



Feeding The Mind

Valuing the arts in the development of young children

A Report For
The Arts Council England North East

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By

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Northumbria University, on behalf of The Arts Council England North East (formerly Northern Arts), undertook research into five projects in the North East of England in which various artists were working with young children and in collaboration with early years workers.

This research set out to address the question

“How can the impact of the arts on the development of young children be seen and valued?”

It was not our intention to begin by looking in on, and measuring the impact of, creative arts events and the creative development of young children. In this research we have built a response by examining the question from the views from inside the projects. We wanted to explore the stories that the participants told about their own experiences of working on the selected projects and the impact they felt had occurred.

The projects were in a range of environments including urban and rural. Twenty-one people were spoken to for this project. Some of the interviews were joint interviews. They comprise five interviews (eight individuals) with coordinators/employers eight with artists and five with teachers. All the sites have been visited and five observational sessions were completed. The projects themselves have provided secondary data in the form of printed materials.

The research has shown that those who are directly involved in the arts projects with young children **know** that there is worthwhile and distinctive impact upon aspects of their development. The continuing support of artists working in a distinctive way with young children is valuable. It is very clear that the support and efforts of The Arts Council England North East has provided and continues to provide arts projects that create genuine impact in the lives of the young children in the North East.

Methods and Analysis

Methods employed within the qualitative interpretative paradigm included open interviews, observation of sessions and examination of printed materials supplied by the projects. The analysis of the data was undertaken using thematic induction.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from the series of interviews conducted by the researchers. As a result of the research the following recommendations are offered:

Impact Evaluation

Outcomes of the research indicate that the evaluation process is very important in determining future progress of any initiative. Impact evaluations also allow Arts Council England North East to determine future direction and support for arts education projects within the region. At this stage these are the key points relating to the central question of the research project.

- There should be a continuation of the requirement that projects build evaluation into their bids and undertake thoughtful evaluation of the effect and impact of their work.
- Larger projects should be carefully assessed by external evaluators to examine the stories that are being told. From this, connections can be made with other stakeholders without getting caught up in the specific projects' quality agendas. An external 'eye' seems key.
- Further work needs to be done to explore the way that evaluations are being carried out to provide useful data that can explain the creative arts projects to a wider audience.
- The evaluations should not become the products themselves.

- Methods of recording impact should both provide the relevant information for The Arts Council England North East whilst at the same time remaining sufficiently flexible to avoid an imposed standardisation.
- Continue the external research to explore in greater depth the complexities around the issue of impact. Through this to support The Arts Council England North East in developing funding streams and partners.

Ethical issues

The research uncovered some significant issues relating to the ethics of the projects and the treatment of those involved. These may well apply beyond this group of projects. As some of these projects have already taken place the authors are aware that some of the following are already being dealt with by the Arts Council England, both nationally and regionally.

- The ethical issues, embedded within the gathering and manipulation of evaluation data, reports, exhibitions etc, be considered in relation to children's rights as set out in the United Nations Charter.
- The ethical issues, embedded within the gathering of evaluation data on the artist's work and their personal reflective diaries, reports, exhibitions etc, be considered in relation to artists' rights.
- The ethical issues surrounding the artists' employment rights are considered to include those relating to the artists' access to appropriate support systems for dealing with sensitive issues that they might encounter.
- All projects must include an ethical stance that outlines the ethical procedures for the protection of the rights of the participants. That the statement includes an ethical stance towards data collection, handling, analysis and dissemination.

An observation that we feel incumbent to make is that no written documents from the projects contained statements concerning ethical issues and procedures. The literature aimed at supporting projects that we reviewed in this research (pages 56) did not offer advice in this area.

Other Recommendations

As the research and analysis developed a range of other recommendations began to take shape. These support the first set and are underpinned by the recommendations relating to ethics.

- That funding is put into place and works for the benefit of the interface between the young children and the artist to enable the young children and their art to be at the centre.
- Encourage those projects that develop from within and as part of community and are imbued with a genuinely collaborative feeling resulting in ownership for the participants.
- Encourage those involved in projects to use the available information to help in supporting the writing and presentation of high quality proposals for projects.
- Give support to project building skills that help provide clarity of intention and can provide information on impact that does not strangle diversity and flexibility, but creates genuine participation for all involved in the projects.
- Support continues to be given to enable artists and teachers to work together and enrich each other's understanding without destroying the distinctiveness of their individual roles.
- Continue to encourage those projects, which both in proposal, action and reflection continue to break out of the boxes and encourage a freedom of mind in young children.

Feeding the mind

Introduction

Context for the research

Northern Arts have, over recent years, put considerable time, effort and funding into the development of arts and creative projects involving early years children and early years workers within the region. In order to support this activity as well as commissioning evaluations by those working on the projects they have also commissioned independent research and evaluations looking at a range of issues pertaining to the arts and early years. These research projects, funded by Northern Arts or by Northern Arts and the Arts Council of England, have highlighted a wide range of issues and areas for further investigation.

Previous Projects and Outcomes

Northern Arts commissioned a research project, which made an initial examination of the range of work being carried out within the Northern Arts region. This was carried out in 1998-1999 and resulted in the publication of a report entitled 'A Drop in the Bucket' (Clark and Taylor 1999), which considered:

- the potential impact of arts projects on the intellectual development of young children (3-5 years);
- the type and quality of work being carried out.

A series of key threads and issues were highlighted which included:

- issues about the impact of the arts on young children's intellectual development;
- training of artists and early years workers;
- the relationship between funding and what happens and, therefore, what is reported about what happens.

The Arts Council in conjunction with Northern Arts has already commissioned two further pieces of work in this area:

In the National Federation for Educational Research 'Developing Young Children's Creativity through the Arts' Sharp (2001) writes that the arts provide a complex range of activities and experiences, through which children can develop their creativity.

Redmond (2001) in, 'Creativity and Child Development: mapping the Northern Region', indicates that there is an emerging interest in developing arts expertise and that arts activities for children age three to six years are at a high point. She also highlighted:

- issues relating to evaluation of arts projects and areas for future development for arts and young children;
- that partnerships between arts organisations and education groups are powerful because of the arts projects they generate.

The Arts Council of England commissioned 'The Arts and the Early Years' a report carried out by the Thomas Coram Research Unit (2002) that had three main components:

- a national survey of arts education and early years representatives;
- five regional and one national focus groups;
- ten illustrative case studies of current practice.

The findings of this first national survey should be taken into consideration along with this piece of research but key recommendations that appertain to the Northern Region's research include:

- developing key strategic partnerships with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCP) and Government initiatives including Sure Start;
- commissioning of national longitudinal study and locally based action research to investigate the benefits of the arts to young children.

Arts, Creativity and the Early Years

Creativity within the Early Years Sector is an area of development that has been gaining momentum over the past few years. However there is still little actual research being undertaken in this country into the effects of working with young children in this area. Considering the amount of work that there is currently being carried out in this area there is relatively little research that demonstrates the effect of artists working with very young children. The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (2000) has ‘creative development’ as a key area for the early years.

Early years provision, with the creation of the National Childcare Strategy and the formation of EYDCP has changed the emphasis of how early years work is delivered. The development of Early Years Excellence Centres, that have been selected as models of good practice in quality education and care in the early years, has resulted in some of these centres using artists on a regular basis.

The Sure Start Programme is showing itself to be of particular importance in reducing social exclusion in families with young children. The use of funding for arts activities is one option for local Sure Start programmers to consider when meeting their objectives. In particular, Objective One, which focuses on improving children’s

social and emotional development and Objective Three which emphasises the value of improving children's ability to learn (DfES 2003 revised).

This Research Project

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This research set out to address the question

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It was not our intention to begin by looking in on, and measuring the impact of, creative arts events and the creative development of young children. In this research we have built a response by examining the question from the views from inside the projects. We wanted to explore the stories that the participants told about their own experiences of working on the selected projects and the impact they felt had occurred.

The Report

The report groups the findings under a series of chapter headings to highlight the issues that emerged through the data. These are

- Paradigms including creativity, teaching and learning and process and product;
- Practice;
- Working together: artists and others;
- Parents, community and locality;
- Outcomes and impact.

The Sample Projects

The projects examined within this research covered a wide geographical area and included both urban and rural areas. The sample also included projects that had finished, those which were on-going and those which were being started.

Durham – The project in question had been completed two years ago. It entailed a drama professional and a musician working in several nurseries. The project culminated in a made-over house with ‘experiences’ mediated by the two artists. The children from the nurseries in question were the main intended participants. An impressive video of their visit there was seen. But other children and adult groups were also encouraged to attend at different times. There were also evening ‘openings’ for this purpose.

Blyth – This project was a collaboration between Sure Start and the local theatre. It comprised one-off whole days, one-off sessions and six-week music courses. These took place in the new Sure Start building.

South Shields – A professional visual artist was employed to work in two nurseries.

Newcastle – This was a three year project employing a visual artist who worked in a variety of media in a nursery. This was done within a larger framework co-ordinated by a charity.

East Cleveland – In this project a visual artist worked in two nurseries and spent half-an-hour a week, for eight weeks, in the homes of ten children from each, before

they started in each of these nurseries. A teacher from the appropriate nursery accompanied the artist on these home visits.

Methods

The approach taken was through open interviews, to allow the various individuals to tell their stories about the projects. In this report you can here the voices of the participants. Twenty-one people were spoken to for this project. Some of the interviews were joint interviews. These comprise five interviews with eight individuals (co-ordinators and employers); eight with artists and five with teachers. All the sites have been visited and five observational sessions were completed. The projects themselves have provided secondary data in the form of printed materials.

Analysis

The approach taken to the analysis of the data was to look for emergent themes or issues that the respondents highlighted in the interviews or that the researchers saw emerging from the observations that were made of practice. The presentation of the key themes and issues, that emerged from the analysis of the data, is organised within thematic chapters for this report.

Chapter 1

Paradigms

Creativity

The introduction of practising artists into educational settings, and Early Years' settings in particular, is encouraged by national Government policies on 'creativity'.

In 1999 the Government Departments of Culture, Media and Sport and Education and Employment published 'All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education'. This document established a framework for the development of creativity and stated,

'Creativity is possible in all areas of human activity, including the arts, sciences, at work and at play....All people have creative abilities and we all have them differently.' (NACCCE Report 1999:6)

They offer the following definition of creativity.

'We define creativity as imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.' (1999:29)

This was followed in 2001 with a green paper entitled 'Culture and creativity: the next ten years.' The official definitions stress the importance of creativity to the future economic health of the nation. As a result the government has a commitment to promoting creative abilities through educational experiences and assessing and tracking young children's creative development.

This document also defined what creative education was and the issues involved in developing creativity in young people. It explores directly the relationship between, creativity, teaching and learning. Within this it highlights the way that creativity

'...involves all aspects of education including styles of teaching and assessment and the ethos and values of individual schools.' (2001:88)

It also suggests that it is the relationships between teachers and learners and between learners that is key.

The important point to note, though, is that teaching and learning are interactive processes that can only be understood in action. When a concept such as ‘creativity’ is added to the mix it, of necessity, becomes a rather difficult activity to operationalise on the ground. As Prentice (2000) notes

‘Too often the case for creativity is made either in general terms that do little more than assert that it is intrinsically a good thing for each individual to have a dose of, or more narrowly in instrumental terms that link it to the economy’ (2000:147).

In some ways, it is best to see what is meant by creativity by examining the processes in action. But participants do have ideas and theories about it and these ideas are a backdrop to their practice even if imperfectly executed, as is the nature of any social practice.

Co-ordinators’ definitions range from the wide and egalitarian

Co-ordinator 3 *I mean creativity is a right, it’s inherent and it’s a right and it’s perhaps reminding and engaging, re-engaging, bringing it maybe for the first time to people as a way of just - a way of being... it’s something to do with people’s spirituality as well and it should be every day, it really shouldn’t be so special and it shouldn’t be so privileged, it should be something normal and that - and it’s about giving people the capacity to recognise, to engage, sometimes about giving them permission to do that because life is compartmentalised to the point of where they can’t recognise it or engage with it or have been told they shouldn’t engage with it or recognise it and that’s quite scary is that you know, there are often policemen in people’s heads and you don’t know where the policemen have come from in terms of the ways in which they don’t think it’s for them or that it’s not something that that it’s a scary thing, it’s something to be afraid ofBut still making it special, still making it something to be celebratory and respected perhaps but at the same time everyday.*

Co-ordinator 4 *There’s a lot more equality of opportunity because it’s not saying “you’re a good painter, therefore, you’re better at this”. It’s working on the principle everybody’s got creativity inside them and*

valuing everybody's contribution equally and supporting that and helping ... in this case children to take that off in whatever direction they want.

to the more utilitarian

Co-ordinator 1 *There's creativity in the structure*

Artists themselves may take a wide social view of creativity but their focus tends to be at the individual level. This is an aspect that they all mention.

Artist A *I think it breaks down boundaries and starts to create a sense of unity in communities a creative voice.... Their ideas are creative because they've got uniqueness to them because of the person they're coming from. For a creative process to work... have to see we're growing and able to use our expressive voice.*

The concept of 'boundaries' is one that is often expressed by all participants. It is sometimes explained by metaphors such as 'boxes in the head'. There are, here, theories of learning and knowledge that it would be worthwhile to pursue as the activities are, after all, located in education.

Artist E *It's taking those boundaries away.*

Artists' definitions also encompass the future, as they see choice and decision-making as important outcomes of introducing creativity.

Artist D *I think, you know, the first thing with the little ones is choice. And you know being - I suppose having- being exposed to as much different stimuli as possible in a specific work that I've been doing with them, which is this project and I suppose not being too steered, you know, having the freedom to just explore... I think if people can see things happening it kind of sparks off a bit of something in them.*

This process of choice can be related back to the concept of boundaries.

Artist F *It's mainly about choice, I would say –the ability to make decisions. I never make decisions for the children. I leave it up to them –although I might make some suggestions. It's also about self-confidence and esteem and about a person's identity. I suppose it's also about thinking without boundaries.*

The concept of creativity may actually be expressed in terms of the artist's own 'self' and their relationship to their work.

Artist H *It's about seeing possibilities about making yourself vulnerable*

One of the teachers gave a definition that included all the elements - egalitarianism, personal qualities and skills.

Teacher Y *When they can use their imagination then they've got the skill to think things through. They can come to their own solutions. We want them to have confidence to try things –but to know that the help is there if they want or need it.... But art breaks down barriers, it's non-judgmental, unlike literacy things. Most parents can get involved with art –they carry on afterwards. Perhaps we should also mention that's it's fun!*

Another teacher obviously had uncertainty about the whole creativity 'thing', as she thought the artist would be able to say whether it was 'there' or not.

Teacher X *(we're) wanting to look at if what we're doing is helping creativity –what are the boundaries; having an artist in enables us to look at things differently*

Teaching and learning

The striking aspect, of philosophical thinking about teaching and learning, is the extent to which the Reggio Emilia approach is dominant in this region. This approach to early years education developed and is practised principally in the Emilia-Romagna district of Italy. Practitioners here in the North East region, who have had exposure to the approach, find all or elements of the approach useful. This approach is thought of as part of the 'progressive' tradition. It derives from Rousseau and is influenced by Dewey and Montessori (Soller & Miller 2003). The approach sees children as active participants in their own learning. In the Emilia- Romagna district of Italy it is a community-supported, localised and activity-based schooling system. It stems from the inspiration of one particular educator, rather than from centralised

policy-making and national guidelines. It is in this localised approach to schooling that enables the approach to develop. A key aspect of the practice which is seen as important is the idea of the *atelier*, a creative workshop, rich in materials and tools. It has its power in the way that it sees children as able, creative and powerful learners. Within this workshop the children are able to work freely to invent and express their own ideas. This is supported by a partnership between the learner, artists and educators.

Community run schools, supported by local budgets, were set up to create the setting for that kind of learning to take place. Many of the artists, co-ordinators and teachers involved in the projects considered in this research had visited Italy and mention its impact on their thinking and practice. This ranged from the macro to the micro level.

Co-ordinator 5 *We aim to develop a learning community..... Transformation –or at least significant change – is what we’re after, and creating intelligent and creative systems. We like to feel we’re being brave.*

Artist G *It was after I had been to Reggio that I became more observant; it was a new departure for me. Time to look and see is important.*

Teacher X *After I’d been to Reggio I developed more of a focus on the individual and on observation and documentation.*

The dominant discourses of childhood are socially and historically located. Reggio, no less than anywhere else, has an approach to children ‘the rich child’ which has been produced in particular historical and special contexts.

‘There are many possible ways of thinking and talking about children and childhood and the choices we make have consequences for policy and practice –and for the lives and subjectivities of children’. (Moss et al 2000:251)

The artists themselves, in talking of their role and their art, may have theories of **teaching** which they would not necessarily label as such.

Artist D *Today in the session one of the mums was cutting things out for the little boy and I steered her away from that and tried to get her, you know, facilitating his choice of colours and fabrics and textures and instead ofJust by you know, kind of gently, gently steering it and not saying 'Don't do that' or 'Don't do this' or, you know, just try to maybe get her to think about offering the choices instead of taking it over from him. So in that sense we're trying to, you know, work with the children but we're trying to involve the mums and the families in helping the children develop that creativity.*

More usual, though, are theories of **learning**, which are expressed in various ways.

They are, it seems, related to the ways in which the artists explain their own mental and creative processes. These are sometimes complex views that have not, by and large, been packaged in educational jargon so the various strands that make up the whole are still visible.

Artist A *My work is conceptual, so having to ask questions, analyse, debate is not always 'nice' and sometimes difficult. Art is about looking at the world in new ways; about challenging ideas about each other and culture. This makes a healthier culture because there is empathy. I think you draw on different parts of the brain at the same time. It should be intellectual –you intellectualise what you're doing. The mind connectives shape the way we view ourselves, our cultures and we construct and reconstruct new meaning.*

Artist B *I have been to Reggio Emilia. This opened my eyes. It totally illustrated the concept of allowing the child to discover for themselves- harnessing the child's own curiosity. It follows that if you put the child in a situation where their curiosity allows them to learn, they will learn... that it confirmed things –that you relate things to where the children are. I have worked, do work, in community arts and I felt there were some key things like respect for where people are and work with what you've got; make what you do come from the people themselves. The creative bit is more meaningful if it comes from people themselves.*

Artist E *I can't learn by being told and have to sit down and well behaved, that's not where I've ever come from and excelled at school in the past but I can learn if it's meaningful to me.*

Artists are comfortable with the future and, as has been noted, uncertainty and risk. So building in possibilities or pockets, as this artist imagines them, that may or may not be realised does not create anxiety.

Artist F *It's about using all the senses. For example when they're doing the art work I get them to talk about what they're doing and how they're thinking about it –so they're talking all the time. Then they have to 'see' things, and listen and make connections and so on. I went to a lecture once where he said it was about having a hundred pockets -but they might not all be full. I like to think I'm giving them pockets that might fill up one day if not now.*

One co-ordinator did distinguish the dominant paradigm from their own experience.

Co-ordinator 2 *(Their) work is more about child development we had bigger aspirations*

One of the artists, too, was able to add a wry note

Artist F *Having said that, Reggio is in Italy with Italian people –we're not, and aren't.*

Process and product

The paradigms and philosophies of teaching, learning and creativity come together in the debate over the relative importance of the 'process' and the 'product'. It is not, though, much of a debate when paradigmatic allegiance privileges one; in this case, the view that the 'process' is all. But artists, in their own professional, work create a product, however temporary. This would seem to be a potential area of paradox and disquiet if artists do not separate their educational from their professional work.

However there was, actually, only one artist who said 'process is the only thing' but had produced decorations for the building. The artists actually see their own work, and their approaches to that, as the starting point for their work with others.

Artist E *My personal work is about the skin you see, so it's obvious I'm going to get more out of it if it's about what I'm interested in as well. So*

it's close up of skin and so they've already seen my close up of skin and they've already looked at their fingerprints and they've looked under the magnifying glass at their skin big and so they've already done that andAnd they've already been to the Baltic where I had an installation of faces that were done through needle holes, so it was just holes and they did holes with a cocktail stick and paper and made faces made out.....I just wanted them to do the work I did, so I sat and did the work how they did it and they sat on the gallery floor popping things and did what I do, so that they knew a bit about me and could understand my art work.

An aspect of their own work, and of creativity, is 'uncertainty'. This sits uneasily with most of the programmatic aspects of modern education but the artists see this as central to their work and practice. Uncertainty is also a 'risk' to them as individuals and artists.

Artist A . *I'm clear about starting point but don't know where it'll go because it's responsive to the group.... It's scary not knowing the outcome –but then when something comes, it has integrity.*

Artist C *In the current project I'm scoring something that will be performed. There are many perceptions of a musical score. I've created a template score and I'm satisfied that reflects my insights and aspirations of what a performance stands for that I felt comfortable with. But I also have to sign areas within the score into which they can put their expectations and skills. The result is eclectic but it's a mode of working. I take a macro view- reading it is not at the level of style but of the moment –what people bring to it. In doing this I, of course, risk my authorial voice.*

The main impediment, though, to neurosis and schizophrenia is the integration of process and product in the artist's mind and in their practice. They are articulate on this point.

Artists A *The performance should be a strong part, because that's when you share it. Product and process are equal. The product grows out of the process.*

Artist C *When artists are involved and there's no official 'end product' the work is still informed by an 'implied product'.*

Artist D *I mean partly what we're doing is creating pieces to inhabit the space downstairs. So it's about, you know, the children claiming the spaces...because I could have quite easily have come in and made lots of*

things and hung them up and you know- but that's not the way that I'm approaching the work, I'm very much working with the children to create their own things.... So in that sense the product is quite important for this particular project but also process is just as important because it's been about all of those things, about experiencing the stimulus and you know and all of the different things that they've done as well.

Children's responses and experiences are central, not least in the theoretical approaches used in the projects. It is meant to be about them, not about the artists, educators or co-ordinators. Woods and O'Shannessy (2002), in researching an attempt to introduce creativity into a primary school, report that teachers thought that the most successful activities were those where children were actively engaged in creating a worthwhile finished product, or where they were fully involved (eg drama, dance).

An important point that the artists, with their eye on the individual, stress is the heterogeneity of projects and experiences. They also, especially if they work in the 'community', see the product as sometimes being an obligation to the participants and audience. This is a recognition that not all groups share the same perspectives on activities and experiences.

Artist D *I think an acceptance that it's not always the same for every project, ..yes I think that's very important..... I do think it's about balance really, it is about balance because people I mean particularly when you work in community settings as well, you knowPeople want to see what's been going on, you know, they want to know what their money is being spent on as wellit's a way of people understanding what it's about and so people want to see something. Because they want to be able to kind of go, 'Well all right that's what's been happening'. And I think also as well, there's a lot of pressure from the powers that be, whoever they may be in specific projects about making the process visible, so a product is a way of making the process visible, if you like.*

Co-ordinators, and one of the teachers, tended to stress the relational and experiential aspects of the activities, which owe something to both psychological and educational approaches.

Co-ordinator 1 *Being in their home is important. (It's about) building relationships.*

Co-ordinator 3 *It's a different way - another way of engaging with an adult. It's a capacity to explore a concept, an environment, explore I'd say a task but I don't really mean task - a little process without it having a meaning beyond the doing.It's a facilitated experience and what the artist does is they facilitate the experience.*

Teacher Y *The very young need to find out about the properties of the materials. That involves them in touching and feeling and so on before they can use them.*

Chapter 2

Practice

Underpinning all of these projects there is a general positive philosophy that emphasises the importance of context-specific teaching and learning. However it is important to note that this is the focus among all child-centred theories. One would expect, therefore, that there might be differences between projects. In some ways there are; but there are also striking similarities. This research project was not large enough to unravel the subtleties of these similarities and differences; only obvious points can be noted. Even so, they raise some interesting issues.

One, or in one instance, two artists working with children in one, or two, nurseries on a weekly basis was the case in one city, one village and one small town setting. This is not to imply that size of habitation is necessarily the crucial factor. One large village setting had a project where the artist went into children's homes for eight weeks and worked in the nurseries they subsequently attended. The other small town setting used one-off events and short 'courses' for parents and children together. Although detailed knowledge of the origins and decision-making of the projects was not possible in this research it seems to be the case that most projects are conceived by co-ordinators and employers rather than by artists themselves. This is not to suggest that the artists have had no input into the nature and shape of the projects they are doing. Clearly they usually have. But a co-coordinator who was an artist conceived the only example of an artist being awarded a sum of money to go off and

'come up with a scheme' in conjunction with a school. This had proved a positive approach to project development.

Only two of the five projects worked specifically with parents as well as children. In both these cases there was a history of community involvement and work with adults. The fact that the other projects were centred on the children may be a reflection of the fact that co-ordinators and employers come largely from educational backgrounds where working with children, as individuals, has been the norm. This is not a criticism, but a comment on one of the factors that seems to shape the provision. This might be considered to be the correct emphasis, as these are, after all, educational projects. One might want to make a case for a more social and community approach to new directions in education and, in this sense, projects such as these being discussed could be conceived of as 'outside the box' in a real sense.

One of the ways in which the projects are similar is in their attention to operating recording and evaluation systems.

Artists seem to be in the habit of recording for their own reflection.

***Artist A** You need to do your own evaluation because you need to interrogate the impact of the creative process.*

***Artist D** I mean that's one of things that I've been doing as well, is making lots of photographs. Lots of documentation, I've kept a diary throughout the project. There are drawings and photographs of some of the sessions. It's part of the way I work as well, you know, I always keep a book. It's very much - because it's a memory thing as well, you know, something to, you know - different things are thrown up about ideas as well, so that you might go back over a book that you created three years ago and -I think it's for reflection and professional development as well.... I think as well it's about recording the artist's experience as well.*

They may also choose to show their records to others in the group with which they are working.

Artist F *It's mainly for me. When I see a photo it brings the whole thing back and I can go back over the records for particular children. They have been passed on to the reception teacher in the school and she's found them so useful she's learning to do it for herself. It's mainly in order to make decisions about the children. But it's a useful record to show other people.*

This record keeping, though, has grown and become synonymous with evaluation and public accounts of the professional's work. Under the dominant philosophy, the self-reflection and reflexivity common to all professionals who work with others has become conflated with documentation that is not private. Where one set of professionals directs another set, this is clearly a useful development for the former. Artists themselves seem to accept the principle, or necessity, of records that are useful for a variety of purposes.

Artist G *I'm trying to make it (the documentation) more accessible. It gives everybody an idea of what's going on; so that it's not just in your head. It's a way of co-ordinating everyone's observation. People watch individually, so documentation makes it more integral. But it's sometimes important not to bog yourself down in systems. I have to say I do mine mainly by photographs –perhaps I'm an artist and a visual person.*

Teachers, used to being assessed and evaluated in various ways, are now having to learn a different form of documentation for these projects. The amount of thought and energy that goes into this is considerable.

Teacher Z *In the first year (of the project) we were finding out how to document. We have a member of staff doing the recording and taking photos. The second year of the project is about recording and documentation. After a session the artist and two staff sit down and discuss it; we have developed a format for that. We aim to produce a booklet for each session to give to other teachers. Technology is a problem –getting a format that doesn't take forever to do.*

But it is recognised that the documentation itself may be the vehicle by which the enterprise is validated.

Teacher X *Documenting the process has given us some credibility.*

The emphasis on the documentation was seen, in one observation, to shape the whole session and determine the experience. On that occasion there was no extra member of staff available to do the 'recording'. The children in the artist's group were therefore added to another group, in the latter's room, so that their teacher could be the photographer and note-taker. This arrangement doubled the size of the intended group; had children who did not normally work together suddenly combined and this happened not in the usual venue but in one in which there were permanent toys and items around the room. The children took full advantage of these during the session, in a way that was not intended. During the session the children were digitally photographed and notes of some of their utterances and actions taken. At the end of the class these were all edited, by the three professionals, into what would become the record of that session. The instance quoted may not be typical, but the issues it raises are probably fairly widespread. The first issue is the extent to which the 'recording' of the process becomes, in fact, the 'product' and the second issue is the nature of the ethical principles that may, or may not, be present in recording children in this way. The final issue is the selection and editing of the 'moments to record' for evaluation purposes. Evaluations need to include a representative sample of the project including strengths and areas that need further consideration.

Co-ordinators are, arguably, the people for whom the artefacts of evaluation and recording are the most useful. As a group they are usually more distanced from the activities and yet, may be the employers and funders.

Co-ordinator 4 *That's going to be a big chunk of what's happening next-documenting what happens during the sessions.... This is something which hasn't really been done very much in the past, so that's quite exciting..... it's really about being able to show that creative journey, or whatever, and that's looking at doing that through documenting what the children say in a session. So you can see how their ideas develop, and through photographs eventually having displays in here. So there will be quite significant displays of a particular project, maybe as it develops on the walls and people can come in and see what was happening.. and whether that works, you know, remains to be seen but obviously it's that whole area that needs developing and the problem is it's a subjective experience isn't it and the next time it's not the same. So it's interesting and it's quite exciting to see whether people -whether it will shed some light on what happened during the project or a residency. So I think we will have to see whether it works and look at that, ask people about what they've seen on an exhibition or a display and build on that.*

There are qualitative aspects to practice that are not necessarily captured by these recording and evaluation methods. Experiences are enhanced, denigrated and mediated by 'time'. For co-ordinators 'time' may be contextualised within a planning framework.

Co-ordinator 2 *having time to plan is vital –.with this project we built in non-contact time. They had paid time to come up with a piece.*

Co-ordinator 3 *what came out of that was a notion that the planning process, the staff needed to be - the lead- in time and the planning with the staff had to be longer - and we actually took up that on board with our next nursery and the two new artists going into another nursery setting that we gave the artists an opportunity to simply be in the space without there being a specific -without doing anything to do with the project, at that point, simply to become familiar all people, little people, teaching staff to get to know the artists and for the artists to get to know the environment and then begin the project.*

For teachers, time 'gained' may be important.

Teacher X *It's been a luxury having time after a session to discuss with the artist. It's led to new depths, because we're given time to reflect and look at different ways of moving forward. We don't often get time to develop things as much as would like.*

Artists, though, clearly express the different qualitative experiences that a variety of ways of organising the time have.

Artist A *One intensive project became all consuming and had energy.*

Artist D *Well I think they have a different energy. (weekly sessions compared with courses). I mean I prefer to do both. I prefer to do, you know, some sort of ongoing work- which becomes very much about people becoming familiar and, you know, building up trust and relationships and, you know, if you're specifically working with children, the children get to know you and...they know what to expect of you, they know what not to expect or they know that there's going to be something unexpected, depending on what you're doing, .A block tend to have a different, because it sort of steps up a notch if you like, has a different dynamic about it. It becomes the main focus of your life. I know I don't cook and I don't shopSo it does become a different ... which you couldn't, of course, sustain over a year because it would, you know, it would be too much.*

Artists E *I have done both. (time-scales) The one that was an intensive week I think will stick in everybody's memory. It was very bonding because I'm still in touch with the arts officer and we feel like we've been through something together too. Yes, that was a week of our lives. And I do other workshops where I go in once a week, I go into a school for two months, I think once a week and I'm coming in on a Monday and - which is good because if it's every week they do look forward to that day and know I'm coming and then you get greeted, 'Oh can I carry your bag' and all and that you know. So you do get to know them and they get to know you. .There's some that slip by you, because you haven't got that long to know everyone. So you know the helpful ones or the naughty ones, or the sweet ones or the boisterous ones; the ones that are just in front of your face the most or whatever. That's sometimes difficult because if you're going just once a day for a couple of hours, you haven't ever got the time to get to them. Although you want to, because time is short. Whereas if you've got a whole day you can get to them, you can get to them over a day.*

Artist G *I have done both (time frames). In this project, which was once a week –that's not ideal because when you come in you're always trying to catch up with what's gone on in your absence. You're not a regular part of it, in some ways you're seen as a visitor. But when you have an intensive project that's not always sustainable. The best thing would be to work full-time in one nursery as part of a team. One year is good because the children grow and change.*

Co-ordinators sometimes expressed the view that the mere act of programming art may remove one, or more, of the valued elements.

Co-ordinator 2 *So the risk factor goes out of it. We built a structure to allow as much flexibility as possible.*

If they are conscious of this, they may attempt to 'programme' to allow for flexibility and unpredictability.

Co-ordinator 3 *I think it's about planning, that's fundamental. It's about being organic in the process, about sometimes perhaps having initial thoughts and ideas, aims and objects and thinking through your capacity to change them so they can - that's a big one for us. - being flexible, and letting the artist be flexible.....Well perhaps if you're being prescriptive then you're not allowing for some unexpected outcomes that may, you know, develop. So you might write a project proposal and put your ideas on paper and your aims and objectives but when you put it into practiceIt has to be fluid because people and, you know, politics come into play, so there always has to be the flexibility that if you find that your idea isn't working within that setting or with that teacher or, you know, for whatever reasons, you have to have a contingency plan that is moveable because - and it's not you then being prescriptive and you're just saying to people 'Well look, we've set these aims and objectives and we have to achieve them, you know, our funding says we have to achieve' ... It's a learning process for us all the time as well.*

Essential elements of creativity reside in unpredictability and risk. This is what professional artists regard as central to their own practice and this is what they wish to allow children, in their projects, to experience. However, systems of recording and evaluating which are time-consuming and programmatic could, unintentionally, undermine the very nature of the creative experience.

Chapter 3

Working together: artists and others.

Some co-ordinators have a larger role into which these projects fit. However co-ordination and negotiation are central to all their activities.

Co-ordinator 2 *I come up with an idea, raise the money to make it happen, get the right artists involved, find the right partners*

Co-ordinator 3 *So in a sense it's about the making, the doing, the commissioning, and the facilitating of art.*

Part of their role might also be the public relations 'packaging' of the ideas and activities they wish to promote.

Co-ordinator 3 *I mean in a lot of cases, not just in the nursery when you're trying to sell art at school, you kind of have to package it in a way that I've found in my experience that there is- should be about additionality, but 'that has to be about whether this can be in your Citizenship module' because people can't think outside the curriculum and they've got so many boxes..... because you do go in to schools sometimes and staff can't be bothered. It's just another thing for them to do, it's extra and they're already under so much pressure but, as I say, if it can't be seen to be covering something they need to cover then it's just another thing.*

There may be more than one co-ordinating group and negotiation between themselves is a precursor for the negotiation with others.

Co-ordinator 4 *So when the theatre became involved as the partner then immediately things, other thoughts and suggestions were being taken up that came from that same point but came out of the kind of things that they have got the experience in - and so, in fact, I don't know whether that was about the changes of the aims but it was certainly about kind of clarifying what people were hoping for. So it's certainly been a clarifying and a combining of aims between the two organisations. The good thing about is that is there are kind of no models, you know, all possibilities are open; and probably the kind of practical good thing about it is that you've got an organisation like Sure Start, which has a lot of experience to draw on in terms of working with the age group and then you've got an organisation like the theatre, which has a lot of experience to draw on in terms of working with people.... which makes potentially a strong combination.*

Negotiation may take place through a joint planning process.

Co-ordinator 1 *There was joint working between nursery staff and artist. We worked together from the planning stage.*

When co-ordinators facilitate the relationship between artists and educators they may do this by taking a leading role that, in this instance, involves the participants in meetings, workshops and seminars.

Co-ordinator 5 *Some people were uncomfortable about the way their material was discussed in the group – so that was interesting. But it meant they were still in there- in the group. So we notice it, and talk about it, and we get past the feeling of being criticised –so that they feel they can talk about what they do. To have a discussion – a dialogue.*

They may also feel the need to ‘educate’ the educators.

Co-ordinator 2 *A lot of the nurseries have to come on a bit of a journey with us –it’s about taking people through a process..... Even nurseries are driven by targets now –they have to trust you to go on that journey with you. We ran training sessions for the nursery staff.*

Co-ordinators are the employers and only, in theory, have a need to persuade the educators to co-operate. The relationship between individual artists and educators is more open to negotiation, change and, perhaps, unpredictability. If the educational institution has a strong philosophy, which is not the same as the artist’s, then the balance of power obviously rests with the institution.

Artist E *It is (the nursery) structured and there are these, like, there's the arts section and there's the planning section and there's the reading and writing section and it is very much - it is very organised and there's time-slots where the children know what they're doing next. Yes it is structured.....It is a particular kind of approach and they are good at some things. ... So I was just in their usual art corner and they could come and do it or not. Which is very, very different to a lot of the nursery schools that I work with... I did fit into their structure, so I was there at their planning meeting as soon as they'd had their hellos and greetings they went into a planning meeting where they planned and decided what they were going to go to. So I went to that and then I went into my corner where they could come and do art with me and that kind of thing. So it*

was- it was definitely that they were introducing me to their day and I took part in their day, that's how it was.

There are examples, though, where artists feel that they are involved in a truly joint enterprise.

Artist G *I'm part of the team and they value it. It's changed the way they look at things and develop things. They're looking at the children more. As an artist I'm not tied up, like they are, I'm freer –can take more risks, anarchy and chaos, if you like! The other people take this on –it's another ingredient in the mix.*

Although the artist, here, is noting her effect on the teachers one of the teachers in question, though, stressed that it was a two-way process.

Teacher X *We learned from her but she learned from us about which bits of behaviour not to let go.*

The artist may also have encouraged the approach called 'going with the flow' –as opposed to 'getting done'. (Woods & Jeffrey 1996)

Teacher X *I find that now when we go in the outer area with the block play, I will stand back and for ten minutes the children may go berserk but rather than saying right and panicking we're going to now do this in the end if you give them the time they will actually start working on their own.*

Occasionally, artists may be influential over other professionals as well. Although this seems fairly random.

Artist D *The speech and language therapist has been going in and doing work with the children in the nursery and it's just kind of coincided that some of the work I've been doing- which has been descriptive work- I'll just explain a little bit about one of the sessions I did. I was taking lots of things in, in bags, and then we were looking at the bags and they were all different kind of bags- shapes and sizes and jewelled and beaded and smooth and rough and furry and hard- and lots of different types of containers. Some paper bags and some with ribbon on and some with tape -and so just lots of different stimulus really, and then we've been looking at them and exploring them and describing them and touching them in a very sensory way. But because it's been quite a lot of verbal work, the*

teacher in the nursery said, 'oh this is brilliant for the speech and language work'

One artist placed real team-working as a central tenet of the whole enterprise.

Artist A *I think the dialogue is important because the dialogue establishes, again for me, the intellectualisation of what's going on, what we understand to be creative thinking. I also share - I've only just started doing this- I've started to share my own work.*

But, at the same time, artists also feel a need to maintain their distinctiveness for their presence to be meaningful.

Artist D *I think it's the deal with the devil if you like, that you do. It's part of facilitating the work but I think also having an artist in the group, it highlights those things that maybe a practitioner wouldn't necessarily think about from time to time as well-. I think it's another perspective. It's like any management group isn't it, you've got different people from their perspective or from their framework. I think it's good that, to some extent, that influence - that perspective can be absorbed, if you like, by the group itself. And I also think it's important, as well, that we fight for that (distinctiveness) as well.*

Too much incorporation is not, though, a universal aim.

Artist C *I can tell if I've been successful by the mild disquiet of staff! You're there to educate the institutions as well.*

This distinctiveness of artists, however, can be one of the elements of friction in the artist-educationalist relationship.

Artist A *I'll tell you what's hard, I think sometimes there's a jealousy as well where you are seen as this person who just comes in; you've got freedom, you do what you like, you do nice stuff and you It can be a bit hard to work with, I'm not saying everybody is like that. I think it's just now and again and perhaps you can understand it if they're having a bad day, if they're struggling, they've got these demands and so on.*

There are also difficult aspects of the relationship between co-ordinators and educators. There might be subtle sabotage.

Co-ordinator 3 *And you know the parents are quite often reluctant but I think what happens is that they've seen nursery staff I won't say dull down but, for example, we had an article put into the newsletter that pulls*

out. We did an article with nice pictures and things and that was to encourage parents to get involved and they never actually received the nice glossy thing, what they got was a slip that they had to tear off and sign to get permissions to get back....

However, probably more usual, are difficulties because of communication and authority systems in the other settings.

Co-ordinator 3 *You can often engage with senior staff who are the people who are buying into the process; they don't properly brief their staff and you don't know what their relationship with their staff is. 'You will do this next week' not 'Let's all engage in the process first and then decide who does and doesn't want to do it' Sometimes it's imposed on them and you - that's a realisation, you could be working with quite senior people and realise that their staff won't engage with it because they don't feel - they don't like being told that's what they're doing.*

Outside bodies may also be instrumental in the success or failure of the enterprise.

Co-ordinator 1 *You could go to schools who would say 'That was not a successful project' and you could go to schools who would say 'It was brilliant'. In fact there was one school who wanted to pull out of it. They were having such a hard time with this that really they just didn't feel comfortable with it and so we went and spoke to them. I went and spoke to them and we re-negotiated the age group. It had been with reception and we moved it to another year group. That school was Ofsted'd and the project was taking place and I went in to support on the day when it was working, as you do, and the Ofsted inspector said 'This is what these kids need'. So that school had turned round from 'This is just not working' to 'Yeah, actually this is exactly what our kids need' you know, within a short space of time.*

The Artists

It is clear that the individual qualities of the artists themselves are fundamental to the success of the projects.

Co-ordinator 1 *She's exceptional not all artists could do it. She perceives art as a learning experience and about the process. She intervenes to help children make decisions. Some artists, it's more about their work than the children's She's not a teacher. She presents herself as an artist and a mother and local. She looks different. She can now sit and talk National Curriculum. She has an interest in young children. She's very organised.*

With her documentation.. She sees opportunities for learning in all sorts of things and all sorts of ways.

Teacher X *She brought in new resources, a different perspective; and ideas of possibilities. She's very observant, which is what you need - observation, sensitivity, a greater sense of freedom.*

For one teacher the artist's personal qualities were even more important than his profession.

Teacher Z *The fact he's an artist isn't important to me-it's who he is, he has a history here.*

Most of the artists themselves, though, see their art as being central to their identity and educational work.

Artist D *I'm a practising artist and that's kind of that's foremost how I think of myself as well, you know.*

Artist F *Do you still have time for your own art?*
God, yes. I have to do it mainly evenings and week-ends now, but I should die if I couldn't do it. That's me, that's who I am.

Artist A *..I suppose part of my own way of working as a performance artist, I'm very interested in how we understand ourselves as body and as a mind and not separating them and how we respond to new spaces and to new experiences and the ideas of themes like things that are lost, things that are almost like metaphysical. So all of the things like that feed in as well.*

They also draw a clear distinction between themselves and teachers.

Artist A *I feel quite a different person as an artist to what I felt as a teacher, I would say very different. I think the way I live my life is very different now because I think being an artist, you struggle because you are having to search for originality and uniqueness to make your artwork different, to make what you do stand out and to have something to say.*

Artist C *What I do is not 'classroom music'. I cultivate a kind of 'equivalent' attitude in kids-I'm not thinking of broader educational outcomes. I think 'what is it these individuals can give?' I look for 'another version' of them-this is the most important thing.*

Artist H *Art teachers are in the system -I can afford to think out of the box.*

The importance of artists **being** artists reflects the view of Millward and Parton (2001) who point out that in order to understand expression in the arts it is necessary for children to ‘think about art, to read art, and to make art’ (2001:192).

There is a range of views about the exact relationship of the artist’s own work and their educational activities.

Co-ordinator 2 *I think it’s about artists who openly embrace, who don’t really distinguish between what they would call their proper art, i.e. what they do for a living and the process of workshopping or developing with programmes with children.*

Artist G *My art is secondary when working with children –I’m facilitating, not pushing my art. It’s important to **me**, being an artist, but I don’t have to show it or keep demonstrating the fact.*

Co-ordinator 1 *I have experience of artists working in schools where maybe it’s more about their work than the children’s, do you know what I mean?*

There is, though, a delicate balance between artists being qualitatively different from teachers, at the same time as working acceptably in the system.

Co-ordinator 1 *I think they have a difficult balance to sort of strike between maintaining their distinctiveness as an artist and not getting sucked in totally to the system.*

Because the qualities required by artists are special and because they are, at present, acquired rather than taught the same group of artists are in great demand.

Co-ordinator 2 *Well I think the starting point is you need to have certainly with early years, you need to have experience of working with that client group because that hardest thing I think.. . . I think they’re hard to find and I think good ones are really hard to find. There are lots of people out there workshopping in schools or workshopping with little ones but whether they have a real understanding of what they’re trying to do or other than entertain a lot of the time or occupy, I would question*

that, I think they are quite hard to find, especially I don't think it's just with early years, I think across the whole range of artists and that's about the training that artists have.

Co-ordinator 4 *I guess the artists all come with a real ability at connecting with the children and that's why we use them.*

Artist E *I'm older than a lot of artists that are you know that are coming into it and so I do have more experience is all I'm saying, you know and also when I was saying I've been involved with children, I have you know, looked after children who have been abused for Social Services which just you know coming as an artist late I have this wealth of life experience.*

Artists are usually employed, in these projects, as individuals. Some co-ordinators see it as their role to support them through their own systems and frameworks.

Co-ordinator 5 *We see it as important that they are supported and given time.*

Co-ordinator 2 *It's another part of our work, is training. We run mentoring schemes for young, well - artists who haven't worked in schools, it's purely for the formal education sector and we have four mentors that we're using at the moment....*

Artists themselves may be seen to perhaps not always be the best people to be the ones doing the 'training'.

Co-ordinator 2 *, But I think there is another stage to that, which is about artists sharing practice who are experienced as well. Because the normal route for training is for experienced people to train inexperienced people. I think there is also a role for experienced people to share practice which doesn't necessarily happen that much.*

Artists themselves, however, may work in 'collectives' and have peer groups outside education. They may also have more temporary groupings but which are, nevertheless, important for their educational work.

Artist A *We invite each other to our work, we invite each other to be critical eyes. We need to be critical eyes to each other. We invite people who we respect as well, in terms of what they're going to say. I mean artist C and H and I are like that for each other and there is a wider group ..but the main thing is I think the artists really want to see each other*

grow, we get together sometimes and we have almost like self training, we-. I suppose we feel as well there is a strong sense of community and identity that doesn't we don't want it to be an exclusive group, it's always wanting to open doors and I enjoy working with people who perhaps haven't worked in the way that like to work before because they can also bring me fresh perspective as well.

Artist C *I get my support from people in the project. But then a project finishes. The groups are heterogeneous.*

Artist D *I think some of it is informal and some of it is through networks, if you like, you know being involved in -. being on mailing lists and things and going to events and you know.*

Artists may be employed individually and they are probably self-employed. They talk to each other about this.

Artist A *Some of us who get together have what we call our own staff meetings, which is about artists meeting, which is where you can share sometimes your frustrations. I mean people are dreadful at paying you, you know to me they're so bad at paying, they don't even realise that you're paying out of your own money sometimes. I've funded the videos of £606, you know, it will take about two or three months before I see that money... So we share little concerns about things like that.*

This employment process raises issues not only of training, as has been mentioned, but also of ethical and protection matters. Any code of ethics which does operate would seem to be personal and individual. Protection issues seem not to have been addressed. This not only refers to the protection of children but of the artists themselves. They do the kind of work, and are in the kind of relationship to children, that might give them access to 'privileged' knowledge. But there seem to be no general policies about this; other than 'experience'. This leaves the artist in a potentially stressful and vulnerable position.

Co-ordinator 3 *The one thing to mention as well that came out of the evaluation with one nursery, from the artists, is disclosure of information, what to do when a very small child discloses information to you and they felt that that was a training need for the artists and the artists recognised that...*

Artist I *I worked for an organisation that would have franchises around the world and they have a child protection policy and within that policy there are ways of reporting back incidents; things to do with dealing with media around these incidents and a 24 hour hotline to Child Protection to report these incidents as they happened, so that you're not you know -.Also they have education forums, maybe an artists' forum you know, where they can talk about issues that affect them when they're working in an education environment.*

Another concern, from an ethical point of view, and with children's rights in mind, might revolve around the matter of the recording and publication of photographs and accounts of the children's activities whilst they are in what used to be a relatively 'private' arena.

Chapter 4

Parents, Community and Locality

'Parent partnership' is not only a current concern in other levels of education but, as far as children with special educational needs are concerned, is firm Government policy. LEAs are now expected to have both a policy, and an officer, for this purpose (DfES 2001). Educational professionals at the Early Years level are aware of the 'importance' of families but, often, perhaps, only in relation to their own professional paradigms. This is worth drawing attention to, as some authors have claimed (Simpson & Cieslik 2002) that a feature of the Education Action Zones was their failure to achieve broad representation and democratic participation among parents. This might be due to adopting a deficit model approach to parents in certain areas and seeing the professionals' roles as 'compensating'. This is more easily done if the child is 'individualised' because then 'treatment' can be applied. This is not surprising as even research on home-school relations still focuses mainly on the professional, rather than the parent, perspective as Atkin et al (1988) noted years ago.

This is an aspect of the projects where artists, co-ordinators and educators may diverge. It is not uncommon for teachers to see any parental involvement there may be as another way of making those parents better able to 'appreciate' what the professionals are trying to do. Or of 'using' parents to assist the educational process already determined.

Teacher X *Because the children are going home all the time talking about what they've been doing and they're highly motivated...I think it enhances their respect for what we do in the nursery.*

One of the co-ordinators actually suggested that this was sometimes a problem.

Co-ordinator 3 *This is something we want and it is to involve parents and it is about them (the nursery), in a sense, letting go of some of that control*

because they are incredibly enthusiastic and fully understanding and engaged with the concept of what we're trying to achieve but at the same time they sometimes put barriers in your wayAnd you know the parents are quite often reluctant but I think what happens is that they've seen nursery staff - I won't say dull down- but for example, we had an article put into the newsletter that pulls out. We did an article with nice pictures and things and that was to encourage parents to get involved and they never actually received the nice glossy thing, what they got was a slip that they had to tear off and sign to get permission to get back.

Co-ordinators with a wider remit than the projects took a view that what they did was as much for the parents as the children.

Co-ordinator 4 *Most importantly it's the adults, it's the adults want to feel involved in the creative activities... Or you know, classes they haven't done since school or whatever and another thing that's been good is we've always presented the activities as being something for the children and the adults to be involved equally and you know, right down to on any of the publicity, finding an interesting way of promoting it.*

In this last project, one of the sessions observed had a time of relaxation at the end. Some relaxing music was played and parents were asked to hold their children and relax. The whole session involved the parents, by a project that had experience of this. At the end of this particular session one of the mothers commented '*This bit has been better for me than him (her child)*'.

However the artists, and co-ordinators who have been artists, have in the main a different approach to parents from that of educators. If they have done art in 'community' settings they are clear that parental involvement is important in order for them, as artists, to fulfil their brief.

Artist A *I want to see more and more of that (parents working with children) because in this new project, I've asked that parents are actually involved and in terms of coming into the experiences, We'd like to show work to both the parents and the community, the people in the fish and chip shop have got to know and I'm going to ask them to come in and actually be part of the creative experiences. What I've done in the past is parents have always been invited and always been interested..... absolutely*

and I think it's to me is sort of finding the parents and where they are coming from, about their ideas, you know.

Artists, with their view of creativity and risk, may not expect or want a uniform acceptance of what they do from the adults.

Artist C *I do sometimes get negative responses –when I use kids in the performance. I did one where there was a lot of very slow singing and movement ... the parents were disturbed by that.*

There are various ways in which people judge the extent to which parents have been 'successfully' involved.

Artist E *In that nursery they were quite impressed because a parent sent a card in, because the child had said how great a time they had had at the gallery. And the mother had put pen to paper and gone to the trouble to say how much the child enjoyed it because they'd done nothing but talk about it all night and she wrote which in that area as well, the other thing is, you know, you're not sure what skills in literacy they have.*

Artist F . *One of the things of the project is that it shouldn't cost the parents anything –so when we've done something we leave a few crayons or whatever it is behind (in their house) for them to use –and they do. The other week I did some rubbings with a child and left the charcoal. When I went back the next week there were all these other rubbings and the mother had taken the girl out and they'd done rubbings of the wall, the pavement –you name it. She said she wouldn't have thought of doing that herself, let alone with her child. It's also the risk thing again. They go funny when they see me hand over scissors –but when I explain it's Ok if you give them boundaries and tell them what they mustn't cut it's Ok and they see it is.*

The project referred to in this last quote was the one in which there was home visiting by the artist. One of the successful outcomes was that it seems as though the whole experience had made the parents more 'available' for wider participation in their child's education.

Co-ordinator 1 *Just a couple of weeks ago, the reception teacher - both the reception teachers said 'We think something has happened here that might be to do with the project'. They had asked for - or they had put on a reading workshop, or something like that, after school and normally they wouldn't get many parents. This time they got about twenty, or they got*

loads of parents, and they said, 'We wondered if it's because the relationship's now already been built between school and the home and so that parents feel more confident, but also think that they have a role to play in helping their children and that the school will help them to do that.'

As children do not exist in a vacuum, neither do parents. 'Community' is a complex reality, as well as a complex concept, but one which artists and educators work with. Some communities may be seen as fairly homogeneous. In which case the opportunities that are offered will be designed to work in conjunction with, and address, the main components.

Co-ordinator 1 *I mean what's sort of particular about the area is the almost isolationist type thing. ...and whilst there is economic and social deprivation it's still a very different nature to that say of a town or a city. There seems to be, we feel I mean this is just as outsiders, but there is a kind of social stability and identity to these areas which you don't get in a town and so in some ways, I think it works two ways, it actually gives kids I think are families and identity and a bit of a firm foundation but also it stops them from looking out and going elsewhere... So they don't look out. So the challenge for the area is almost one of aspiration, not significant social physical whatever deprivation, it's just that they don't seem or don't believe what's possible for them.... and so young kids have experiences of like you know being with granddad on the allotment and stuff, which is great, you know I mean it's really good that they have those kind of experiences as well but you're right in that what's available in the communities for the youth, you know is limited.*

One of the experienced artists, though, had reservations about this approach.

Artist C *All art is autobiographical and some people might say this disenfranchises the community –there are paradoxes... It assumes, of course, that communities are homogeneous and that you can access them.*

One co-ordinator seemed to address these issues by taking a partnership approach to the work. However, it is interesting to note that she drew a distinction between the purposes of her organisation and those of the caring and educative ones.

Co-ordinator 3 *It's sort of to look at sensitively how we reach that particular community and work with staff and parents and children to find ways of working with the arts, so we don't go in as experts, we go in as*

explorers, we go in as partnersWe're an arts centre; we're not a community centre or social services or a school.

There is an aspect of this community focus that is equally as important as the nature of it. That is, the parts which are not reached at all.

Co-ordinator 4 *There are a lot of people here who are not used to having very much at all –I suppose hard-to-reach groups and they're the ones who haven't really come into the centre.*

Locality, environment and context

Moving through mental 'boundaries', as has been indicated previously, is considered by artists to be a crucial aspect of creativity and artistic endeavour. It is sometimes forgotten, though, that there are actual physical boundaries to our behaviour; the ecology of the social. Artists are conscious of the importance of the setting in which their work takes place. They may attempt to overcome this, if they have the freedom and the space.

Artist D *..... I mean partly what we're doing is creating pieces to inhabit the space downstairs. So it's about, you know, the children claiming the spaces, all those classic things about making their mark on the space and becoming theirs.*

Artist A *The school has actually given me a room and we've sort of taken over this room and tried to just cover up all of the space with white sheeting, so it's got a neutrality about it.*

The space may, though, be limiting in terms of the people who access the art.

Artist A *For that other project I found a creative base in a church, it was a neutral base and parents were invited to come because I think the space you work in is very important... because schools are very - they're heavily agenda-d already and so are other places, quite often, and it's trying to find that neutral space.*

Particular co-ordinators, because of their background or location, are attuned to this aspect of the work.

Co-ordinator 2 *But the idea is she's going to have a creative base within the school, (in the next project) her own space which is something that we didn't do before.*

Co-ordinator 3 *That's new; it's the idea that of making this place a resource available for the project as well as the artist in that setting. And that is slightly different. Because as part of our visual arts programme giving up a space of time here specific for that group of people. So it's new, it's a kind of- it's a move forward for what we'd achieved before and a different kind of way of working than what we achieved before.*

Making the space available and allowing adults to be comfortable in it is a precursor to their ability to access creative experiences and processes. Parents are adults and, as such, are part of the process by which very young children may be incorporated into the creative experiences that artists are developing. This is to suggest the possibility that there may be an argument for an 'holistic' approach to children's creative development which, rather than 'inserting' children into the art, finds more ways of placing the art into the young child's context. Creativity is culturally specific (Craft 2003) and the individualising of creativity, with the focus on individual children, is only one approach. Millward & Parton (2001) express this succinctly

'We are inclined to think of expression in the arts as an opportunity for self-expression; but self-expression is mightily constrained. It is constrained not simply by the imagination of the child and by his or her technical ability, but also by the medium, by the audience and by the specific social and cultural contexts in which it is developed'. (2001:191).

Another approach would be to foster creativity for the 'mode of associated living that is called community' (Greene 2000:274). Perhaps it is possible, and desirable to do both.

Chapter 5

Outcomes and Impact

This was not a project that ‘measured’ outcomes from the outside. There are evaluation exercises that have attempted to do that. If taken from the ‘inside’, as it were, there is a complexity and subtlety to the outcomes that artists and educators themselves see that can only be hinted at in a small study such as this. Nevertheless, this would seem to be powerful testimony, not to the fact that there is an exact match between ‘Aims’ and ‘Outcomes’ but that, in some cases, something important has actually ‘happened’.

The most straightforward aspect to consider is probably that of ‘skills’. This matches educational objectives and ideas about use and purpose. Participants can, indeed, cite examples of an improvement in these as a result of the arts projects.

Co-ordinator 1 *Well actually the new kids were telling the old kids, ‘No you use a glue spreader like this’ and ‘you see you can fasten that together like this’. So they were actually able to apply, you know, some of the things that they had learned.*

Teacher X *It definitely helped them to listen to each other and the quality of the circle times which we actually had - circle time discussing within the projects and it was amazing, actually, the depths of conversation, because they were so involved with the projects. It wasn’t our agenda.*

Co-ordinator 3 *It’s the fact that in the Special Needs’ nursery a child said to the artist ‘tape or sticky?’. It was to do with creating a big tent, a big new tent because the artist was making it with tissue and bamboo and the children were helping him do that and he was doing it anyway and they diddled and engaged with- and the child was working beside him and said- I’m sure it was either tape or sticky and that was a breakthrough with the child. Simply to engage with, and ask of, the artist something that they hadn’t done before and that was something new to the child and that was observed by the nursery staff.*

Teacher Y (Are there any spin-offs from the project?) *Definitely, in terms of language; also maths. When we do things about size and shape*

and so on –that’s familiar to them. What happens, happens more and better

Equally as important, though, are the affective aspects of change that projects such as these can effect. The artist here is referring to a project she did with older children, but it illustrates the potential power of the work.

Artist A *One little girl came up and she said ‘when you first came here it was weird’ -. I’m paraphrasing, ‘it was weird but you know, after a while’ she said, ‘once I started to do it more and more I started to understand it and now that I’ve performed’, she said ‘I feel clear about what I’m doing because I was on my own journey when I was performing’.*

Teacher Y *They have more confidence; they’re willing to have a go.*

Another aspect of the success of the arts experience can be seen in terms of a development in a wide range of interpersonal relationships.

Artist A *so we have the rainbow birds, we have the child doing this, we have another child playing and saying ‘can you just do rainbow music on the piano’ and then I walk in and just sit on the floor and so you’ve got all of us performing together but you’ve got music, story, physical image and so on and it’s all led by the group.*

Co-ordinator 1 (the project that went into the home) *By building relationships with people we get to know the family, we get to know the children and so information would then emerge that is probably more robust, if you’re talking about evaluation, because it’s over a period of time. It’s not a one-off snapshot and the fact that the people who need to know that information directly gather it themselves, the nursery teachers, the nursery nurses, the artist*

Artist G (How would you judge success in these projects?) *By their involvement; by what they tell you. By their energy –you can tell. Their engagement –you just **know**, they have different ways of showing it. Group dynamics are important. Social and interpersonal relations are a big part of what they get out of it. Last year the group had strong individuals in it, but over the year they grew as a group. You have to learn to negotiate other people without losing your own identity. Being with a group sometimes happens at the cost of the child; they need to develop a sense of self.*

Artist E *So by actually working, everything changed over the week, totally changed during the week and the final day, the arts officer that had*

been working alongside me every day, you know, she said that the amazing thing to come out of it was how they shared everything. Because the older ones had been showing –and they'd been sharing pencils, 'I want the red or '- you know, how they'd been looking after each other; how they'd made friends obviously, but across ages – which, you know, was nice and how they seemed to be thinking of others and had, you know, there was definitely some caring and social changes that had happened just during one week.

It is clear that at both the skills and the affective level, artists can often engage with, and recognise, other aspects of a child than educators might. Children can express themselves in ways that a person who works in non-verbal media can recognise and respond to immediately.

Artist A *I watched him with the feathers and he spoke with the feather because he was dropping them and then picking them up, just playing with these feathers and I just watched him for a while....and I said 'look', and we all just watched him for ages and I just started to play the piano to give it a sense of a sort of theatrical context. The teacher said afterwards, she said 'gosh you know the fact he even stood up and carried on using the feathers when normally he would just not be- not want attention at all, he'd hate it' and I said 'but he has a strong physical element'*

Co-ordinator 3 *and sometimes through engaging in those processes, the staff can learn things about that child's abilities that they didn't know- because they don't learn in that way or through that route, if you like. Sometimes staff - quite often, particularly Special Needs staff, have come back to me with expressions of 'I didn't know, you know, this girl hasn't had high contact with anybody for two years until this project'.*

The people involved directly with the children, the artists and educators, can cite examples of particular individuals and groups who have given indications that the projects were worthwhile and adding another dimension to the children's experiences and development.

Teacher X *I think we could pick out certain children where you can say it had changed them. I mean if I think of B. last year... who was not- who didn't have a creative approach at all in the sense he was quite a bright little boy, but he didn't paint and he didn't talk about things and he actually became involved in the silk painting and became quite descriptive about things and not embarrassed about it any more. Whereas before it had been seen as a very girly thing to do and he was a real macho boy*

Artist D *I've seen how being involved in projects - I mean I did some work a few years ago with schools in the borough and we made some banners and we put them up in the local shopping centre. One of the particular schools I worked with was very kind of, you know, very sort of- it had a lot of problems in the school and it didn't have a great deal of money and the parents - there's wasn't a strong parental involvement in the school. It was a particularly deprived area and you know, all of the associated social problems that come with that, you know, but the **buzz** that happened within the school, you know, and just seeing some of the reactions of the children when we went down to the centre and said 'There you go, there's your work up there in this place where they all go to and it's a public place' and, you know, it's a very kind of straight forward idea to do that but you can see it in people.*

Artist C *An example I can think of is when I was doing a session and at break-time the kids just carried on. I didn't want that, I needed my cup of tea! But they were so into it –they wouldn't stop.*

One aspect of the success of projects can be seen in the extent to which they aid 'capacity building' in schools and communities. In this respect examples were also available.

Co-ordinator 3 *That head teacher in particular is looking at the environment of the school and developing the environment and looking at it separately. We went in to do some work in their garden.She just got it, she really got it, and she built confidence in her own ability to then commission, buying, having artists in and I think that's what we will want to leave behind - a capacity for the nursery staff to say 'we really enjoyed that and that had a value'. I've had another nursery head ring me up recently and say 'Just how much did you pay them? (the artists) Because we want to do it again'.*

Artist D *We'd done some silk painting and school went out and bought some silk and some silk paints and they had no money, you know, but they went and spent on what was incredibly expensive materials to them. But they wanted to try it and they'd been inspired by the project to try it themselves. So just something as simple as them going 'Well we've got this budget and it's really precious and we'll spend- we will go and spend this money on this because we feel that it's, you know, the children have responded really well to it so we'll try and harness that a bit and continue on with that.'*

Artists in these projects usually feel the traditional inaccessibility, to large sections of the population, of certain art forms, is a form of elitism that needs to be addressed.

Where artists, as practitioners, are engaged in their own 'productions' this may become a real and meaningful part of the demystification process. In this instance the artist took the children to see her finished exhibition and showed them how she had achieved some of the effects, which the children then experimented with.

***Co-ordinator 3** So the children went across and worked with the artist, because her work was on the wall and that was the specific intention. I thought that worked extremely well. Pink dominated as the colour because her work is abstract, completely abstract, so that was quite interesting. So the children were not looking at the pictures, the children were looking at texture and colour. She then explored with the children what that meant for them, so they interpreted their own sense of her work and their own sensations.... First of all she went in part time and ...they looked at work that they were already doing within the nursery that is about structures and that was to do with buildings and all kinds of structure. So they look at structure in the broader sense of the word and looked at art and architecture and loads of different things; shapes, form and content all that kind of stuff ...and then they came and visited the exhibition.*

In case an important aspect of children's development should be forgotten, we should remind ourselves that enjoyment and fun are experiences which may be hard to measure, but easy to see.

***Artist D** You can tell that they're having fun because you can see whether they're enjoying something or not straight away, because if they're not they just go. There's no conventions like adults, who might be polite about it and stay and think 'Well I've got to stay until she's finished' – they will just think 'I've had enough of this' and they're off!*

Educators, in these projects, do not dissent from the view that engagement with professional artists has had real, and sometimes profound, effects on both the skills, affective and interpersonal development of children. They can cite individual and group examples as evidence. Artists, too, can do this but they also 'know' in a way which is not necessarily encapsulated formally. Their knowing might come from levels of energy within the group; non-verbal responses of children and the way children have engaged individually and collectively with the activities. This is

important to note, as the arts is intended to reach the parts that other processes do not. It should not be surprising, therefore, if intuitive judgments by professional artists rightly form part of their own assessment of efficacy and success.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research set out to address the question

“How can the impact of the arts on the development of young children be seen and valued?”

It was not our intention to begin by looking in on, and measuring the impact of, creative arts events and the creative development of young children. In this research we have built a response by examining the question from the views from inside the projects. We wanted to explore the stories that the participants told about their own experiences of working on the selected projects and the impact they felt had occurred.

It is clear from the earlier chapters that there has been impact from the projects on all of those involved and a great deal of this is positive. These projects, many of which are in the early stages or ongoing, have and are having impact upon those involved. It is clear from the accounts that those involved all know what they feel should be coming from the work with the children, parents and others involved in the projects. They know what the impacts are, even if, at times, they cannot realise that through traditional recording of outcomes as discussed on page 50.

It is the nature of such projects that the aims and outcomes may shift as the projects develop and events occur within the work that are critical for those involved. These critical events are as Woods writes

‘-critical in the sense of crucial, key, and momentous, rather than being problematic.’ (1993:viii)

It is worth noting that in reading the voices in the previous chapters that much of what is accounted for fits within this notion of 'critical events'. We would not want to undervalue those parts of accounts, which could have been negative for some of the participants, but to highlight the positive.

The projects described in the interviews and through the secondary sources have either fully or to some extent met the criteria that Woods (1993) suggested are those qualities to emerge from 'critical events'. These are, conceptualisation, preparation and planning, divergence, convergence, consolidation and celebration.

The impact felt by the participants of working within these projects has clearly caused reflection on their own working partnerships. This is an area that has potential development for the future. There are questions raised about some of these impacts that may well require action by the teams or others involved in supporting or funding initiatives. These have emerged from within and may not have done so had the research approach been different.

It is apparent from the accounts that the participants have clear ideas about what is being achieved within the project sessions and are collecting information on the effects in ways that are useful to those involved in the project and potentially other audiences. Though care needs to be taken when using the work generated in the *privacy* of the sessions with young child that then becomes a *public* record or used as evidence. This is also true of using extracts taken from the working or private journals intended for reflection within the project. The products of projects, whilst not being an end in themselves, are seen by some to allow others to have access to the projects

and as accounts, or celebrations and achievements. However the same caution highlighted above applies. Some of the evidence also highlights tensions between artists' agendas and understandings and the agendas set by others. These aspects of the findings raise a series of issues relating to the ethics of these projects and potentially other projects to the future. This is a very complex and difficult area that requires further careful consideration.

A related area is that of the protection of the artists' rights. This area includes the support available to enable security when in employment. There is a need to facilitate the artists' in the sharing of practice and development of their own skills, knowledge and understanding without having to vastly compromise themselves as artists. Mentoring is an issue that is already being developed but 'who does the mentoring? and for whom?'. This is an area where careful consideration is needed.

As is indicated in the earlier chapters, it is *distinctiveness* that is important in the experiences that teachers and artists, working together, create for the children. It is of little point using artists in projects with the children for work that the teacher or education worker is able to do easily. It is therefore important to ask the question do we need an artist to achieve the impact and outcomes in a particular project or just better trained teacher? It is clear in the projects where the distinctiveness of the roles of the artists and teachers have been carefully thought through that the children gain a lot. Tensions appear to occur when artists are expected to operate as teachers or teachers as artists. The work of Upitis, Smithson and Soren (1999) has clearly demonstrated the benefits from developing teachers as artists to become teacher artists. However this is not necessarily the approach that can or should be taken across

the piece. The issue, therefore, is one of the value that the distinctiveness of the two roles can create for children's and parents' learning within projects and community.

The creativity agenda was being addressed within these projects. However this may not have matched the official agendas, support for creativity and the way that learning experiences are shaped and understood. The participants saw the openness of learning, which involved opportunities to take risks and use exploratory approaches, to be of greater benefit than a model that was more structured. They held to this view even though at times this caused tensions for individuals or teams. The official definitions stress the importance of creativity to the future economic health of the nation (NACCCCE 1999). In response to the government's green paper the Learning Skills Development Agency (2001) supported this and took it one step further by stating

'...it would allow the creation of learning experiences, courses and qualifications which include appropriate cultural and creative outcomes'.
(2001:para24 p 3)

This Official support, for the encouragement of creativity, has arisen partly because of changes in the labour process. These move from 'generic labour', which is collectively indispensable but individually expendable, to labour which is 'self-programmable' (Castells 1997). The latter form of labour has the ability to constantly redefine the necessary skills for a task and to access the sources for learning those skills. This 'self-programmable' labour, Castells (1997) suggests, is best developed through exploratory learning which is associated with, among other things, innovation, variation and risk. This would be a tenet of all participants in these projects; it matches their paradigm and belief in education. A feature, though, of this kind of education is also, according to Castells, 'relaxed control'. The development of

‘appropriate ..creative outcomes’ (LSDA, 2001:3) and certain recording and evaluation processes might, paradoxically, encourage

- less variety;
- more predictability;
- less risk; and
- more control.

It is important that we get this right.

‘Democracy is not a natural form of association; it is an extraordinary and rare contrivance of cultivated imagination. Democracy needs the arts’.
(Barber 1992)

We were not able to discern from the interviews or the secondary data whether the various publications devised to support projects and artists are being used. These include publications on artists working in schools ‘artists in schools: a handbook for teachers and artists’ (Sharp and Dust 1997), ‘Artists in Schools: a review’ (Oddie and Allen 1999), the more recent ‘from policy to Partnership’ (QCA and The Arts Council of England 2000) and ‘partnerships for learning –a guide to evaluating arts education projects’ (Felicity Woolf, Regional Arts Boards and Arts Council of England 1999). These are some of the current public documents available to support this process and should perhaps be used as a starting point. Whether one agrees with the thrust of these documents or not, even if the model is rejected, they can support those planning projects.

When projects are to be commissioned, conceived and set up the funders need to be reassured that the funds will be used productively and have maximum impact. This issue generates a number of questions. Who gets to decide that a project is needed

and who the participants should be, will affect the whole nature and ownership of the work. Whether a project grows from within the community or is devised from outside will impact on the levels of involvement. How the specifics of a project are conceived and by whom has an effect on who participates and how they engage. The content of the project including the approaches taken has to be dependent on the way the project is planned and set up. Therefore each project has to consider who is best suited to set up, plan, coordinate and facilitate the work within the project. This may be one person or several but the way the decisions are made needs to have *open and explicit criteria* that are used for making the judgements.

Many projects claim to involve the community and parents/carers. It has been highlighted that often the role of parents has been viewed differently from the various perspectives of the professionals involved. As was highlighted in chapter four this can lead to tensions among project teams. The actuality of parental and community involvement during the projects vary. It seems to depend not just on the 'usefulness or otherwise' but on the levels and type of involvement of all the participants right from the commissioning and conceiving of the project, through all the stages, to the end.

Ownership at each stage for the participants including the artists seems key to successful outcomes. This involvement of community and parents/carers in the whole process allows for the impact of the project's outcomes to be shared in a positive way.

All five projects have an underpinning ideology and philosophy expressed in relation to young children, the arts, creativity and engagement in the arts processes and products. This can be glimpsed at in both the interviews and secondary sources.

Where projects appear to be less successful there is clearly a more remote control of

the project and imposed structures that do not sit easily with the artists and the participants. The context and choice of the space where the project operates also seems to be important because of the various messages that settings give out. These could be seen as either inhibitors or enhancers.

The research has shown that those who are directly involved in the arts projects with young children **know** that there is worthwhile and distinctive impact upon aspects of their development. The continuing support of artists working in a distinctive way with young children is valuable. It is very clear that the support and efforts of The Arts Council England North East has provided, and continues to provide, arts projects that create genuine impact in the lives of the young children in the North East.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from the series of interviews conducted by the researchers. As a result of the research the following recommendations are offered:

Impact Evaluation

Outcomes of the research indicate that the evaluation process is very important in determining future progress of any initiative. Impact evaluations also allow Arts Council England North East to determine future direction and support for arts education projects within the region. At this stage these are the key points relating to the central question of the research project.

- There should be a continuation of the requirement that projects build evaluation into their bids and undertake thoughtful evaluation of the effect and impact of their work.
- Larger projects should be carefully assessed by external evaluators to examine the stories that are being told. From this, connections can be made with other stakeholders without getting caught up in the specific projects' quality agendas. An external 'eye' seems key.
- Further work needs to be done to explore the way that evaluations are being carried out to provide useful data that can explain the creative arts projects to a wider audience.
- The evaluations should not become the products themselves.

- Methods of recording impact should both provide the relevant information for The Arts Council England North East whilst at the same time remaining sufficiently flexible to avoid an imposed standardisation.
- Continue the external research to explore in greater depth the complexities around the issue of impact. Through this to support The Arts Council England North East in developing funding streams and partners.

Ethical issues

The research uncovered some significant issues relating to the ethics of the projects and the treatment of those involved. These may well apply beyond this group of projects. As some of these projects have already taken place the authors are aware that some of the following are already being dealt with by the Arts Council England, both nationally and regionally.

- The ethical issues, embedded within the gathering and manipulation of evaluation data, reports, exhibitions etc, be considered in relation to children's rights as set out in the United Nations Charter.
- The ethical issues, embedded within the gathering of evaluation data on the artist's work and their personal reflective diaries, reports, exhibitions etc, be considered in relation to artists' rights.
- The ethical issues surrounding the artists' employment rights are considered to include those relating to the artists' access to appropriate support systems for dealing with sensitive issues that they might encounter.
- All projects must include an ethical stance that outlines the ethical procedures for the protection of the rights of the participants. That the statement includes an ethical stance towards data collection, handling, analysis and dissemination.

An observation that we feel incumbent to make is that no written documents from the projects contained statements concerning ethical issues and procedures. The literature aimed at supporting projects that we reviewed in this research (pages 56) did not offer advice in this area.

Other Recommendations

As the research and analysis developed a range of other recommendations began to take shape. These support the first set and are underpinned by the recommendations relating to ethics.

- That funding is put into place and works for the benefit of the interface between the young children and the artist to enable the young children and their art to be at the centre.
- Encourage those projects that develop from within and as part of community and are imbued with a genuinely collaborative feeling resulting in ownership for the participants.
- Encourage those involved in projects to use the available information to help in supporting the writing and presentation of high quality proposals for projects.
- Give support to project building skills that help provide clarity of intention and can provide information on impact that does not strangle diversity and flexibility, but creates genuine participation for all involved in the projects.
- Support continues to be given to enable artists and teachers to work together and enrich each other's understanding without destroying the distinctiveness of their individual roles.
- Continue to encourage those projects, which both in proposal, action and reflection continue to break out of the boxes and encourage a freedom of mind in young children.

The impact of the arts is being seen and valued but the different adult participants see different *things* and sense the impact on the young children in differing ways. As with all *genuine* educational experiences

I would hope that children learn they have a freedom of their mind, that they learn, that they can play and that in playing they can discover the world in ways that isn't fixed by an adult (Artist A)

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