed in tone when she shared: “I can’t see myself in this picture.” Alice then focused consistently on developing accuracy and the illusion of movement through copying photographs of sports’ action shots:

I chose the most interesting drawings to paint...

What I really like about this painting is the muscle formation...

Acrylic paint is easier to stroke with...

The first thing that catches your eye should be the important thing you want to say.

(Alice Year 6)

“One of the commonest beliefs about art is that it is essentially a form of expression, and what is more, the expression of feeling” (Graham, 2001, p.120), or *paint what you feel!* Graham ascribed the popularity of expressivist views to the inheritance of mid-19th-century Romantic theory and the fact that *some* artworks clearly do have the capacity to “move” their audience. Within the expressivist view, the artist’s feelings and subjective experiences are skilfully embodied within the work through choice of content and the expressive use of visual devices, such as heightened colour and nuanced gesture. Music at the turn of the 19th Century was clearly both expressive and abstract, in the sense of being freed from the requirement of description. As Harrison and Wood (2003) pointed out, expressive theory from music was adopted by the fine arts as the means to advance modern architecture and abstract expressionist painting.

Figure 4 **Jessica’ image derived from a forward roll (Year 5)**



Jessica (Year 5) experienced the gym challenges of forward rolls, but located her painting within a beach environment. Photographs supported her memory but the memory translated both context and feeling. Her painting was informed by studying the way her older sister worked at home: “*My older sister paints water like this.*”

Figure 5 **Tim's drawing and painting (Year 5)**



Tim (Year 5) went beyond replication in this drawing of a volleyball player diving into the sand. Researchers observed him painstakingly build up flying sand textures as his pencil dived into the paper and taking care to strengthen and soften the outline of the figure to capture movement and emphasis. His later painting of a rugby player emphasised a sense of occasion and humour over accuracy.

Figure 6 **Geordie's painting in progress (Year 5)**



Geordie (Year 5) modified his striking underpainting of memories of a hot summer boogie boarding after checking with his peers: “Does this look like water to you?” A concern for realism and peer approval at this point was no match for the original and vibrant image he had commenced.

At times, teacher actions epitomised the ideal of Gallagher (2000) who described the role of teacher as “the person in the equation who creates the spaces of possibility, who does not find solutions but nurtures the questions, while asking the learners to bring what they already know to bear on what they are learning” (p. 114). Nurturing questioning manifested in a teacher’s practice as an often used stem by both the teacher and children: “I going to challenge you to ...”, “Does anyone have a challenge for ...?” Knowing when to challenge comfortable predictability and deepen children’s first Arts responses is certainly within the repertoire of the generalist teachers within this study.

A formalist tradition arose from experiments in art in the early 20th Century. Meaning was found in the internal coherence of the artwork. Langer (1953), Bell (1958), and Greenberg (1961), theorised the autonomy of the self-contained abstract artwork that points to nothing other than itself. Art-making in a formalist model was generated through a self-contained network of visual relationships that could be described after-the-fact through formalist analysis. A viewer is offered a contemplative relationship with the artwork. This stance validated modernism and legitimated artists’ choices to be free from both the dictates of nature and resemblance encouraged by mimesis and the excesses of psychologised emotion thought evident in expressivism. In terms of the formalist view, the artist’s personality and biography were deemed irrelevant outside the artist’s *unique* vision and *original* contribution to “modern art”. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1962) supported this view through publishing their philosophical challenge, titled *The Intentionalist Fallacy*. “The design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard of judging the success of a work of literary art” (p. 95).

We recognise these fossil-formalist relationships buried within the New Zealand Arts curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000) practical knowledge strand. The so-called “elements of and principles of art”: line, colour, tone, texture, harmony, contrast, tension, and so forth, inform school art production at the primary level. Langton (2002) questioned whether the use of formalist terminology deepens art production with younger children even though they may develop an emergent understanding of the terms. Our study concurs. Formalist language does appear to offer a potential language with which to focus children’s attention away from subject matter and onto how their art is constructed. While the children were encouraged and able to use art terminology this was rarely employed in other than formal situations. Children’s conversations with their peers and discussions of their artworks seldom used this lens.

Figure 7 Mitchell's collage plans for composition and painting (Year 5)



Although Mitchell's visual exploration was directed through a verbal brainstorm, followed by motif identification, followed by two attempts at collage composition, his own conversations focus on personal relevance expressed through story:

My first idea was that I was going to do the gully at school but I changed it because the gully isn't really part of my life.

My life was living in London...

I found pictures of London bridge and then started on doing some buildings ...

The plane takes me from where I used to live, to NZ.

I looked for kiwi things ... fantails, kiwi, ponga trees...

I decided where things went by having two sides, NZ and London

Sometimes I put them where you would see them more clearly...

For my water I'm just going to paint plain blue first and then paint over with lots of white and some other colours to get swirling.

My words will be **Two homes, One world**

I think I'll try them swirling in the water.

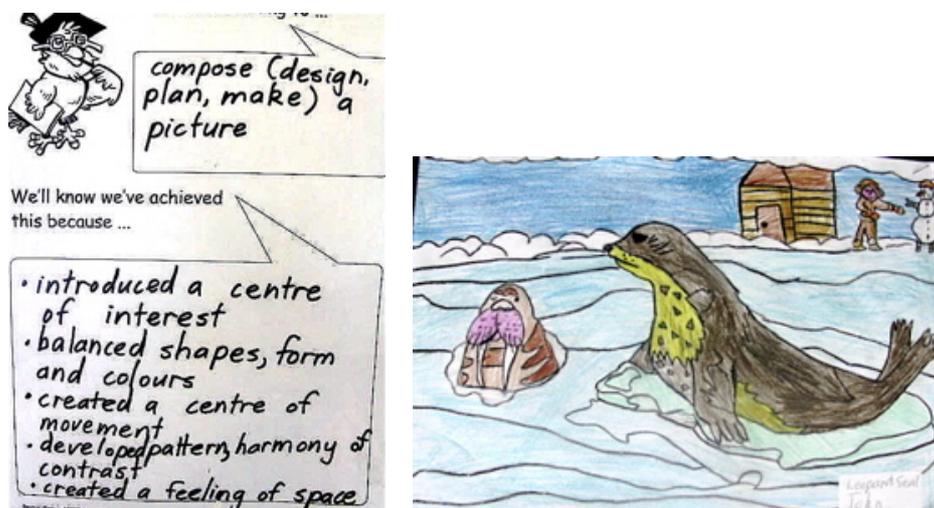
(Mitchell Year 5)

Within art education, exploring the nuance of perception, Arnheim (1954) was a lone voice championing the cognitive foundations of perception in a time when psychological and expressive views on art held sway. Arnheim argued that perception is a cognitive act and that perceptual development matured as individuals were able to further discriminate amongst the qualities within their environment. He gave physical evidence through studies of perception to a visual, nonverbal language. Concurrently, philosopher Susan Langer suggested the nature of experiencing artworks gave rise to meaningful experiences beyond language, expressed in nondiscursive symbolic form. For Langer (1953), an audience is charged to receive a *necessarily* nonverbal experience. She asserted that language has words and phrases for only familiar notions and that art provided a

symbolic presentation of subjective reality. Contemplating art was not only tentatively beyond the words we have, but *impossible* to express in verbal language.

The formalist view privileges the artist as an unquestionably original author, but at the same time also diminishes the need for a viewer to “know” anything more than their personal response to the artwork. Regarding the unreliability of the artist’s intention, formalism could be summarised thus: “Artists do not always do what they intend, nor is what they say they have done, always what they have done” (Harrison & Wood, 2003, p. 3). The formalist view implies an elitist community of skilled and sensitive responders to the tensions and harmonies embodied in artworks. “The modernist connoisseur would claim that works of art do indeed ‘speak for themselves’ to the adequately sensitive, adequately informed spectator” (p. 6). Our study consistently showed a driving force for children’s art making was their intention which they often articulated as a narrative interaction with the media.

Figure 8 **John’s coloured pencil draft (Year 4)**



John’s third draft, now in colour, was beginning to fulfil the formalist requirement dictated by his teacher. However, the “story” of this work is not founded in the formalist aspect of the task, but quite another narrative. The lightning motifs were derived from earlier independent explorations free from teacher intentions.

Figure 9 **John's colour flow and dye final work**



I started my drawing in my scrap book ... I asked [J] if I could borrow his book that had a sea lion ... that was too basic but it had a leopard seal with heaps of detail ... then I practiced until it got better ...

I was thinking of doing snow falling from the sky but that would be pretty hard with colour-flow so ... I changed it to thunder. I changed my background ... I was going to do a penguin but Mr Pye said my walrus looked better, so I rubbed it out and then I thought the land was a bit boring so ... I did a bird being shot by thunder with different clouds. I used to do clouds like that ... but now I've found ... another way.

(John Year 4)

The importance of context was marginalised within expressivist and formalist visions for art education. Parsons (1998) pointed out that the universalist and individualist emphasis inside formalist views also now sits uneasily with an emergent sensitivity to cultural diversity and a postmodern interest in meaning making and context. Discipline-based art education (DBAE) emerged as an approach that emphasised the 20th century disciplines of art history and art criticism as relevant to the reception of art. Art production in schools was to be now informed by activities associated with adult art reception. Fehr, Keifer-Boyd, and Fehr (2000) critiqued the emergence of DBAE thus:

Art education as a series of studio activities with minimal linkage to art viewing or societal issues – dominated art education in post war 1940s–50s. In the 1960s Eliot Eisner and others, driven by a blend of noble intent and Getty Center money tinkered with the idea that art education could be defined as a series of disciplines. Their tinkering crystalized into Discipline Based Art Education in the 1980s. (Fehr et al., 2000, p. xiii)

Even Fehr, as a self-confessed cynical postmodernist, conceded that DBAE had benefited art education through making art viewing more important, even though he challenged art educators to move outside the predictable canon with its sexist, racist, and socially privileged bias. The use of Nigel Brown's artwork (Pearson, 2004) as a reference point within the Hukanui painting programme draws on this model. Nigel Brown's working method was studied, his preliminary drawings, explorations, themes, and artist statements were read. His work was analysed by the

class to see what he was doing well in relation to colour use, compositional placement, and use of text. The children's analysis of his finished work was used to help generate categories for success criteria. The children responded as "critics" to his, their own, and each other's work, using earlier established criteria to inform their looking.

Freeland (2001) asserted that assumptions of meaning making underpin many views of art. The shared assumption is that the function of art is primarily concerned with the communication of meaning:

Both the expressive and cognitive theories of art hold that art *communicates*: it can communicate feelings and emotions, or thoughts and ideas. Interpretation is important because it helps explain how art does this ... A good interpretation must be grounded in reasons and evidence, and should provide a rich, complex and illuminating way to comprehend a work of art. (emphasis in original, Freeland, 2001, p. 101)

The issue of meaning making is problematic for the more abstracted forms of music and dance as it was for abstract modern art. It is here one finds a resurgence of Langer's positioning of the nonverbal, supported by feminist-inspired theory of *embodied* experience. Primary children can certainly experience the abstract qualities inherent within their music and dance experiences. As teacher-researcher Shirley Tyson discovered and developed, the children's sustained engagement with review of their experience is best supported by further reflective *action*, rather than more passive discursive verbal summaries. There are rich possibilities across arts disciplines for exploring nonverbal review that honour Arts media.

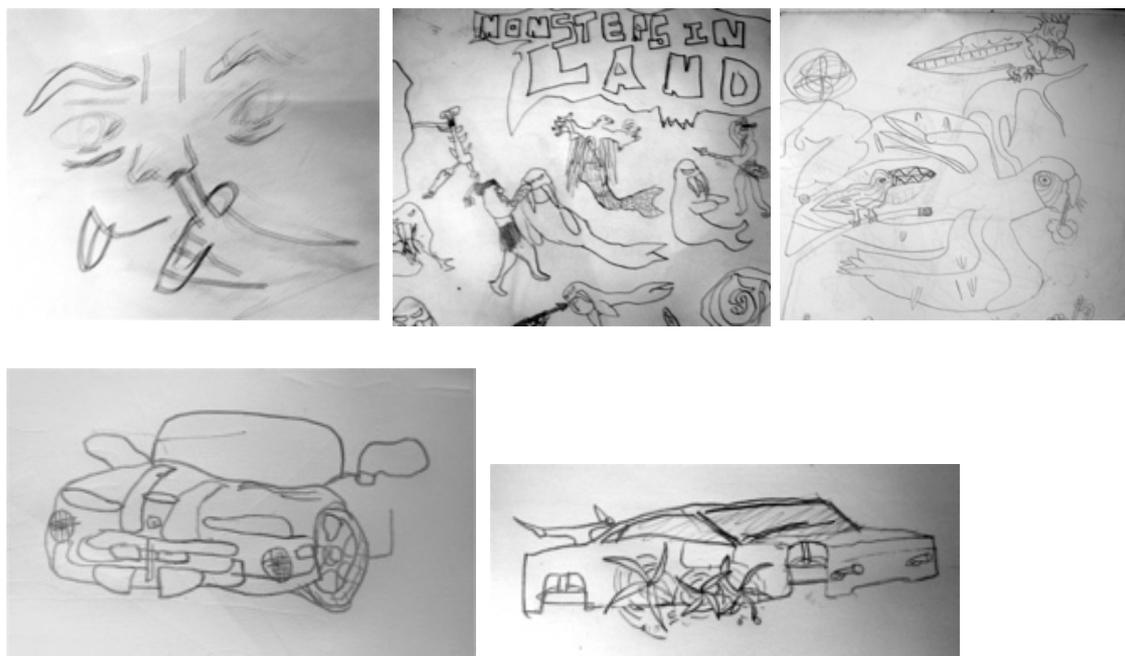
It is worth acknowledging that there is an unmistakable irony about attempting to characterise postmodernism. Attempts to define postmodernism through the characteristics of artworks suffer from postmodern art's challenge to and resistance of typologies. Diverse sets of contemporary approaches commonly emphasise uncertainty, discontinuity, fragmentation, ambiguity, and complex interrelations of text and meanings. To address postmodernism one must locate postmodernism as a reaction to concepts that were emphasised in the modernism that preceded it. Thus, for Harrison and Wood (2003), postmodernist theories cluster together around the critique of the myth of originality. Copying, recycling, and quotation are no longer abhorrent as thought by expressivist and formalist inspired educators. Postmodernist artworks are sometimes recognised by deliberate and ironic use of pastiche. Efland et al. (1996) characterised postmodern art "as a form of cultural production whose purpose is to construct symbols of shared reality. [Artists] recycle content and methods from modern and pre-modern forms of instruction [in order to] promote deeper understandings of the social and cultural landscape" (p. 68).

Figure 10 **John's development of Cat from Shrek**



John's (Year 4) teacher gave opportunity for popular culture to inform their drawing. Increasingly, John took ownership and completed several variations in his own time, at home, from memory, and developed a series of motifs that he brought back into the classroom projects.

Figure 11 **Nathaniel's home sketch book**



Nathaniel's (Year 4) first term was spent drawing the same gang patch over and over again. The teacher-researcher, as part of the action research phase, provided a home drawing book for everyone that opened a new dimension to their artwork. While his classmates were dutifully exploring the components and proportions of sea mammals and cars, Nathaniel's extensive private sketch book tells another story. His friend reported: "I copy people's stuff and change it. After school Nat and I draw pictures together at home. He's better at people, I do good cars" (student

Year 4). There is more than a hint of visual art being claimed as a tool supporting legitimated rebellion here. As Duncum (1997) found, children's unsolicited drawings present a striking contrast to teacher directed work. Wilson (2004) suggested "it is through conventional constraints first acquired, then subsequently rejected and subverted that creativity arises" (p. 314). He also observed that drawing homework opportunities for young Taiwanese students created links to popular visual culture that appeared to open a dialogue for child-initiated and teacher-directed art activities. How that link is built upon and valued remains an open challenge. Children's self-determination of focus is rare. Opportunities for children initiating their own art sometimes occur. These usually result in drawings and occur more frequently outside the formal school day. Also noted was that children tend to take independent creative risks in situations where the outcome is low stakes, that is, in backgrounds or margins, when experimenting with media and in private sketch books. Children's perceptions of "what paint *can't* do" also constrained their choice of final subject: "This one's easier to paint 'cause it's not so detailed."

Efland (2002) proposed a shift for art education towards an emphasis placed on human agency and meaning making that contemporary education might recognise. The learner can identify their own purpose and work in a social collaborative context to investigate cultural contexts while acquiring the cultural tools to do so (Rogoff, 2003). Aesthetic response, while not denied its place, is now presumed "cognitive from the start" (Efland, 2002, p. 171). Meaning is found neither solely by internal coherence (as in formalism), nor solely by the way artworks are used in the social world (as Marxist or feminist models might suggest), but through students integrating knowledge into their own life worlds. Efland considered that this integration of knowledge both occurs and is demonstrated through the imaginative power of metaphor explored in full consciousness. The contribution of art education moves beyond the construction of individual stories and becomes, in this view, the development of an understanding of the social and cultural landscape which each individual inhabits.

Practices in art education are a synthesis of interests expressed within art theory and general theories of education. Educational theory can be viewed as underpinned by contestable views of the nature of childhood, learning, and societal views for the purposes of schooling. Eisner (1994) recognised that our orientation to curriculum, learning, and teaching "serves to legitimise certain educational practices and to negatively sanction others" (p. 71). Within the visual art practices observed within three different schools, we found programmes framed by teacher beliefs of what art is, its function and why teach it to children. There are multiple paradigms at work: mimetic, expressivist, formalist, discipline based, and the postmodern. It is ironic that the latest draft national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2006a) fails to address "Why teach the arts?" in this pluralist environment.

The influence of teacher-in-role

And should I thank you, dear skin,
For holding me in,
For holding me in?
When all the while I want to shout
Let me out,
Let me out!

Annette Lynch

While drama has existed within the primary curriculum for quite some time, its presence within the New Zealand Arts curriculum is emergent since 2000. The experienced generalist teachers in this project were familiar with the shifts in emphasis through professional development opportunities from 2000 to 2003. For the generalist teacher, there are strengths in being able to integrate with their broader programme using existing frames of reference and goals. We observed natural bridging between drama and the content of science, social studies, and health. There were rich opportunities for building a raft of literacy competencies (see also Ewing & Simons, 2004) such as: oral and expressive dialogue; genre writing as letter correspondence between fictional characters; developing understanding of the construction of story with younger children; and alternative ways of presenting knowledge be they sun-safe practices, advances in contemporary agriculture, or ways of challenging bullying behaviour.

The initial case studies across the Arts showed that teachers were the ones who decided upon the goal or theme of lessons and while these were open ended enough to allow children to locate their experiences, deviation from the set brief was rare. Within drama the use of teacher-in-role, encouraged teachers to maintain control over the general theme while structuring opportunities within this for children to make decisions and co-determine the direction of the drama by their own responses.

During the improvisation that is necessarily part of teacher-in-role, teachers found they took risks alongside the children. They could not always determine where the drama would go, and one teacher–researcher in particular relied intuitively upon the children’s engagement more than her overall lesson goals. As theorised by Prior (2001), the teacher does not own the drama; it is co-constructed and the children are endowed with their own decision-making roles. For example, from the data, when the teacher-in-role as a hungry wolf was searching for the pigs (the children), the pigs had to decide where and how they would hide. If there was not enough room in each of the houses they had built, they had to come up with alternative solutions, which they duly did. It would be inappropriate for the wolf to make suggestions of where to hide so the decision making was very much the children’s. This is not to assume that the teacher can never come out of role or that co-constructing the drama is only achievable from within a role. However, teachers found to sustain a role allowed them to build tension, and establish a fictional social context in “real time” (Bolton, 1998; Bolton & Heathcote, 1999).

Through drama, both teachers and students can be liberated from the conforming rituals and roles of the everyday classroom. By exploring different status positionings, teachers can be naughty, bad, and unco-operative and children can be responsible, resourceful, and philosophical. These roles may have an impact on the broader class culture too. It was observed that in classrooms where drama was a regular occurrence, an atmosphere of playful and crafted spontaneity was generated that, at times, extended beyond the actual drama lessons. This atmosphere appeared to be strongly tied to the forging and negotiation of relationships inside and outside the fictional world.

When the children (in role as pigs) learnt more about the wolf through questioning, they found that she was lonely, and this partly accounted for her aggressive behaviour. The pigs then came up with ways to include the wolf and build a new relationship. The drama enabled children to offer their own fictional solutions to maintain belief in the imaginary world that had been co-created. Holland and O'Connor (2004) added that such co-constructed environments in the Arts allow teachers and children "to experiment and learn from each other" (para 2). According to Prior (2001), the major challenge for the teacher is to let go and share "the created world with their students" (p. 28).

This project found that through drama children were able to step into new roles that not only challenged themselves, but changed the perception and expectations of their teachers. The teacher-researchers commented on how many of the children grew socially in unanticipated ways. They noted some shy children becoming braver, quiet children being more assertive, and disruptive children learning to become more focused and engaged. In addition, boys were witnessed playing the roles of females and *vice versa* without self-consciousness. For example, one rather shy and reticent boy became Jack's mother, in Jack and the Beanstalk. To deepen the quality of his initial rather timid response, the teacher came out of role to model and support his confidence in his role as the mother. After several repetitions focussing on voice and gesture as well as his innate knowledge of mother, the boy in role as mother was able to admonish Jack with a strident voice to, "Go and sell the cow!", shaking his finger emphatically as he did so. Such transformations require both trust in the process of the drama and risk of the public scrutiny of one's constructed identity. The risk of exposure is lessened, however, through the taking of a *fictional* role, giving license for more freedom in identity.

The fictional world of drama allows empathy to develop within a context of safety. Knowing that this is "just a play" actually allows *more* risks to be taken. Bolton (2003) commented on the necessity for the children to be aware that the tasks are fictional. "Tasks are and must be fictional ... at a level there is a 'no penalty' awareness felt by the doer, a sense of freeing the individual, so that they find themselves 'caught off guard' into identifying skills they did not know they had" (p.136).

Metaxis

Nonetheless, to build and sustain belief requires engagement and enactment “as if” this is real. It also underlines metaxis (Boal, 1995), or the drama participants’ dual awareness of the real world and the fictional world. Edmiston (2003) claimed that drama always has a double reality. While the everyday world is “what is” the drama world adds “what if”. The process of drama in the classroom brings together both “what is” and “what if”. This allows a fluidity in shifting in and out of role. “Teacher and students interact in both worlds simultaneously and as necessary they move back and forth between them at will” (p. 233).

O’Toole (1992) identified this essential tension between the real and imagined worlds as inherently productive. Bolton (1992) wrote of the usefulness of this tension in supporting the building of belief. Edmiston (2003) described this duality as part of the “frame” that sets up the fictional reality. The student begins to understand what is at stake in the drama and the way participants are likely to behave in this context. “Teacher and students are not immersed in an imagined world that is separated from the everyday world but rather they interpret their imagined experiences for meaning to connect with their everyday lives and thereby develop more understanding about a facet of life” (p. 222). O’Connor (2006) emphasised that metaxis is the central and most powerful agency for changed understanding through drama. The following two vignettes indicate a variety of possibilities emerging as children bring their knowing to the drama:

- Mrs Glow (a teacher–researcher-in-role) had development plans for the Waitomo caves. She presented as a property developer who suggested that the Waitomo caves should be gutted and turned into a holiday theme park. At first the children were excited by the prospect, but slowly a few dissenting voices emerged about the ethical and environmental impact. For example, when Mrs Glow proposed that the real glow worms would be replaced by fake ones, one child exclaimed: “But you can’t lie to the public!” Another child who was disturbed about the life of the caves suggested: “You might like to build your adventure caves in the volcanic caves of Rangitoto. They aren’t as old as our limestone caves and don’t have life forms already in them.”
- A challenging synchronicity arose with Year 3 children where the teacher–researcher had adopted the role as “the sun” within a retelling of Maui and the sun. A grey day was suddenly illuminated as actual sunlight burst into the classroom at precisely the same moment that the teacher entered in her role as the sun. To resolve the metaxis a child volunteered: “That must be your mother”, and the teacher fluidly adopted the new role cast upon her by the children. Through child initiative, the entire drama shifted into the impromptu use of a phone conversation convention to invite “the mother” to afternoon tea. When the child disappointedly said: “But we don’t know the number!” the teacher continued to build belief through an impromptu: “Oh yes we do, it’s 0800 SUNSHINE.” The drama continued to explore mother-daughter relationships that held rich personal relevance, rather than pursuing the planned power narratives of Maui, his brothers and the sun. The teacher’s action within role deepened the commitment and initiative of this child. However, it was the skilful use of

the phone convention that allowed the child to deepen her ideas and bring the rest of the group along with her.

Hence, the drama findings from the action research phase reveal the important distinction that the use of teacher-in-role deepens children's *commitment*, but skilful and timely use of drama conventions deepens *ideas*. As illustrated, the generalist teacher needs to draw on their intuitive understanding of when children are ready to accept more responsibility within the drama. Bolton (1998) observed how power is shared in the teaching-in-role relationship. "That moment of taking over from the teacher-dramatist can only occur when the pupils are ready to interpret committedly, imaginatively and rationally in the light of what has gone before" (p.186).

This example also confirms the complex interactions that are intuitively managed. While the literature of drama education abounds in terminology of "shifting in and out of role", we consider it is more useful to regard such shifts from a sociological perspective. "Participants do more than take on roles and adopt frames in process drama. As teacher and students interact in both the everyday world and imaginary worlds, they position one another" (Edmiston, 2003, p. 229). Like Edmiston, the power dynamics inherent within teaching interested Gallagher (2000). She described the role of teacher as "the person in the equation who creates the spaces of possibility, who does not find solutions but nurtures the questions, while asking the learners to bring what they already know to bear on what they are learning ... Drama teachers must often 'feel' when to move in and when to move out. The striking of this careful balance is often more easily executed if the teacher is seen to be in role (in the game) with the students" (p. 114). Both writers emphasised that the teacher already inhabits a powerful role as teacher. Our observations around the research question on the influence of teacher-in-role on the development of children's ideas led us to the conclusion that there were powerful educational reasons for teachers to consciously and repeatedly signal the transition from the character role to teacher role. Children's commitment to the drama was consistently enhanced through the lead taken by the teacher entering role to reinforce "this is a game we are playing together". Conversely, when the teacher was clearly out of the character role the metacognitive skills of reflection about the emerging drama, selecting new drama pathways, practising a new skill through teacher or peer modelling, and analysing what we had learned, occurred most easefully when operating as reflective practitioner alongside the children.

With Year 6 children, the teacher-in-role as agricultural advisor was caught in a dilemma of her own making. As Gallagher (2000) also confirmed, "being both inside and outside the drama can be a precarious place for teachers" (p. 114). Our "farm advisor" was to award a cheque for an effective advocacy presentation for methods of farming. As teacher, she was unconvinced by the under-conceived presentations, yet felt trapped into resolving the drama and reaching its expected resolution of presenting her cheque in role. By stopping the drama and raising questions of quality with the children the next day, the children had opportunity to craft a more convincing presentation. The handing over of the cheque with the university-researcher-in-role as "the official agricultural ministry photographer" heightened the sense of audience. Teachers do not, and should not, forget their teacher self.

The university-researcher-observer-role had, up until then, been politely ignored for the duration of the drama unit. Taking a fictional role as the official photographer opened up further dialogues with the children in role as farmers. They felt able to interact and interrogate the presence of the university-researcher within the fictional context and relationships felt less, not more, contrived. The photographer now had a reason to exist within the drama world and again the tension of metaxis was creatively resolved. In such cases, it is appropriate that video research carried out within fictional drama contexts should make use of the opportunities for university-researcher-in-role to elicit impromptu dialogue with participants rather than solely relying on filming and post-event interviews from an objective observer stance.

There are implications of teacher-in-role for the other art forms of dance, music, and visual art. When the teacher is in role, she becomes part of the community of inquiry with her students. This “being with” was less explicit in the other art forms, although it is mentioned earlier in visual art. The previous dance example also goes some way towards engagement in the art form with children, when the teacher–researcher used nonverbal feedback and feedforward with her class. Nonetheless, there is further potential in exploring the implications of joint inquiry through the Arts, where the teacher and children collaborate, or where children see their teacher engaged in Arts thinking and activity alongside them.

3b. Project findings: strategic and practice values

The following sections outline the strategic and practice values that are furthered by this project. The findings contribute to: understanding teaching and learning processes; reducing inequalities; and exploring future possibilities (principle one), plus: the practice values of recognising rituals of practice; questioning pedagogical assumptions; and providing innovative alternatives that enhance learning and teaching. The findings also contribute to theorising learning in and through the Arts.

Development of ideas

Believe those who are seeking the truth; doubt those who find it.

Andre Gide

The present Arts curriculum includes the importance of development of ideas and it is this aspect that the project intended to primarily focus on. However, it was not long before the project team realised that the notion of idea development was not well understood and nor was it very evident in Arts programmes. The initial case studies found that little in the way of idea *development* was evident in classrooms and that idea development as a concept is not clearly defined or explained by the curriculum. It is, therefore, not surprising that idea development was difficult to identify, let alone enhance. It seems that a process or series of processes need to be identified that enable development of ideas and make such development both distinguishable and accessible. The same issue was raised by Craft (2005) in relation to imaginative activity and the evaluation of children's creativity. Development of ideas (as mentioned earlier under *Rituals of practice*) infers movement or growth towards something better. In other words, there is a qualitative improvement. Children are more likely to grow their ideas if they know what that feels, looks, moves, and sounds like in practice. And similarly, teachers are more likely to foster such development if they too are familiar with the context and processes that enhance such development.

Burnard, Craft, Cremin, Duffy, Hanson, Keene, Haynes, and Burns (2006) provided a model of creative teaching and learning that they believe fosters the development of what has been termed "possibility thinking". This possibility thinking Craft (2005) argued, drives creativity in different ways and encompasses both problem finding and problem solving. As such, possibility thinking incorporates the playing with ideas that is necessary in development. The model that Burnard et al. (2006) devised was based on empirical evidence gathered from early years classrooms. They concluded that possibility thinking is fostered when teaching and learning is considered as integrated within a context that encourages: the posing of questions; play; immersion; innovation;

risk taking; being imaginative; and self-determination. Arguably, the same enabling context fosters development of ideas, given that possibility thinking has similarities with idea consideration, testing and refinement. Our project similarly found that play, immersion, innovation, and risk taking were important features in children's art making. There was also evidence of children asking questions of themselves and others, and making decisions based on their experiences with both the art resource they were working with and the parameters of the narrative they constructed. Interestingly, the greatest risk taking was more likely to take place on the "margins" of children's work, both literally and figuratively. Moreover, self-determination was sometimes thwarted by the group children were working in, at least in drama, dance, and music. And in visual art, self-determination was sometimes stymied by the children's need for particular skills that were not always taught when needed. This "just-in-time" teaching is a perennial challenge for any teacher with a class of 30 or more children. However, such an assumption suggests that the teacher is the only expert in the room capable of providing such scaffolding, and that is not the case when peers are encouraged to share their skills with each other within a community of learning. This was very evident in two classrooms in this project during visual art and during dance. Such classroom cultures fostered the values of learning together, sharing ideas, and seeking improvement.

The enabling context, therefore, for the development of ideas would include peers as co-teachers and co-learners. It could include outside "experts" and access to suitable resources. The context would also be determined by the philosophy and culture of the school as mentioned earlier. To enhance development of ideas, the teaching-learning nexus needs to be responsive to multiple opportunities to explore and refine and rework ideas, towards qualitative improvement. This means that less attention is given to completion of tasks and more attention is given to striving within the process of art making. If we are not careful and cognisant we perpetuate a culture in schools that runs counter to development of ideas, intellectual struggle, aesthetic awareness and heightened perception, let alone deep absorption in worthwhile learning. And dumbing down can too easily occur when completion of activities takes "priority over engaging in intellectual struggle" (Sewell, 2006, p. 145).

Idea development inevitably is a time consuming process. The parameters are fluid and the outcomes unknown at the outset. It requires exploration with the art medium, be it body, sound, image, or enactment. It requires a sensitivity to what is felt, heard, seen, and expressed so that qualitative improvements can be gauged. And if children are working in groups (which is often the case in primary classrooms), they also need time to negotiate the ideas of the group. This adds a whole new layer of complexity and also requires skill in collaboration, a theme that has already been commented upon.

Relationship to models of creative process

Midway in the journey I found myself in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost.

Dante, Divine Comedy

The manner in which the generation of Arts ideas have been historically constructed within the Arts curriculum deserves some mention, given the simultaneous variety of theoretical positions alluded to by generalist teachers. The expressivist paradigm informing Arts curriculum internationally held sway unchallenged in New Zealand primary education from the 1950s until the mid-1980s, and the assumptions privileged self-expressive functions for art in school contexts (Efland, 2004; Price, 2006). As described by Fraser (2004), this alignment of the Arts to creativity drew on psychologised and domain generalised notions of creativity emphasising persons, process, and products (Mednick, 1962; Stein, 1962; Wallas, 1926). In subsequent cognitive and sociocultural models (Amabile, 1983; Gardner, 1983, 1993; Osborn, 1963; Sternberg, 1988; Torrance, 1984), expressive assumptions continued to be challenged or submerged. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) argued for closer examination of the conditions under which creativity was more likely to flourish and, alongside Davis and Rimm (1998), focused on generalisable personality traits.

Visual Arts curriculum reforms since 1989 have tended to emphasise an expanded view of *artists' ways of working* that de-emphasised a modernist concern with genius, novelty, and originality. An expressive function for art in primary programmes continued to be marginalised in policy, but appears still evident in teachers' practice. Continuing the policy trend, the Arts curriculum (2000) constructed a common strand of "developing ideas" for all Arts disciplines. Unpacking this strand to "*a process* for developing ideas" evolved a trans-discipline heuristic for idea development generated by the Waikato Arts Professional Development Team 2000–2003 (see Price, 2002). This model was found to be useful for generalist practitioners in Arts education, both preservice and inservice.

Our research project builds on this examination of Arts and creativity praxis. The model outlined below (Price, 2002) provided an early frame for teacher–researcher discussion and has subsequently been shared by some teacher–researchers within their respective schools. This dynamic model attempts to avoid the generalised and somewhat linear process models of early creativity theorists that resulted in generalised expectations from individuals' creative experiences (Plucker, 2005). Music educators offered Balkin's (1990) cyclic "re" factor of repeated cycles of re-view and re-visiting, and Swanwick and Tillman's (1986) map of a spiralling hierarchy of exploration through material, expression, form, and value. The poets amongst us dimly remembered a preface to an early anthology of Robert Frost's poems, where he succinctly described the emergent life of a poem thus:

It begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life – not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion. (Frost, 1939, p. iv)

This mix of metaphor, maps, models, and theory led to our diagrammatic representation that subtly alludes to Arts idea formation being an untidy journey, individual, or group that starts with “?”: curiosity and question supported in a pre-requisite context of trust and safety and, one hopes, delight. This disturbance in a pond’s surface leads to ripples of exploration and reflection.

Figure 12 **Early phase of idea development**



The maze-like map that unfolds, reminds participants that aspects of revisiting and shifts of direction are expected and the artwork will transform accordingly. However, as Frost reminds us, creative ideas are also influenced by “the first line laid down” (Frost, 1939, p. iv).

As the idea travels outwards, the focus on the initial impulse shifts to the focus on interaction with the medium, and then to increasingly conscious use of sociocultural conventions and awareness of potential audiences. Revisiting and clarification is of course linked to “idea” retrieval and in group processes in the performing arts, emergent auditory, and kinaesthetic memory may limit the ability of younger children to repeat and refine an artwork in progress. Where memory is challenged, cycles of repeated improvisatory play appear more likely. Development depends on the memory recall of fleeting, temporal music ideas—being able to repeat what they have done. However, it is problematic, given the temporal nature of music; it is here now, then gone. Kratus (1989) maintained it is an age related ability to fully recall music in this way .In fact, it may not be until perhaps 8 to 9 years of age that children are able to sequence ideas together, recall, and deliberately refine them.

Figure 13 **Later phases of idea development**



In an iterative model, the opportunity to reflect as the maker inside the process can be taken at any time. As Freedman and Stuhr (2004) argued: “Creative production and critical reflection are not separate in art; they are dualistic and mutually dependent. Creative production is inherently

critical, and critical reflection is inherently creative. When we [attend to] an image or artefact we create it in the sense that we give it meaning” (p. 825). The opportunity to reflect as audience, where creative product is interpreted anew, is signalled diagrammatically by the pause of a separated full stop where artistic intention is no longer a dominant guiding criteria for constructing interpretation (Price, 2002).

Figure 14 **Heuristic for a creative process**



A postscript on being lost inside the creative process

Rules break like a thermometer,
quicksilver spills across the charted systems,
we're out in a country that has no language
no laws...
whatever we do together is pure invention
the maps they gave us were out of date.

Adrienne Rich

Figure 15 **Losing one's way in a creative process**



The commonly met phase of chaos and messy incoherence is an aspect of creative endeavour that is challenging to generate in a static diagram. It corresponds to Wallas' (1926) well known incubation phase. Physical analogies with muddying or rippling water over the projected diagram may give some feel for this disorientating loss of "the map".

This temporary state of engaged confusion is where sympathetic time frames and support through a mentor may defer premature closure and assist the students' persistence and belief in their creative journey. Anticipating that both incoherence and challenge to quick resolution are part of the creative process supports the persistence and resilience of both learners and teachers. They may with Frost (1939), share the recognition that the final resolution and coherence are "but a *momentary* stay against confusion" (emphasis in original, p. iv). Holland and O'Connor (2004) similarly argued that learning in the Arts resembles structured chaos, and that reflection occurs throughout the process. However, we add the importance of tolerating the confusion and ambiguity that typifies the messiness of idea development.

The importance of play

The early stages of idea formation within this model emphasise the need for exploration and play in assisting the development of a "first response". There is an emphasis in the creativity literature on the importance of exploratory play and combinatory play that historically was well valued in Arts programmes of the last century. A number of music researchers (Burnard, 2000; Dogani, 2004; Glover, 2001; Swanwick & Tillman, 1986) have continued to claim that improvisatory play is central to idea generation. They promote playful immersion as the norm in children's intuitive response to music making. In Vygotsky's (1986) terms, play allows the child to separate words from objects and actions from meanings. Through play, objects and actions are freed from their traditional meanings and associations and this fluidity creates the opportunity for new meaning and association to arise. Matthews (2004) noted that play "allows hybrid families of thoughts and ideas to be formed. It allows the far reaching connections to be made among different seeming phenomena, which allow creative, autonomous thought to develop" (p. 285). Craft (2000) presented an extensive collection of theorists on play as it pertains to creativity in the primary classroom. Notable is Bruce's (1994) numerous features of "free-flow play", where play is "an active process without a product, intrinsically motivated, exerts no external pressure to conform to rules, uses first hand experiences, is sustained, uses previous developed technical prowess and acts as an integrating mechanism enabling the bringing together of everything which we know, learn, feel and understand" (Bruce, cited in Craft, 2000, p. 46). Our observations concur that important discoveries were made by children during less structured time that sometimes were integrated into later Arts products.

Across all Arts disciplines it was felt by teacher- and university-researchers alike that play in Arts learning appears to be given less time and emphasis in their programmes. More attention is given to directed skill acquisition with measurable intentions and often adult-defined criteria for success. A dislocated emphasis on skills and a mechanistic approach to outcomes tends to drive learning and fix meaning making when ambiguity and nuance may be the subtler and more Arts sympathetic option. We reiterate Eisner's (1972, 1994, 2000, 2002, 2004) oft repeated advice that *the arts traffic in subtleties* and, therefore, need open ended situations that value expressive and often *unexpected* outcomes. Not being able to predetermine outcomes does not mean a loss of quality. If idea development in the Arts is linked not to teacher intentions, but to the early student or group intention, then shifts in ideas can be reviewed and evaluated against the journey from this early intention. Witkin's (1974) concept of "holding form" (p. 180) was an attempt to provide Arts teachers and learners with a visual/verbal construct for early intentions that temporarily commit the learner's intention to tangible scrutiny for both the learner and teacher. As explored later in this report under the role of narrative, student intention can be broader than narrative subject matter and includes gesture, media exploration, composition, and aesthetic considerations embedded in each arts discipline. Thus, observing, reflecting (and possibly documenting) on the process of shifting and changing ideas becomes the foundation of formative interactions that value the thinking within a creative process.

The research findings also indicate that children and teachers did not always have a clear idea of how children might grow ideas past the initial idea generation stage. Indeed, the literature would point to a gap in terms of any clear heuristic on how one might strategise and teach Arts idea development. This problem may be exacerbated by the fact that development and refinement in the Arts disciplines requires discipline specific knowledge in order to make the connections and realise the possibilities presented. For many generalist teachers, such knowledge is outside their experience and indeed their required brief. To be useful to generalist teachers the discourse on play needs to be illustrated and contextualised through discipline specific knowledge. The challenge is also to reframe a generalist concern for the discourse of play away from past associations restricted to creative expression for psychological health and expand into cognitive and postmodern frames which position playful exploration as emancipatory thinking. There is also a need to embed early creative arts making in rich sonic, visual, and kinaesthetic exploratory experiences. This entire area is one for future investigation.

Uniqueness and commonalities

Each Arts discipline is unique in terms of its structure, form, language, and epistemology and some findings are specific to an individual discipline. Yet, we have also discovered a raft of commonalities that pertain across each Arts discipline that force us to consider issues in the Arts, not just issues in music, or dance, or drama, or visual art. For the specialists particularly, the degree of commonality has been quite a revelation. While this project is ambitious in scope (investigating drama, dance music, and visual art), there is also value in considering all four Arts,

given the overlaps and points of congruence we found. We still have pertinent “local narratives” of practice that pertain to each discipline and convey the uniqueness of that discipline. In effect, the findings suggest a “both-and” conceptual model where distinctiveness is recognised alongside points of commonality.

The other useful aspect of this that has emerged is the ways in which findings in one art form throw up issues in another. The ability to reconceptualise how something might be done is made easier when comparisons and contrasts with other disciplines are made. This has been helpful for surprising ourselves in our familiar landscapes of practice (McWilliam, 2004); a perennial challenge for classroom-based research. The university-researchers and consultants bring disciplinary expertise from each of the art forms and this dialogue *across* subject specialities has been a strength of the project. Moreover, the teacher–researchers bring their depth of knowledge about their pedagogical content and the children they teach. All of these strengths serve to deepen our understanding of what is possible in the teaching and learning of the Arts.

However, comparing and contrasting learning in the different Arts disciplines led to challenges for the specialists in the project team who generally held to the distinctiveness of their various Arts forms. The process of data gathering across disciplines and team analysis forced them, though, to reconsider defensive assumptions that each art form is completely separate. They discovered many commonalities, as well as differences, between learning in drama, dance, music, and visual art. The following outlines what the project team found to be common in teaching and learning across all four Arts disciplines. Some of these points have already been discussed in earlier sections. A few issues will be elaborated in the sections to follow.

An inflexible emphasis on and prescriptive, mechanistic adherence to, practical knowledge and skills (PK) constrains children’s idea development. An atomised focus on skills ignores broader holistic learning goals that reflect Arts idea development. However, practical knowledge is both essential and easier to identify, define, and teach—it is little wonder, then, that pedagogy tends to emphasise PK. Development of ideas (DI) is an inchoate concept that leaves teachers with little guidance in terms of what the implications are for teaching and learning. It is not clearly defined in the curriculum or in the literature, so it is not surprising, therefore, that teachers are unsure about fostering DI.

Exploratory play seems to be marginalised and sometimes absent. This has implications for children’s learning as playing with ideas and bodily play contributes to how children make sense of their world and consider possibilities (Craft, 2000). While play does not necessarily conflate with creativity, fantasy, social play, and open-ended exploration can enhance children’s repertoire of responses “ultimately towards greater creativity” (Craft, 2000, p. 52). Children need multiple opportunities to play, revisit, repeat, refine, and develop ideas in the Arts. However, this is not to deny that the spontaneous first response may also be the “best response”. Children tend to take independent creative risks in situations where the outcome is low stakes such as the backgrounds and margins of their art work. Playfulness and invention is enhanced when they don’t have to “get

it right”. The requirement to perform/share often leads to premature cessation and the closing down of alternative possibilities. However, performance can increase focus.

There is little evidence to show awareness of the fact that children’s *relationship* with the media they are working in has mutually reciprocal effects, and there is much potential for further research in this area. This relates to the importance of play as well; there is value in prolonging the activity inside the medium to become familiar with its potential and more responsive to it; to develop an aesthetic relationship that is dynamic and generative. This also has implications for becoming more fluent in thinking in and through the Arts.

Formative feedback and feedforward from peers *and* the teacher appears to be more influential on children’s work than summative, especially when there are opportunities to respond to and build on that feedback. Teachers need to strike a delicate balance between building confidence and setting new challenges for children, and modelling from teachers *and* peers helps scaffold children’s learning.

Finding out what children bring to the Arts helps teachers to build on their knowledge, experiences, and values. The interviews teachers undertook with children revealed many things they were unaware of. They also commented on the value of observing their children working within an art medium and the changes that this precipitated. The dynamic nature of learning is highlighted when engaged in art forms that are temporal and fleeting. Moreover, opportunities for children to view themselves or their work alongside opportunities to be immersed in “doing” are both useful for extending learning.

Thinking in the Arts is embodied knowledge and highly cognitive, but anecdotally, does not seem to be well valued or identified as such by education policy or the wider community of professionals and parents. As with any collaborative research project, the school culture and, in particular, the attitude and philosophy of the principal has a large influence on how, in this case the Arts, are valued.

Finally, each Arts form is commonly taught in relationship to a narrative or story. However, these narratives need to be considered as *points of departure* rather than fixed boundaries. It is this important issue in teaching and learning that is explored next.

The role of narrative

This morning
The sun broke
my window
and came in laughing

Javier Galvez

Narrative thinking is described as creating stories in order to make events, actions, thoughts, and feelings meaningful (Bruner, 1996). Bruner argued that we are predisposed to narrative thinking and that this is an innate aspect of our intelligence. In creating stories, it is claimed that people can make sense of their experience, impose structure on their thoughts, explain ideas and concepts, and communicate to others. Bruner suggested that the widespread use of narrative indicates that we are preadapted to narrative ways of understanding ideas, concepts, and feelings. Moreover, Clandinin and Connelly (2000), in their influential work on qualitative research, posited that we story our lives, making sense of our experiences through narrative. Through the telling of stories we make opportunities for affirming and modifying experiences, as well as creating new narratives.

For all the Arts, the dominance of narrative was evident and this has implications for both children making decisions and their teachers' planning for children's Arts experiences. The use of a personal narrative has importance for children's Arts focus, because it obviously holds great personal relevance. Generalist teachers in the primary school with strong literacy goals may also find compelling reasons to unconsciously position the Arts as carriers of narrative. The Arts can speak closely to children's lived experiences: the picture that illustrates a biographical story; the dance that shows a moment at school camp; and the musical composition that remembers the sounds we heard on a field trip. This multi-sensory enrichment of memory is commendable. But the Arts are more than story; they attempt to address *qualities* of experience not just describe or interpret experience in a prescribed sequence.

Within the study we noted that the impact of story is particularly potent, across the Arts, in both enabling *and* restricting the development of sequence and in refining the quality of children's Arts ideas. The initial case study data showed that oral and written narratives, brainstorming around personal experiences, poems, and stories were used frequently as motivational triggers and significantly effected idea development. While this *can* give structure to ideas and confidence to those more diffident to create, it can also inhibit idea generation and development if it is played out as literal translation only. For instance, in music and dance, children translated the theme *literally* into sound or movement sequences. It was common to see this structure cemented from initial, first response with little development or deviation from the early literal focus. Witkin (1974) used the term "holding form" (p. 180) for those first tentative descriptions in order to encapsulate the seed of an idea that guides further development. Primary age children appeared to settle on early sequence structuring devices based on the narrative they formed or sometimes the organising framework they were provided with by the teacher. Regardless of the source of the ideas, the children tended not to deviate from early choices regarding structure. Indeed, later refinements, if any, tended to be an embellishment of detail within an existing structure. Structural devices and organisational principles were rarely changed or challenged.

Where children gave reasons for any qualitative changes made to their ideas in progress, these also appeared to be based on their guiding personal narrative. There is arguably a need for teachers to take creative work past the obvious, clichéd naturalistic descriptive responses, to allow for a more open-ended imaginative and possibly abstracted response, particularly in music and

dance. Interventions that enable children to break from, vary, and extend their work structurally, are also indicated when children are mature enough for such development. A Year 6 class doing visual art explored their plans for their “window on my world” painting through arranging three-toned collage shapes. Collage allowed for changes of mind and an exploratory approach to composition focusing thinking on the major shapes and their tonal, scale, and spatial relationships. Alternative solutions were digitally recorded for their idea journal before any gluing down.

When further considering the impact of story, there are historical and systemic differences between the five traditional art forms: dance, drama, music, visual art, and literature. In literature, “text” is seen as a coherent identifiable unit of spoken, written, or visual information. “Coherence” is a qualitative term and achieved through attending to structure, context, and considerations of the conventions associated with function. In the New Zealand English curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1994), emphasis is given to literature as both expressive and transactional genres of writing, both needing practice and instruction. This is deemed to include the following examples in the written context: narrative, biography, personal letter, poems, journals, reports, instructions, persuasive essays, business letter, and in the oral context: conversation, prayer, formal speeches, debates, and so forth.

Just as there are functions that language pursues other than narrative, so too the Arts pursue other functions. In addition to the Arts function for telling stories, the *New Zealand Art Education Syllabus* (Ministry of Education, 1989) listed: symbolising beliefs; comment on society; express identity; graphic communication; explore natural or built environments, real or imagined; design shelters or objects for everyday use; respond to ceremony or ritual with regalia and ornament; react to existing artworks and ideas arising from working directly with materials and their qualities. The opportunities for these diverse functions still needs to be considered as potentially part of a primary school Arts programme.

Eisner (1972) posited a typology of creativity that includes aesthetic organisation where a high degree of coherence is exhibited across an artwork. The sense of “rightness of fit” of the parts to the whole requires both an awareness of detail and the whole gestalt. Individual shapes are seen as belonging to a context and emerging relationships are given attention as artworks are produced. For example, in dance, children could view or produce a dance as a: prayer, argument, conversation, or welcome. This would certainly change its *quality*. The requirement for a fresh cohesion would need to be embedded in the nature of dance. Chosen choreographic sequences would have to consider repetition, emphasis, and *coherence* in a different way to written language. However, these concerns for cohesion are still governed by attention to *structure, context, and conventions within a prescribed function*. The form that it takes, however, is determined by dance, not spoken or written language.

There are parallels here with the other Arts. For visual arts in the primary school, the use of story frequently means an unconscious choice is made to operate within a narrative function for art. This may be an accessible entry point for novices to connect to an imitative and narrative function for the Arts. For narrative art, the story is stopped within both time and space. It is asynchronous

and separated from the “world” by a frame .Because of the momentary nature of a single image, children are forced to choose objects framed as nouns: Which moment? Where?, When?, Who? A single framed action, like a still in a movie, is constructed and action is frozen as a verb: Doing what?, and adverbial qualifiers ask: How is that action being performed? What shapes is that making? All of these choices inform children’s attempts to re-present their experience, to bring a past significant memory into an unchanging, eternal, present image. Children may approach the task informed by their experience of photographic imagery and, thus, enlist an emphasis on a mimetic function for art. This binds them into solving visual problems informed by *the tyranny of the real* and suppresses expressive, symbolic, associative, and abstract concerns. Teachers asking a child to “Tell me about your picture” subtly position the child to provide a story. We *tell* stories. Conversely, asking “What choices are you making at the moment?” is less determining. “How might I show my story more effectively?” shifts the focus onto materials, techniques, and devices and away from the literal memory and reproduction.

During the study, children were observed to independently construct story boards/cartoons of their own narrative, thus, appealing to known popular imagery styles not mandated by the task. They sometimes placed individual time sectors simultaneously within the same image reminiscent of cartoons or animation, or explored personal often rebellious themes, outside the classroom task. As such, the Arts fulfilled a function as a site of resistance as well as conformity. Irony and humour, playful variation, appeared within these spontaneous works of Year 4 children below.

Figure 16 **Year 4 home drawings from Frankton School**

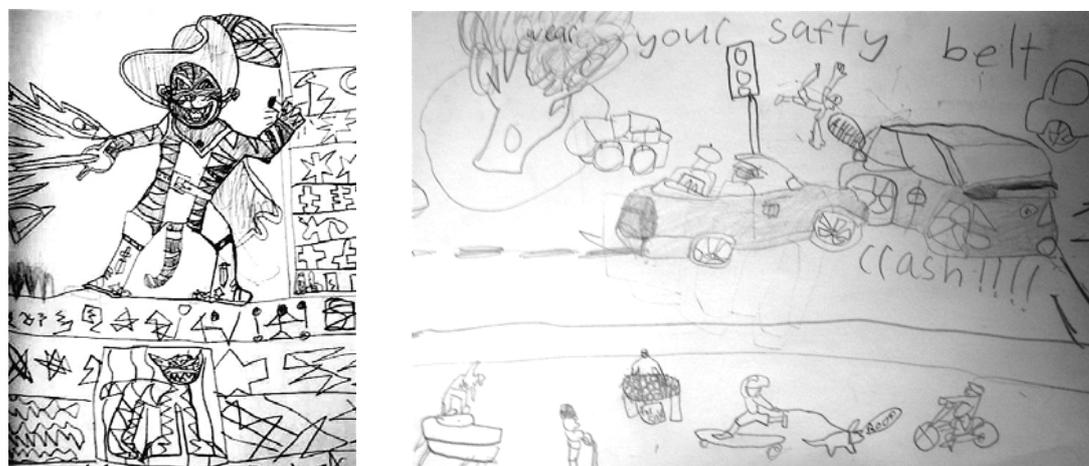
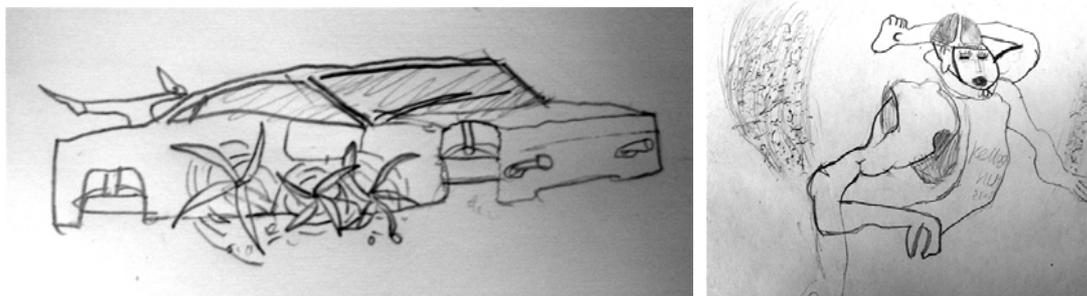
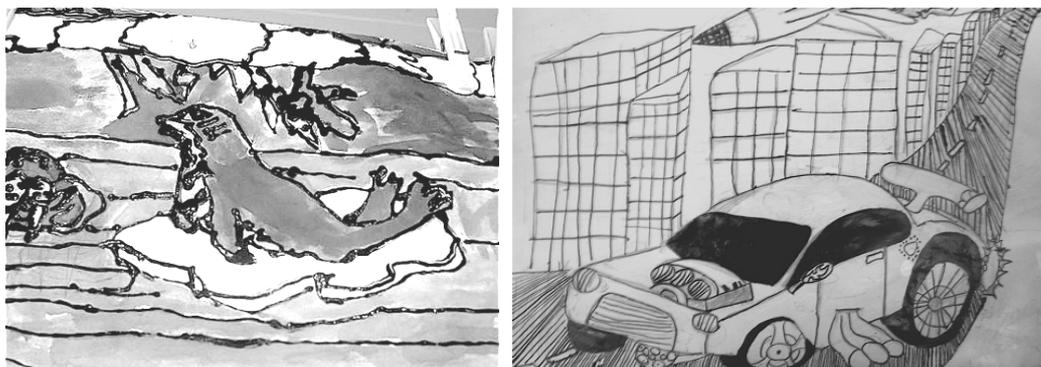


Figure 17 **Contrasting invented and observed drawings from Year 4 students**



Some of the motifs that first appeared in these more casual drawings reappeared in more finished examples. John's (Year 4) zigzag patterning re-emerges as lightening motifs. Hot rods are evolved and transformed in place and context. Careful early pencil exploration of the texture of flying sand re-emerged as exploration of texture using layered paint surfaces.

Figure 18 **Year 4 works completed in classroom context**



For drama, the place of narrative is clearly embedded through the co-construction of a shared narrative in process drama or the use of an existing script. Process drama has evolved some elegant ways to move beyond a script and draw on a child's innate social knowing and their use of drama conventions to escape the literal bounds of a known plot into challenging and engaging imaginative explorations. O'Connor (2006) pointed out that in process drama, the narrative that evolves is non-linear. "Classroom drama is episodic and engages in non-linear narrative. This distinguishes it from single or brief improvisation exercises. The non-linear narrative allows other kinds of explorations of narrative and its meaning[s]" (p. 65). He later commented that the use of non-linear narratives "provide opportunities for reflection both in and out of role" (p. 67). Such examples as the elaborate advice of Mrs Pig farewelling her children as they leave home, or the pigs buying the materials for their houses, are extensions to the known story. Dealing with the entrepreneurial Mrs Glow, and her development plans for the Waitomo caves, exercised a similar lateral, social, and ethical twist to an otherwise factual study for Year 6 children.

For music and dance, because story is continuous it has the capacity to provide *an accessible and dominant structure* for children to arrange their actions within both time and space. However, this

same narrative intent can effectively reduce dance to *literal* mime and music to *literal* sound effects. The story appears to get in the road of further development. Tertiary Arts educators sometimes invite their students “to lose the *plot*”. The plot has the capacity to interfere with the subsequent development and refinement of their ideas. The *quality* of movement, or *quality* of sound choices, are not directly addressed by focusing solely on a story sequence. To address quality the focus of the maker must shift from, “what is my guiding story?” to, “how might I tell my story more effectively?” Or alternatively become fully absorbed in the quality of the nonverbal experience rather than maintaining the verbal narrative. The “hanging onto story” is a quest for retaining meaning that is ultimately verbally mediated.

The absorption in nonverbal qualities is no less meaningful, but is a multilayered cohesive device that resists verbal translation. Indeed, one could claim alongside Langer (1953) that this cohesion is more closely allied to the subtlety of Arts experiences than a linear narrative. With older children, this shift into noticing abstract qualities may be achieved through conscious attention to examining modernist elements and principles, and an emergent awareness of cultural conventions.

With younger children, some less abstract, alternative strategies may be employed to help focus attention away from the story and onto the power of telling it. In the performing Arts in particular, consideration must be given to the problems of repetition and returning to the same focus for several occasions:

- If a story is to be refined in the telling, it must be capable of repetition and refinement.
- If the children’s auditory or kinaesthetic memory (individual or group) is not sufficiently developed, then accurate repetition may only be possible for short, recently performed phrases.
- The study suggests other factors might also be implicated in the ease of motif retrieval for novices, that is, in music: use of rhythmic pattern, number of repetitions. And in dance, whether the movements happen: in a fixed place, while travelling, or use of more complex muscular groups transversely across the body rather than laterally.

Seeking to move beyond the literal to a more metaphorically framed response, the recognition of simultaneous layered ambiguities and metaphor, proves challenging for novice learners and generalist teachers in the Arts. Theory concerning the development of a consciousness around metaphor usage suggests that at least the life experience of mid-level primary aged children may be necessary. Many have argued that understanding metaphor requires sophisticated metalinguistic skills “that do not develop until late childhood” (Winner, 1997, p. 35). Studies in the 1960s and 1970s appear to confirm that metaphor comprehension is a skill that does not emerge until middle or late childhood (that is, after age 8 or 9). These studies support the hypothesis: “... that for children the major stumbling block to understanding is the task of inferring what is meant” (Winner, 1997, p. 35).

Children have greater relative difficulty with nonsensory-based, rather than sensory-based metaphors, as children know more about physical than relational attributes of things. “Knowledge of relational aspects of objects can only be acquired through experience; physical aspects are

known directly through the senses” (Winner, 1997, p. 60). This has implications for learning in the Arts through sensory engagement with the art media and if more abstract rather than literal interpretations are aimed for, then children need experiences that engage them in this qualitative difference. Children as young as 5 or 6 can apply a term like “cold” to people (a form of metaphor making) but only in the physical sense of the term. “Hence, cold people were people who were not warmly dressed; hard people had firm muscles. Not until between the ages of 7 and 10 were children able to understand the psychological meaning of such terms” (p. 39). At age eight children begin to offer genuine metaphoric interpretations, realising that a guard described as “hard” is someone who is mean.

However, the problem with the research to date, according to Winner (1997), is that too often children are asked to make sense of metaphors out of context (a criticism also made of Piaget’s classic points-of-view task). It is also difficult to measure children’s metalinguistic abilities as “children understand metaphors before they can successfully explain their understanding” (p. 45). She also argued that the information processing that children require in metaphor comprehension is very demanding, especially when the context is unpredictable. When the metaphor extends into nonverbal associations “understanding” is necessarily made more complex. The shift is from narration as a goal to a conscious exploration of connotation rather than description.

If appealing to story is not the only way for reaching coherence in artworks, how is a new coherence arrived at, received, and valued? How do teachers scaffold literal understanding to metaphorical understandings?

Pursuing creative exploration of alternative sequencing structures requires that the literal hold of the story’s sequence must be temporarily broken, through setting aside *getting to the end of the story* as a goal. The challenge is to direct attention away from the guiding power of story to an exploration of the abstract qualities of movement or sound sequences. The power of the story can be disrupted through *fragmentation* to allow new guiding principles and new criteria to generate sequence and aptly inform the quality of their response.

The search for new decisions has two decisive focal points, discovering an apt sequence (structure) and the pursuit of meaning through allusion rather than description. To achieve new sequences, several disruptive strategies through fragmentation emerged from observing the teachers’ practice and informed by the wider literature review:

- See the focus topic generate a story *moment* as a *point of departure* rather than an overarching binding narrative. For example, develop an alternative background that deliberately contrasts with a starting point focus, require a second solution to an arrangement before moving on, deliberately transform known sequences into a new order.
- Reduce the story line to a series of “frames” (film analogy, drama’s freeze frame). Select and refine the frame that has the most tension/contrast, rhythmic, or shape potential.
- Break up the narrative into a list of key words according to grammatical function (nouns—establish character and place; verbs—provide actions, movements; adverbs—provide the

quality of movement or sound). Note that sequence is now a free floating variable released from the bondage of story.

- Focus exclusively on experimenting with an element for its own sake, that is, rhythmic pattern, energy, levels, layers ...
- Apply a culturally acquired structural device or convention, such as canon, overlapping to give illusory depth, greater detail in foregrounds ...

Setting aside illusion as a goal and pursuing allusion is also a strategy for the creative exploration of quality:

- use of associative memory rather than literal memory. For example, “What does this remind me of?”
- exploration and incorporation of resulting metaphors
- use of connotation and suggestion
- random juxtaposition of contrasting ideas
- attempting to alternately follow two competing stories, two melodic/movement motifs, two lead dancers, two directions, two layers
- attending to less literal adult artworks may lead to acceptance of layered ambiguity as an indicator of imagery richness.

In summary, a narrative intent both supports and constrains the emergence of artworks. Thus, to enhance the quality of learning in and through the Arts there needs to be consideration of two avenues of refinement: both a deepened technical response to how a narrative might be told more effectively, and also, the seeking of a wider repertoire of approaches than narrative when pursuing development of ideas in the Arts.

Advocacy in the Arts

Of particular note is the fact that this project takes as a given the value of the Arts and, therefore, does not need to advocate for the Arts nor show critics how vital the Arts are for aesthetic awareness, multiple perspectives, productive surprise, nonverbal ways of knowing and expressing, and personal transformation through immersion in an art form (see e.g., Eisner, 2000). Moreover, another liberating aspect of this project is that the co-researchers were able to focus closely on what happened during teaching and learning in the Arts. This occurred without needing to justify the ways in which the Arts can support literacy and other subject areas of the curriculum. This justification is often regarded as necessary in art education research (see for example findings reported in ACER, 2004; Alton-Lee, 2003; Deasy, 2002; Ewing, 2004; Griffiths, Berry, Holt, Naylor, & Weekes, 2006; Harland, Kinder, Lord, Stott, Schagen, Haynes, Cusworth, White, & Paola, 2000; McMaster, 1998). Arts researchers are often beholden to show the relationship between art and other things deemed beneficial, such as improved achievement in literacy, improved attendance at school, higher self-esteem, retention of minority students, and improved attitudes to school generally. While these are noble outcomes and influences, there is a

tendency for Arts research to show how it improves the “other”, be it attendance or literacy levels. In this project, the Arts are not the bridesmaids for any other discipline or goal, they are respected for their unique and original forms. The widespread marginalisation of the Arts and the concomitant emphasis on numeracy and literacy in many countries is the norm, so it is with considerable appreciation, therefore, that the co-researchers had the scope, over two years in eight schools, to research Art for Arts’ sake.

While this project has not had to advocate for the value of the Arts, the teacher–researchers all commented on the importance of this project for highlighting the value of the Arts. As teachers who are keen on the Arts, they have all experienced marginalisation, even in the more supportive schools. This marginalisation is exacerbated by current education policy which gives clear priority to numeracy and literacy, ICT, and, more recently, physical education. Those teachers who are passionate about the Arts have felt discouraged and largely invisible in the debate about what counts as epistemology. This project has put a spotlight centrally on learning and teaching in the Arts—not just on concerts, displays and performances—but on the processes of learning that occur in the Arts. This focus on children’s learning is reinforced by O’Connor (2006) who argued: “The arts, the process by which humanity has always struggled to define itself, to reflect on who we are and who we might become must be seen as central in any process that endeavours to find a space for young people to have their voice heard” (p. 3).

The teacher–researchers expressed how encouraged they felt to share with colleagues, and their wider school community research that shows what children are learning in the Arts. Teachers can now advocate from an informed position grounded in empirical evidence; evidence which Eisner (2002) reminded us has been sorely lacking. Moreover, the university-researchers and consultants have experienced affirmation of their respective discipline areas from each other, and from generalist teachers, so that their isolation as lecturers in one field has been considerably lessened.

There are problems, however, with advocacy as it can make for biased research and over-blown claims. This issue is discussed further in the section later on partnership between co-researchers.

Relational pedagogy

Much has been written in recent years about the centrality of relationships in classrooms, and many current theories on learning and development (especially those influenced by Vygotsky, 1978) agree that children learn in social, relational contexts. If we are to continue to assert that the Arts should tap the personal and emotional world of children (Richardson, 1988), and that children “of necessity, develop from both the inside out and the outside in” (Eisner, 2002, p. 93), then the teacher’s role is a particularly finely tuned one in order to build the trust necessary for children to risk the exposure, expression, and depth of emotional engagement that is manifest in a rich Art experience. The relationship between teacher and child, while important in all subjects (Bishop, 2005; Buber, 1970; Erricker, Erricker, Ota, Sullivan, & Fletcher, 1997; Noddings, 2003),

is emphasised in the Arts where the personal, emotional, and psychological world of the child is exposed and, ideally, enhanced. Therefore, the nature of that relationship bears close scrutiny.

This project has examined a number of aspects of the teacher-child relationship. It has highlighted the collaborative potential of teacher-in-role, identifying the opportunities for co-construction of learning, as well as the need for teacher led skill building. Similarly, the teacher's role is a fine tuned one when developing children's ideas in dance, drama, and visual art as working in these art forms requires a sensitivity to nuance as well as an awareness of teachable moments. The relationships between teachers and children in the Arts can be mediated through nonverbal as well as verbal means. Nonverbal relationships rely more upon the visual, the haptic, the emotional, and the kinaesthetic for expression and understanding. Attention to nonverbal ways of knowing emphasises communication beyond the traditional reliance on talk between teachers and children.

Relational pedagogy is also about collaboration with peers. In all of the art forms, the project found evidence of children incidentally, or more explicitly, guiding, instructing, and advising each other. There was also evidence of children actively seeking feedback from each other and responding to this. Peers were instrumental in a variety of ways from dancing their feedback and then modelling some dance feedforward, through to providing expert advice for an art technique they had mastered and which another child had enquired about. For example, in visual art, the whiteboard was used to note children who could be consulted with if any child in the class had a problem with their art, whether it be colour mixing, creating hues and tones, or achieving a sense of perspective. The teacher-researchers who actively encouraged this peer teaching provided clear messages about learning. They conveyed that teaching comes from multiple sources and that learning from peers is part of the many possibilities available. Such classrooms become communities of learners in which both teachers and children can grow and develop through reciprocal and mutually enhancing relationships. Kutnick and Rogers (1994) noted that, "the learning relationship may be between the child and teacher, the child within a small classroom group or as a member of the whole class" (p. 2). In addition, incidental one-on-one peer relationships and fluid groupings are also important to mention.

While group work was a frequent ritual of practice in drama, dance and music, children did not necessarily work as a group, a common finding in the literature (e.g., Kutnick & Rogers, 1994). The co-operative group work literature stresses the importance of "training" in skills such as turn taking, listening, questioning, supporting, and challenging (e.g., Bennett & Dunne, 1990). In addition, trust, communication, and problem solving skills are explicitly taught in the current working-with-others programme in the United Kingdom (Ota, 2006). While the Arts project is not about group work, this common ritual of practice effects how children are learning in the Arts. If they are expected to work as a group, then the processes of collaboration may need to be carefully taught and attended to; not as peripheral and incidental, but as part of the learning process. Cognitive and social gains are possible in groups that work well together. If teachers choose to incorporate group work, then decisions need to be made about how the groups are composed, the nature of the tasks engaged with, and what social and co-operative skills are required (Bennett, 1994).

Another relational aspect of note, and one which is frequently absent from the literature on learning, is the child's relationship with the art medium. Engaging with paint or sculpture, or drums or shakers, or spoken thoughts or hot-seating, or dynamic or melancholic dance music, requires different responses from children that teach nuance and mood. As Eisner (2000) claimed, the Arts "traffic in subtleties" (p. 9) and the art medium worked with provides direct clues to these subtleties. Children are able to appreciate these subtleties more when they are given the time and opportunity to explore what their body, instrument, role, or art material can do. It is only through exploring the art mediums in a low risk, high engagement way that children can learn from what the medium is conveying to them; that colour flow works better with broad, rather than fine movements; that using different levels in space makes dance more interesting; that different sounds can be layered in music, and that you can be bold in drama even if normally you are timid. And when they reach the limits of their current ability, they need scaffolded assistance to solve the problems they encounter, as well as to consider new problems as their ideas and skills grow.

Relational pedagogy as a concept also has relevance for a child's relationship with him or herself. As mentioned earlier, children can adopt a new role in drama, a role that is not constrained by their current identities, nor by people's expectations. Through drama the child can visit times and places beyond the here and now. They can reinvent themselves through role and they can take risks in a safe and encouraging environment. All this helps children appreciate their potential and not be limited by the daily assumptions of who they are (the examples of transformation observed in this project are well documented in other research). Similarly, children can discover things about themselves through their visual art, their music, and their dance. They learn about persistence and risk taking as much as they learn about rhythm, tone, colour mixing, and bodily expression. And because the Arts so often tap feeling, children can deepen their understanding of who they are (evidenced, for example, in a teacher-researcher's art unit, inspired by the artist Nigel Brown entitled, "A window on my world", in which children created montages and paintings of images that were personally significant to them). Moreover, the sensory nature of the Arts enables an exploration of the self that is not limited to the verbal. Richardson (1988) argued that personal insight and growth are fundamentals of creativity, and in creative writing he felt that children were able to develop their sensitivity to, and awareness of, deep feelings. The same could be said for the creative process in the Arts:

... the individual is actively involved in learning to understand and enjoy the self and the interactions which arise in living, looking, feeling, touching, dreaming, wondering, loving, thinking, hating and the like. (1988, p. xii)

Not all can be understood through linguistic means and the Arts provide opportunities for children to know themselves in multiple and surprising ways.

4. Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this project, as outlined to follow. First, a strength of the study is that it provides rich case studies of current practice and outlines a range of innovative interventions that enhance children's learning. However, the size of the project (10 teacher-researchers in eight schools) is relatively small. What is provided in depth is curtailed somewhat by breadth. Not all of the detail of the project can be reported here, so the findings may seem to claim much, yet these are based on many months of triangulated data collection. Nevertheless, a larger sample would add a broader and more generalisable dimension. What is interesting to note is how closely some of the findings of the project resonates with much of the current international literature.

Second, the perspectives of parents and caregivers are not part of this study. Further research could include their perspectives as well as boards of trustees members and other community members concerned with children's learning. Third, the wider school culture was found to have a large influence on what happened in classrooms, and the broader sociocultural context also warrants close scrutiny. Cognisance was taken of context, but more time spent in each school, as with a full ethnographic study, would enable a greater understanding of this influence. The project did not, however, have the resources to support such a sustained ethnography, and the teacher-researchers as generalist primary teachers could not focus solely on the Arts for two years.

Fourth, the time frames of the project required flexible planning to respond to school structures, school commitments, and university demands, which, at times, conflicted despite careful negotiation and advance timetabling between teacher- and university-researchers. Schools are frequently involved in a range of professional development projects and, increasingly, in other research projects as well. Maintaining commitment and focus to this project was required and there was little substitute for the value of face-to-face meetings. This meant that university-researchers were often in school, juggling their programmes to fit teachers as best they could. The university-researchers were also involved in other research projects, including one who was completing his thesis. Such multiple demands are taxing and require much goodwill.

Fifth, as a result of circumstances beyond anyone's control, three teacher-researchers had to leave the project at the end of 2005 and three new teacher-researchers were invited and inducted in 2006. By the second year, a distinct culture had evolved in the research team, and it was not entirely easy for new members to enter that culture given the relationships that had already been formed and the common research language that the team had developed. Extra visits by university-researchers to the new teacher-researchers in their schools were required to build trust and rapport. The university researchers felt the extra pressure of working with people who were

neophytes and those who had a year's experience. This is not to claim that the new teacher-researchers were lacking or deficient. Indeed, the building of research skills did not necessarily correlate with time spent in the project. Some of the new teacher-researchers were very quick to respond and suggest methodological and analytical ideas. However, there were challenges in building a new research team culture in 2006 amongst some who knew each other well and others who initially were strangers to the other teachers. This has implications for sharing research data that reveals one's pedagogy and the quality of learning taking place in one's classroom. When a teacher-researcher is new to the project and does not know the other members, they can feel exposed and vulnerable. This was evident at the start of the project so it was likely to be the case for new members in 2006. When teacher-researchers feel vulnerable and exposed, they are less likely to reveal doubts, fears and problems, yet these revelations are important when building research teams. The project was fortunate however, to have new teacher-researchers who were highly motivated, curious, and not afraid to ask hard questions of themselves and others.

Sixth, the influence of the project on each school varied immensely from some teacher-researchers using the work to lead staff development and some finding it difficult to muster wider school interest. The leadership and the philosophy of each school were pivotal in determining what wider influence the project had beyond the teacher-researchers and their buddies.

Finally, much of what this project has found is central to good teaching. If the word "Arts" was substituted with the word "Sciences" could the same claims be made? In some cases, that seems to be true. The notions of idea development, creativity, responsiveness to what children bring to a subject, the strengths and limits of groups, the influence of narrative, and so forth are not unique to the Arts. While the Arts were the focus of this project, the teaching and learning processes that enhance the Arts are not entirely specific to the disciplines of dance, drama, music, and visual art. This is to be expected given that effective pedagogy, while influenced by the content of what is taught, remains a distinct form of knowledge and contains well known skills and processes.

Notwithstanding this issue, however, there *are* findings that pertain specifically to the Arts. Care is taken here not to assert over-blown claims, but some points made earlier merit repeating. Teaching the Arts is enhanced when nonverbal ways of knowing are used, rather than relying predominantly or solely upon the linguistic. Capitalising upon the unique languages of the Arts enables a responsive, congruent context in which to enable development of ideas that is not shackled or defined by the verbal or written text. Given that the Arts are explored through time and space that is fleeting and temporal, and rely heavily on the visual, aural, and kinesthetic for expression, innovative ways to capture learning in the Arts are important. For example, children need opportunities to mirror each other, watch each other, learn from each other, video and playback their dance, record and listen to their music, perform and process their drama, view and evaluate their visual art. These processes are important in the Arts as art making (with the exception of the visual arts) takes place in the immaterial and intangible realm. Sound can be heard and felt, but not captured, unless it is recorded in some way. Similarly, movement can be

viewed and felt but also can be recorded. Relying on aural or kinaesthetic memory can help, but is challenging, especially for young children. This project has highlighted the importance of assessing and learning in the Arts through processes that capture what is happening in the temporal flux of the process.

5. Contribution to building capability and capacity

Over the two years of this study, the project team was comprised of the following people:

- Fiona Bevege and Amanda Klemick (teacher–researchers: Piopio)
- Gay Gilbert (teacher–researcher: Hillcrest Normal) with in-school buddies Lynette Townsend (2005), plus Jocelyn Williams (2006)
- Olive Jones (teacher–researcher: Hamilton East) with in-school buddy Trish Bush
- Shona McRae and Shirley Tyson (teachers-researchers: Hukanui) with in-school buddies Lauri Thorburn (2005), plus Mark Bell (2006)
- Francis Pye (teacher–researcher: Frankton) with in-school buddies Irene Cheung (2005), plus Supranee Marshall (2006)
- Kelly Thompson (teacher–researcher: Pukete) with in-school buddy Judith Blake (2005)
- Andrea Goodman (teacher–researcher: Cambridge Primary) with in-school buddy Donna Grigg (2006)
- Lisa Rose (teacher–researcher: Tauriko) with in-school buddy Nicki Dunn (2006)
- Deborah Fraser (director: The University of Waikato)
- Clare Henderson and Graham Price (researchers: The University of Waikato)
- Carolyn Jones (project manager: The University of Waikato)
- Margaret Drummond (project support: The University of Waikato)
- Viv Aitken (drama: The University of Waikato) and Sue Cheesman (dance: The University of Waikato); consultants to the project.

Partnership between co-researchers

This study is a collaborative research project between university and school staff wherein teachers were co-researchers with university colleagues. Such partnerships aim to bridge the divide between academia and the profession and can help to mitigate the common problem of theory-practice divisions. Moreover, collaborative research of this nature builds research capacity amongst teachers who have direct influence on the children they teach. The research process in the hands of teachers with the support of academics has much potential for change that can benefit and enhance children’s learning alongside improvements in teachers’ pedagogy.

However, “there is much talk of collaboration between teachers and researchers in accounts of action research and many utopian visions of what such relationships might achieve. Although some authors acknowledge challenges ... the details of how these ‘challenges’ manifest

themselves, or are addressed, are largely left untold” (Frankham & Howes, 2006, p. 618). Also, as Grundy (1998) asserted, the principles of partnership between school and university based co-researchers are easier to espouse than to achieve. More often than not, “the partnerships for most collaborative research projects are formed after the funds have been obtained ... this has implications for whose questions and interests the research is really addressing” (Grundy, 1998, p. 43). Zeichner and Gore (1995) provided five principles underpinning collaborative research:

1. democratic relationships that avoid expert “positionings”
2. account taken of distinctive interests of all parties
3. trust, communication, and understanding of each partner’s perspectives
4. recognition of problems and “rewards” in collaborative activities
5. all involved are jointly responsible.

The first, however, denies the specific expertise that each partner does bring. Each partner in collaborative research brings expertise, but their expertise differs: not quantitatively, but qualitatively. The expertise held by teachers is valuable insider knowledge for classroom-based research, and the expertise held by academics complements what practitioners contribute. Capitalising on both sets of expertise means that “expert positions” will be taken from time to time. The second and fifth overlook practical and structural impediments (Grundy, 1998). The third is particularly relevant when surfacing data that are contentious and suggests that changes are made to pedagogy in order to enhance children’s development of ideas. Teachers can feel exposed when their practice is revealed through the collection and analysis of data. Trust and risk are both apparent, a point that will be returned to later.

All of these principles raise issues rather than provide a blueprint for how to undertake school-university research. These issues contain tensions and paradoxes, some of which are outlined to follow.

Holding the tension of apparent contradictions

Collaborative research of this nature is typified by ongoing dialogue, trust building, and the inevitability of paradox. Living the experience of paradox seems to be largely necessary and inescapable if we are to be open to the unexpected, resist the lure of premature closure and maximise school-university partnerships. Project collaborators need to exercise caution in their examination of practice and strive to resist affirming only what is already valued. As Hellawell (2006) asserted: “both empathy *and* alienation are useful qualities for a researcher” (emphasis in original, p. 487). By alienation he refers to the need to distance and detach oneself in order to make strange what is observed. All parties need to hold the tension of apparent contradictions, being both interested (in effective Arts pedagogy) and disinterested (in order to heighten perception) so that they might “surprise themselves in a landscape of practice with which many are very familiar indeed” (McWilliam, 2004, p. 14). Some of the paradoxes discussed here are:

the tension between passion and disinterest; the goals of practice and theory; differences in school and university cultures; and risk and trust.

Passion and disinterest in Arts education

All co-researchers are passionate about the Arts and appreciate their value for students. It is this very passion, however, that can make us blind to envisaging alternatives to preferred rituals of teaching and learning, and deaf to nagging doubts and questions. Passion and its attendant enthusiasm can make us positive and celebratory at times when we might be exercising healthy scepticism. With passion we defend our allegiance to the Arts, but in so doing, we risk losing the critical edge that is the heart of research. This is exacerbated by the way in which the Arts are largely marginalised in education so that advocacy for the Arts becomes a somewhat habitual response by those who understand the value the Arts provide for learning and the importance of the Arts as distinct and valid disciplines. Ironically, such advocacy can have the effect of diminishing the ways in which the Arts are regarded, especially if this leads to large claims that are not valid or are exaggerated. So even though this particular project does not require that the Arts assert their value in any explicit way, the way in which the Arts are positioned on the periphery in school curriculum can lead to advocacy by those aware of the fragile status of the Arts.

Moreover, some critics of action research with teachers maintain that such projects lack any objectivism and result in the unqualified “confirming their own common sense” (McWilliam, 2004, p. 114) rather than raising questions and probing assumptions. Indeed, how can we all ensure the necessary disinterest within a sphere of interest in order to think differently about current practice? “There is a need to provide practitioners with a means of discovering their situation anew while at the same time valuing the tacit knowing that is produced out of their embeddedness in practice” (McWilliam, 2004, p. 121).

Research is to re-search, or to search again (Berthoff, 1987). It requires and demands a questioning of the status quo and assumptions that underlie the rituals of teaching and learning in classrooms (Nuthall, 2001). It means raising doubt in a sea of certainty and asking

“What is going on here? Why? What does this mean?” It requires researchers to avoid over-blown claims that are often the result of advocacy for the Arts and does not make for robust research. It requires resistance to looking for only what is desired and also an alertness to surprises, nuance, and exceptions. While not everything in a study can be data-based, researchers should try to disprove their arguments and hypothesis in order to strengthen the robustness of their research (O’Toole, 2006).

Inevitably, wherever we “stand” we are all complicit in the research process. We need to acknowledge that we are historically constructed and locally situated as human observers of the human condition and that the meaning we seek to learn about is radically plural, always open, and

politically saturated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). With this in mind we are more likely to hold the tension of passion and disinterest in order to produce robust research.

The goals of practice and the goals of theory

Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) noted that teachers' perspectives are often marginalised in research in favour of theories generated by researchers. School-university projects like this aim to ensure teachers' perspectives are heard and their views taken seriously. This requires ongoing dialogue wherein one set of voices (the academic) is not constantly privileged over another. While dialogic "mechanisms for knowledge construction" (Zellermayer & Tabak, 2006, p. 48) are more complex and more time consuming than traditional research, they can "produce more practical, contextualized theory and more theoretically grounded, broadly informed practice" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 599).

However, research between teachers and university staff which focuses on classrooms often has a greater emphasis on the needs and concerns of practitioners (Johnson, Peters & Williams, 1999) and that improvement in *teaching* becomes a central goal in teacher research (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). This practice-based preference by many teachers can dominate and obscure other research goals such as methodology refinement and creating robust and substantive research findings related to students' *learning* and to building theory. These different goals are not necessarily competing, nor discrete, and there are opportunities for projects such as this to serve both sets of goals in a manner that does not detract from the value of either. Moreover, with increasing numbers of school-university collaborative projects there is a need for recognition by universities of the importance of "partnerships with schools as an integral part of academics' work" (Ewing et al., 2004, p. 5), which includes the induction of research novices alongside valuing their insider knowledge.

However, teachers will not always share the goals of their university colleagues. Contribution to knowledge in an academic sense was generally not regarded as important as the professional development goals teachers expressed as their main agenda for participation in collaborative research. Improving their teaching and having time to focus carefully on the children in their classes were highlighted again and again as compellingly relevant. The research process enabled teachers to see their practice afresh and gain multiple perspectives on what was happening in their classrooms. This is a practical advantage of collaborative research wherein teacher development is an inextricable part of the study. The tension for academics, however, is that the more teacher-friendly the project, the more the goals of theory can be reduced or over-looked in favour of trust-building and practice goals.

School and university cultures

One of the tensions in fostering reciprocal dialogue that considers both practice and theory goals is that there are a number of marked differences between school and university cultures (see also

Sewell, 2006). This palpable difference is both a strength and a challenge when engaged in joint research projects. The three university-researchers are all ex-school teachers and one of the teacher-researchers was a university lecturer for a period. Therefore, the differences we discuss here are not “ivory tower” observations based on opinion nor naïve judgement uninformed by theoretical perspectives, but rather, jointly constructed comparisons we have discussed as a community of co-researchers. Three of these differences are outlined below:

1. Schools generally have a strong emphasis on problem solving. They are adept at identifying key problems and attending to the business of rectifying or addressing these. From playground bullying to raising funds for school camp, schools are constantly at the forefront of problem solving processes which often involve their students and their wider community. Universities, on the other hand, have a history and culture of “problematising”. In general, universities hold dear the importance of questioning the *status quo* and of raising thorny and often unpopular issues. The traditional role of critic and conscience of society is evident across universities. This is not to say that universities don’t ever solve problems or that schools avoid speculation; rather, there tends to be a dominance of one over the other in terms of the institutional culture. Alongside the search for solutions and certainty, schools are required to identify and teach in relation to specific learning outcomes. Research on the other hand is more about tolerating multiple meanings, resisting premature closure, and asking new questions.
2. While intensification of work has increased in both university and school settings (Johnson, Peters, & Williams, 1999), the sheer pace of school classroom life is relentless and fraught with numerous demands and interruptions. Bells, announcements, timetables, library times, swimming times, lost property notices, lunch orders, assemblies, playground duties, children’s extra classes for sport, or reading recovery, or violin practice, and a myriad of other competing demands literally eat up the hours leading John Gatto to sceptically comment: “But when the bell rings I insist they [the students] drop whatever it is we have been doing and proceed quickly to the next work station. They must turn on and off like a light switch. Nothing important is ever finished in my class nor in any class I know of” (1992, p. 6). While Gatto is scathing in his commentary about compulsory schooling, he was highly successful himself at teaching in the very culture he condemns. He does, however, highlight a palpable feature of classrooms that run by strict adherence to short time-frames usually determined by teacher and school structures. Balancing curriculum demands and the restrictions of timetabling have been identified by teachers themselves as a major barrier to inservice development of any kind (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Hipkins, Strafford, Tiatia, & Beals, 2003). Universities also have timetable restrictions when it comes to teaching, but less so when it comes to research. While there are budget constraints and targets to meet, the flexibility is greater than the usual school week and research needs can be organised around shifting work demands. Moreover, research and scholarship require reflective mulling, the careful consideration of competing perspectives, and time to consider the nuance of emerging themes and their significance. In this project, university staff, by necessity, need to re-enter the hectic pace of classrooms and adapt methods to flexibly capture the constant flux of learning in the Arts while fulfilling the

need for consistent and triangulated data. And teaching staff need to tolerate what seems at times to be the ponderous pace of questioning and analysis required for careful research. Goodwill between both parties is essential to ensure smooth communication and productive school-university interface.

3. The distinctive interests of each party, as previously mentioned (Grundy, 1998), is an inevitable issue in joint research of this nature. Some of the teachers are particularly keen to use the project to promote their school and this is perhaps, of no surprise given the competition between schools for publicity, boosting school rolls and parental approval. However, some teachers' enthusiasm for media coverage and public dissemination of findings may be considered somewhat premature. Moreover, teachers' publishing outlets seldom require the scrutiny and evaluation of peer review. On the other hand, teachers' desire to quickly disseminate is understandable given the pace of their working lives (see point 1) and the slow process of academic publication. For all the teachers in the project, the months (and sometimes years) required for publishing in academic journals is excruciatingly slow and rather pointless, as their major focus on development has already been achieved. Therefore, a blend of both succinct teacher-targeted papers, and articles for academic peer review are required if project members are to feel that dissemination counts and meets their specific audiences.

Risk and trust

One of the main findings of the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP) evaluation (Ewing et al., 2004) was that high levels of risk taking by teachers and trust in their university colleagues led to powerful learning related to teachers' own practice. A major feature of collaborative research in the Arts is also this productive tension between risk and trust with the former growing in direct relationship to the latter. One of the challenges, however, is identified below:

If collaborative researchers have learned anything from such endeavours, it is that trust takes time, and members of a group never develop trust in synchrony. We know that collaboration is soul-searching, labor-intensive work for anyone participating, that shared understanding and significant change takes longer than expected, and that nothing is perfect (Bolin & Falk, 1987; Hall & Hord, 1987; Jackson, 1988). Although these factors are sobering, such findings are better than feeling powerless and isolated in one's work setting. (May, 1997, p. 230)

In the first weeks of the project, one teacher–researcher admitted that when she was being observed it was still quite stressful for her and she felt she wasn't as relaxed as normal. Another (very experienced teacher with previous research experience) commented that she didn't intervene nearly as much as usual with a group because of the video and other researchers in the room focusing on the children. These “confessions” are a healthy indication of trust. Such feelings are important to acknowledge as an inevitable part of “exposure” through the scrutiny of the research process.

The teachers also risk their identities with each other when exposing their practice and their research at regular roundtable meetings between all in the team from the eight schools, but such sharing helps to build collegiality within and across schools and across Arts disciplines. This required considerable trust amongst the research team and helped to build a climate and common language wherein questions, concerns, and issues could be shared. As generalist teachers who teach all four art forms, they seemed genuinely interested in each other's questions and issues. Teacher release from schools was paid for as part of the research project to enable time to share, plan, evaluate, and reflect, unencumbered by the daily demands of classroom life. Moreover, ongoing collaboration between university- and teacher-researchers is maximised due to the flexible relationships with academic partners located fairly close to participating schools (see also Ewing et al., 2004).

There are risk and trust issues for university staff as well, as we bring together different discipline knowledge and perspectives and, at times, are working outside our respective discipline areas (e.g., the music educator working with teachers in dance and the visual arts educator working with teachers in drama). While the project brings in consultants to advise in areas beyond the expertise of any one researcher, we need to ensure that consultants do not adopt the role of professional adviser and lesson evaluator, as this can lead to resistance by teachers when the change suggested is not of teachers' choosing or design (Obert, 2006). Instead, with the central focus on the research questions that come from teachers' authentic concerns, teacher change is more likely to be something that they seek with the support of their university colleagues. Outside pressures on teachers to change often lead to feelings of frustration, and even fear and resentment (Fullan, 1999; Hargreaves, 2005) and exacerbate risk without the necessary counter balance of trust. Trust is maximised when teachers are considered both generators of knowledge and agents of change (Beck & Kosnick, 2001; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Teachers also need to reconsider traditional views of researchers and regard them more as co-learners, collaborators, and critical friends.

Developing relationships that engender trust requires regular, ongoing interaction between university and school co-researchers; interactions that create a climate of hospitality and charge (Palmer, 1998). Relationships need to be hospitable so that partners in research feel supported and understood. But the research partnership should also be "charged" so that challenge is welcomed, dispute is encouraged and competing perspectives are aired. It is this challenge that also enables the taking of risks as teachers try new interventions and work alongside their university partners to interrogate emerging themes and findings.

As evidenced by the teachers' research questions, the teacher-researchers' role can bridge the traditional duality of teacher *or* researcher and theory *or* practice. Eisner (2002) addressed the need to move the initial teacher education focus from *episteme* (formal theory) or *phronesis* (practical knowledge) on into *artistry*, because it is within artistry that the notion of knowledge viewed as embedded and resident within self appears to be understood. He stated:

Teachers, for example, are not regarded now as those who implement the prescriptions of others but as those most intimate with life in classrooms. ... Teachers are collaborators in knowledge construction and bring to the table of deliberation a kind of insider knowledge ... (2002, p. 381)

It is just this intimacy and the insider knowledge that is the strength *and* challenge of this project as we worked together to interrogate assumptions, ask hard questions, and constantly surprise ourselves in the all too familiar landscape of school classrooms (McWilliam, 2004). The power of the teachers' knowledge construction as described in this quote is such that they all have much to share with the professional and research community. Collaboration as co-researchers extends into the dissemination of findings, as some of the teachers have already presented on this project at a research symposium last year and we co-presented at the annual New Zealand Association of Research in Education (NZARE) conference at the end of 2006. These events convey the message that the research is jointly constructed and owned rather than produced by academics and transmitted to teachers in a top-down manner (Sewell, 2006). Collaborative research is not without its tensions however, and recognition of the challenges is part of the transparency and dialogue that comprises such joint endeavours.

As Andrea Goodman put it: "I think I've learnt more from this than the children!"

Conclusion

As with any action research project, questions kept emerging and require further investigation. In dance, for example, further research is required on the criteria used by children for acceptance or rejection of feedback and feedforward. Were they making decisions based on improved *quality* or were they simply choosing to change or accept what they liked and what their peers preferred? The aesthetic evaluation of any art form requires a sensitivity to nuance as the Arts "traffic in subtleties" (Eisner, 2000, p. 9). Developing an appreciation, therefore, for such subtlety in each of the art forms is also part of learning in the Arts. Gough (1999) claimed that appreciation involves the subjective (emotions, sensations, feelings, memories) and the objective (concepts, language, form, structure) and a synthesis of both can help to find meanings. In addition, "the devil is in the details. The artistry of composition [in any art form] happens in the editing and refining stages. Editing requires acute critical thinking" (McCutchen, 2006, p. 177). It is this critical thinking that the Arts also needs to develop if quality is to be enhanced.

Further research needs to acknowledge and capture more about these ways of knowing in order to construct further understanding of learning in and through the Arts. We need more empirical evidence about the processes involved in development of ideas and further trialling of the conceptual model produced in this study. The inclusive potential (for all cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds, for those with disabilities, for the gifted and talented, and for combinations of each of these) of the Arts bears closer scrutiny. Meeting the needs of individuals, pairs, and groups, and developing their creative potential through responsive class environments

requires further examination. Moreover, research is required on what children bring to the Arts, how they inform each other, and how teachers access and respond to this to further maximise children's learning. The critical support of school leaders is required so that the Arts are not relegated to the margins by competing priorities, but rather, are part of schools' strategic plans (Ministry of Education, 2006b). In addition, the importance of exploratory play cannot be underestimated. Care is required to ensure that an outcomes-based curriculum does not thwart the flexible purposing and expressive objectives the Arts need (Eisner, 1994).

Many of the teacher-researchers' interventions provided opportunities for children to generally go beyond first response: best response. The interventions provided children with opportunities to revise and improve their work, often through peer interaction. Other times, through direct scaffolding by the teacher, or by uninterrupted immersion in the art form itself. The "balancing" of practical knowledge with development of ideas remains a tension and one for which there is no clear answer. As Gough (1999) argued: "too much concern with structure too early on can become restrictive and produce boring, predictable [work]. Equally important ... is being selective about the choices" (p. 63). There is a *productive* paradox in the tension within an Arts programme to provide both compliance to conventions and freedom to explore. For example, a tension exists between the process drama concept of *building belief* and theatre arts *performance skills*. Both freedoms and acquired conventions are necessary for thinking in the Arts and are, ultimately, mutually enhancing (Lavendar & Predock-Linnell, 2001).

Disrupting rituals of practice is no easy task. It requires that rituals are first identified and then examined as to their validity in fostering learning. Such examination can feel risky as it exposes teachers' practices and assumptions. And not all rituals are necessarily poor or problematic; it depends upon what the ritual is intended to support. For example, the use of peers as joint problem solvers in a community of inquiry was an existing ritual in one classroom that seemed to promote learning in constructive ways. However, this report mostly draws attention to rituals that teacher-researchers identified from the initial case studies as requiring change. Such soul searching of their pedagogy is not without its risks, and trust between research partners is necessary to sustain throughout (May, 1997). Teachers can feel exposed when their practice is scrutinised. However, the action research phase enabled them to take a position of authority as they chose the research focus and worked alongside their university colleagues to refine their questions and trial their methodologies. Teacher ownership of the change process is maximised in such situations when the questions posed are the authentic, felt questions of practitioners themselves (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Taylor (2000) noted:

A principle of effective partnerships is to empower the classroom teacher to believe in their own worth, to activate their own capacity to influence and direct curriculum. Jenny was not going to be liberated in her drama teaching [for instance] if I came in as the expert who conducted her drama lessons, then retired to the university, while she retired to her usual curriculum ... she had to have her authority elevated in the partnership. (p. 5)

The research partnership also provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to discuss what they find and try new initiatives with the support of a university colleague who has a vested interest in

the research process. Research requires and demands a questioning of the *status quo* and assumptions that underlie the rituals of teaching and learning in classrooms (Nuthall, 2001). Nuthall clearly identified a number of obstructive rituals of teaching that went unchallenged for the most part in schools. As Loper (2006) urged: “we need to mine his rich vein of findings and construct from them workable solutions” (p. 7). This is very challenging for teachers or academics to pursue alone, but has potential for supported change in pedagogy when pursued together. Co-constructed research of this nature is, thus, more like a dance than “follow-the-leader”.

6. Publications on the project

A variety of publications have already emerged and more are in preparation or under review. Two of these are written solely by teacher–researchers (Jones, 2005; Tyson, 2005); one is written by an in-school buddy of a teacher–researcher (Dunn, 2006); and four are joint university-school papers. The others are written by the university researchers.

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