

The Education of Artistic Vision: A Collaboration between the Community and the Academy

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Abstract

This paper investigates an established collaborative working relationship between two people working in the arts discipline area. One works in a voluntary arts organisation providing professional development for teachers, whilst the other is an arts academic preparing pre-service teachers for a primary teaching career. Both participants bring a range of skills, expertise and experience to their working collaborative relationship resulting in opportunities to engage the school, university and wider community in the arts. Narrative inquiry methodology has been utilised in order to provide rich insights into the elements which have contributed to the ongoing success of the collaborative relationship. The paper also explores the current context facing universities the challenges encountered by the collaborators in a climate of increasing performativity and accountability. The findings of this paper may assist those seeking to pursue university-community collaborations and provide insights into the characteristics of the collaborative process.

Introduction

The increasing interest in processes such as collaboration, particularly in the arts sector, is due to a range of factors, most notably the recognition that cross- or inter-disciplinary arrangements can provide new perspectives, skills and expertise which can result in the creation of something which neither a person or a group working in isolation could have achieved. Increasing corporatisation and accountability across a range of sectors can be linked to a growing awareness that management practices demand greater efficiency and productivity (Waples & Friedrich, 2011). Terms such as ‘benchmarking’ and ‘outputs,’ with the implication of an objective measurement of performance, have traditionally been confined to business contexts. Their growing currency in the education sector is indicative of a wider integration of management practices by educational institutions (Biggs, 2002; Neumann & Guthrie, 2002). The education sector, specifically schools, has come under increasing pressure to justify government funding and to engage with external benchmarking processes such as national exams in order to gauge student achievement and, subsequently, teacher effectiveness. Adams (2011) contends that discipline areas such as science and mathematics and educational priorities such as literacy and numeracy are valued for their economic potential whereas areas such as the arts have limited funding and are “neglected and expected to be sustained through dedication, commitment and passion” (p. 156). This perception is not supported by arts education research which has found that arts programs boosts academic achievement (Bamford, 2006; Catterall, Dumais & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Creativity, Culture & Education, 2012; Vaughan, Harris & Caldwell, 2011).

Waples and Friedrich (2011) argue that increasing economic pressure due to the global financial crisis highlights the need to capitalise on existing resources and value creative interactions, such as collaboration, which can lead to new “innovative process, products and services” (p. 367).

One innovative process which has traditionally been under-utilised is university-school partnerships which build upon existing resources, including human capital, to strengthen the relationship between schools and universities with a view to encouraging interaction between participants and achieve the goal of effectively training quality teachers for the classroom. Burton and Gregher (2007) contend that any discussion of quality teaching is “not complete without addressing the efficacy of various collaborative models such as school-university partnerships in the education of highly qualified teachers” (p. 13), noting that when “partnerships are well thought-out and designed for success, a number of benefits are possible for all participants” (p. 16). One such example is the Creative Partnerships program which ran in the United Kingdom from 2002 – 2011. This program was implemented in over 2,700 schools, with 90,000 teachers and over one million school students and brought together creative workers such as artists, architects and scientists to work in schools with teachers to inspire young people through creative practices (Creativity, Culture & Education, 2012). In Australia the national premier funding body the Australia Council for the Arts have pursued a similar program on a smaller scale through the federally funded Artist in Residence (AiR) program which is the focus of this investigation of the collaborative process between the two project leaders.

Theoretical Background

The effects of globalisation and increased communication have highlighted policies which have resulted in increased social and economic inequalities. Social tensions erupting from these inequalities have resulted in global international protests such as the Occupy Movement which originated in the United States (2011), the Arab Spring in the Arab world (2010), the Pink Tide in Latin America (2006), and since 2011 the ongoing Spanish protests collectively known as the 15-M Movement, The Indignants Movement, and Take the Square #spanishrevolution. Duggan (2003) argues that market-centred, neo-liberal policies which have resulted in global inequalities have become increasingly evident. She reveals that Western political leaders have supported neo-liberalist policies to advance the specific interests of the Western world with organisations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization transferring wealth and power from the poorer parts of the world to the richest, primarily located in the West. Consequently Duggan (2003) contends that “these practices constitute a reinvention of Western imperialism, not the worldwide democratization and broad-based enrichment promised by neo-liberal globalization’s promoters” (p. 11). Connell (2012) argues that “neoliberalism is the dominant policy logic in our world” (p. 27).

Aspromourgos (2012) contends that the character of universities has changed due to the neoliberal agenda with Connell (2012) proposing that universities have been “re-shaped on the model of corporations” (p. 26). Harland, Tidswell, Everett, Hale and Pickering (2010) reveal that “the main pressures faced by universities have been a drift to commercialisation through a reduction in state subsidy and an increase in user pays and private contracting” (p. 85). Successive government policies have made all sectors of the business and community life increasingly accountable. Duggan (2003) posits that the “primary strategy of turn-of-the millennium liberalism is privatization, the term that describes the transfer of wealth and decision making from public, more-or-less accountable decision-making bodies to individual or corporate, unaccountable hands” (p. 12). In the university sector students are increasingly viewed as clients and educational institutions as businesses. As Boden, Epstein and Kenway (2005) reveal, “for all kinds of professions, regulation has increased and autonomy and possibly work satisfaction have

been reduced in recent years. Being an academic is no exception...” (p. 13). Sosteric, Gismondi and Rakovic (1998) contend that the “discourses of efficiency, accountability and consumerism have transformed the public sector and overflowed into the university” creating an environment in which research outputs and performance indicators are utilised to measure effectiveness and efficiency.

Corporations use various means to measure efficiency, but the indicators commonly used to measure the productivity of academics are the three areas of teaching, research and community involvement. However, as Aspromourgous (2012) reveals, voluntary contributions by academic workers “cannot be written into explicit labour contracts”. There are many extra duties which academics perform and which they could cease doing without compromising their workload agreements. However, if the majority ceased these voluntary contributions the end result “would certainly compromise the overall product that universities deliver” (Aspromourgous, 2012, p. 45). Malcolm and Zukas (2009) agree, adding that universities would collapse if academics worked strictly to their ‘notional’ workload allocations. Livingstone (2010) argues that for many centuries, universities have been highly adaptable because they have enriched the ‘commonweal’ (p. 61). However, Timms (2004) contends that the Western celebration of competitive individualism has contributed to a loss of belief in the concept of the ‘commonweal’:

We have only to look at contemporary political life, where social welfare programs are being progressively whittled away, public utilities privatised and community infrastructures dismantled, to understand the extent to which the special interests of the individual have triumphed over concern for general welfare. (p. 125)

Increasing accountability in the public sector has also resulted in many community arts organisations, formerly led by dedicated volunteers, adopting business approaches in order to more strategically align themselves with other institutions and to enhance collaborative opportunities. In conjunction with increasing accountability in organisations has been the recognition that creativity is an important commodity for international competitiveness (Davis, 2008; Robinson, 2001; Sawyer, 2006). Therefore there has been an increased emphasis on research which explores the link between the arts and creative and lateral thinking. Consequently there is increasing recognition of the importance of community engagement within the university sector with the establishment of organisations such as the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA), an alliance of universities and affiliations committed to university community-engagement across Australia and the Asia Pacific region and the UK Creative Partnerships program. Such partnerships are ineffective, however, if the people involved are not advocates for their respective sectors. Therefore, such arrangements need to be mutually beneficial and able to be evaluated using measures that the both the university and community group can use to justify the time, expertise and skills involved in the endeavour being undertaken (Lederer & Seasons, 2005).

Accountability is an inherent principle of neoliberalism and resulting in value being ascribed only to things that can be measured. As a result, people working in various sectors have to provide evidence of productivity, and are therefore more strategic and careful about whom they collaborate with (Harland, et al., 2010). Collaboration appears almost as anathema in this policy

context due to its emphasis on relationships, trust, and equal sharing of rewards. Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2004) describe collaboration as:

a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards. (p. 4)

Such a paradigm facilitates the creation of new structures, particularly at an organisational level. Relationships are maintained by well-defined communication channels and comprehensive planning operating on all levels. The collaborative structure determines authority, and the risk is much greater because each person contributes resources and reputation. The people involved jointly secure resources and share the results and rewards. The literature has revealed that writers use the terms cooperation and coordination interchangeably to describe a collaborative process, without acknowledging the intensity of the relationship described above.

Context

In 2008 the Australia Council for the Arts received \$5.2 million in national funding over four years to establish a unique partnership between State and Territory arts agencies and education departments. The successful implementation of the Artist in Residence Initiative (AIR) culminated in it being instituted as an ongoing program of government in 2010. The AIR initiative was a response to a number of studies and national/international reviews such as: *Australians and the Arts* (Costantoura, 2001), *Report of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Crafts Inquiry* (Myer, 2002), *National Review of School Music Education: augmenting the diminished* (Pascoe, Leong, Mac Callum, Mackinlay, Marsh, Smith, Church & Winterton, 2005), the *UNESCO Roadmap for Arts Education* (2006), *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium of the arts in education* (Bamford, 2006), *Evaluation of the Australia Council for the Arts Young People and the Arts Policy & the Young and Emerging Artists' Initiative* (Barrett & Baguley, 2007) [unpublished report], *Educating for the Creative Workforce: Rethinking Arts Education* (Oakley, 2007), and *First We See: The National Review of Visual Education* (Davis, 2008). This research challenged the increased emphasis on the curriculum stalwarts of literacy and numeracy as evidenced in external testing such as the annual Australian NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) tests for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, which were inaugurated in 2008. This emphasis has also extended into the field of teacher education with a proposal that graduating teachers in Queensland, Australia, sit for pre-registration tests in literacy, numeracy and science.

In early 2009 a research partnership was established between the Primary Arts Network Ipswich (PANI) and the University of Southern Queensland (USQ), Springfield campus, in order to evaluate the government funded Creative Community Hub Artist in Residence (CCHaIR) Pilot Program which drew funding from the AIR initiative. PANI was one of two Queensland groups who were successful in obtaining this funding. PANI has been operating since 2002 and is a voluntary, teacher-run organization. The network's main activities are the provision of professional development (PD) workshops, Artist in Residence projects, and advisory and consultancy regarding arts education. PANI sought a collaborative partnership with USQ in

order to generate both quantitative and qualitative evidence from the CCHAiR project supportive of its advocacy of arts education. The project focussed on artist in residences occurring in three primary schools in the local area. During this time the project manager worked with a range of people, however, this paper focuses on the collaborative relationship that developed between herself and a university academic during the CCHAiR Pilot Program.

Both participants in this study are currently working in the field of arts education. Lee has been teaching for a period of twenty-one (21) years in early childhood, primary and special education settings and Margaret has taught for fourteen (14) years in primary and secondary schools and nine (9) years in tertiary education. Both have also been employed as primary art specialists. At the beginning of 2009 Margaret and Lee began to work together on the CCHAiR Pilot Project funded by the Australia Council for the Arts. Lee was the Project Manager and Margaret represented her university. The aims of the project were to: deliver three Artist in Residence projects in three government funded schools in the local area; evaluate the project to ascertain how the arts engaged children in their learning and how the residency impacted on the school and wider community; provide professional development for teachers involved in the residencies; and produce assessment items which were uploaded to the State Assessment website. The residencies also culminated in a showcase event titled *Living the Arts in Ipswich* which was celebrated with students, teachers and 350 family, school and community members in November, 2009.

Methods and techniques

This paper utilised the methodology of narrative inquiry which allowed the participants to describe, through reflection and discussion, why they acted in particular ways (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Webster and Mertova (2007) propose that the increase in narrative inquiry across a range of disciplines, which have traditionally utilised empirical methods such as medicine, politics, and science, “stems from the realisation that the traditional empirical research methods cannot sufficiently address issues such as complexity, multiplicity of perspectives and human centredness” (p. 31). As St. Pierre (2012) argues there is:

mounting critique of neopositivism and neoliberalism and their goals of producing knowledge that is value-free, mathematized and ‘scientific’, and used in the service of free market values, economic rationalism, efficiency models (e.g. creating the disposable worker), outsourcing, competitive individualism entrepreneurship and privatization. In this ideology, everything must be scientized and reduced to the brute (value-free) data of mathematics for the purpose of control. (p. 484)

Narrative approaches allow researchers to “present experiences holistically” and acknowledge the “temporal notion of experience, recognising that one’s understanding of people and events changes” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 2). The data for this paper was co-constructed through the experiences of both researcher participants and provides the reader with an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the complexities of the collaboration under investigation (Dunn, 2003; Kelchtermans, 1993; Trzebiński, 2005).

Each of the researcher participants provided each other with a written account of their experiences within the project referred to in narrative inquiry as *field texts*. After reading and annotating these written accounts they met and sought further clarification from one another.

This provided an opportunity to create a second round of texts, known as *interim texts*, which incorporated the insights gained through clarification. The interim texts, which also included further reflection by the participants, resulted in *final research texts*. The process, particularly in relation to the interim and final research texts was through active co-construction by the participants. The three common places of temporality, sociality and place were utilised to explore the three dimensional inquiry space of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor & Murray Orr, 2007). Resonant threads have been drawn from this inquiry space to illustrate important aspects of the collaboration in the context of this paper. As Kelchtermans (1999) notes, the quality of the relationship between the researcher and the participant has a significant impact on the quality and quantity of the data generated. In this study the relationship between the researchers, who were also the participants, had been well established before the project began.

Concerns have been raised regarding the credibility of narrative research, particularly because much qualitative research focuses on naturalistic settings and is often experience based. Therefore characteristics other than those employed in quantitative research are used to determine validity and reliability (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Huberman, 1995). To assist in achieving trustworthiness in this research the researchers described the procedures undertaken to obtain the data in order to ensure the process was transparent (Kvale, 1996; Leavy, 2009). As Webster and Mertova (2007) state, in narrative research “validity is more concerned with the research being well grounded and supportable by the data that has been collected” (p. 90). Therefore, narrative research does not propose to provide generalisable ‘truths’ (Polkinghorne, 1988; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Reliability is described as dependability of the data in narrative research and was achieved in this paper by the trustworthiness of the transcripts used (Polkinghorne, 1988; Webster & Mertova, 2007). In this paper we have also adopted Huberman’s (1995) proposal that the elements of access, honesty, verisimilitude, authenticity, familiarity, transferability and economy were the characteristics that were most likely to enable an assessment of the validity and reliability of narrative research.

Excerpts of the narrative data have been included in the paper to provide the reader with access to first-hand accounts of the experiences on which the findings have been based. The opportunity to read and respond to each other’s narratives encouraged honesty as we sought to understand the complexity of the events being portrayed. The shared journey as leaders throughout the CCHAiR project created verisimilitude within the accounts. Authenticity was achieved by ensuring the narrative accounts were coherent and written with integrity through constant reflection. Our familiarity with the narrative accounts enabled us to obtain greater insights about the phenomenon under investigation. Transferability has been achieved by providing enough detail and accessibility to enable a similar study to occur in another setting. The incorporation of our narratives into one overall narrative account from which excerpts have been drawn for this paper has provided an efficient and economical approach without compromising the integrity of the data or the findings.

Although we have had different journeys in arts education it has enabled us to bring different perspectives to this research study (Burns, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The uniqueness of such perspectives is an important aspect of narrative inquiry research and is incorporated as an important element in the narrative accounts. Through the interim texts

and further discussion from our annotations we jointly identified the following three resonant threads which we felt had either supported, challenged or in to some extent affect our collaborative relationship on the CCHAiR project: Relationships, Institutions and Arts Advocacy. These will be explored in the following section with italics used to represent extracts from the final research texts.

Discussion - The Resonant Threads

Lee and Margaret met shortly after Margaret had taken up a position at her current university. Margaret was delighted to discover that a professional development organisation for teachers existed in the Ipswich area which was close to where her university was situated. She received an invitation to attend a PANI workshop on Drama which was to be held one evening after university classes. Margaret was broadly aware of the existence of the Primary Arts Network (PAN) in Brisbane but had no professional interaction beyond the display of student artwork in one of their sanctioned events. Lee clarified that PAN was a sister network to PANI, however emphasised the importance of the distinction between the two branches. *I am very specific about the Ipswich brand and how we have done and gone about things.* Margaret recalls meeting Lee and the other members of PANI after the drama workshop as ‘refreshing’. *After being immersed in the university environment for five years, following on from being a school teacher for fourteen, it was refreshing to see how well organised the members of PANI were and their willingness to ‘pitch in’ and undertake some hard labour for such an event. I have found some academics can be a little ‘precious’ at times ... some seem to forget the importance of being involved – emotionally, mentally and physically.* The importance of respecting the skills and expertise of community members is advocated by LeGates and Robinson (1998) who state that “academics must divest themselves of their expert status and meet the community on level ground” (p. 315). It is this relationship that is at the core of any authentically collaborative endeavour.

Relationships

Lederer and Seasons (2005) propose that “community-university alliances are about networking and collaborative relationship-building” (p. 246) which has proven to be successful in the ongoing relationship between this university and community partnership. At a personal level, Lee and Margaret shared an efficient, almost pragmatic, approach to tasks which facilitated this relationship building. This was evident in the way they worked together during the evaluation of the CCHAiR project. As Margaret notes *I think we have the type of work ethic where we ‘bunker’ down and get the job done. There was no time for egos, we realised that the CCHAiR project was an entity that needed to be nurtured and protected. We were also on the same wavelength and working towards the same goals.* Collaboration provides an important opportunity to ensure the process and/or end product is protected. Pullen, Baguley and Marsden (2009) refer to this as the *third entity* which is “created from the collaborative process and is a physical manifestation of the group’s common goal. Although created by the participants, the third entity is also independent of them” (p. 222). Lee revealed: *We entered this collaboration with some knowledge of each other ... It was an intuitive good feeling from the start that there was a connection falling into place.* Margaret confirmed this view, adding: *I was so thrilled to see that you were a well established organisation that would be such an important connection for our pre-service teachers at USQ. A good collaboration has to be mutually beneficial and this definitely is one of those.* Margaret was also keen to be involved with PANI as she had been involved in a number of community initiatives at her previous university and was aware of how

important these connections are for our students and the wider community. This view of community-university connections supports Lederer and Seasons (2005) view that “local knowledge and expertise is important and extensive, and must be acknowledged by universities as a significant asset in community-based research initiatives” (p. 245).

Even though there were some challenges, as there often are when groups of people are working together, Lee and Margaret both concurred that because it was such an intense experience it *really helped us to clarify what was important in relation to the project. I also think our experience as teachers has enabled us to recognise certain behaviours that are not conducive to working in groups.* Although Lee had undertaken and managed a number of projects, the CCHAiR project was the largest that she had been involved in. As such she recognised the importance of honouring the commitment of team members and working with a number of difficulties encountered in her role such as *trying to understand the politics, dynamics and manage as project manager, whilst also [being] mindful of not stepping on toes.* Lee and Margaret are also aware of the importance of passion, enthusiasm and commitment in implementing and sustaining a project and maintaining these connections when it is completed. *We both share a connection, a bond, synergy, energy and vested interests in supporting the work that each is doing both individually and collaboratively. The collaboration did not stop because the project was completed, in fact, it was just the beginning!*

Institutions

Both Margaret and Lee had experienced isolation in their roles as art educators. Lee stated that *I have struggled to find my place for some time amongst colleagues and administration where my ideals, interests and passions are completely supported and enabled as well as provoking a challenging, stimulating and enriching professional working environment.* This was consistent with Margaret’s experience when she was a classroom teacher. Margaret revealed that there is a gap in the professional development that is offered in schools which could be strengthened through school-university partnerships. In her narrative she noted: *There is so much universities/schools can gain from one another. Some of the research that universities do is not filtering into schools for all sorts of reasons – the language that is used for example. More people need to publish in teacher professional journals and discuss the types of projects that are being undertaken. This will create greater interest and may increase people’s confidence in participating in research in their own schools.* The potential challenges of such a link between schools and universities is described by Lieberman (1992) who notes: “It may be that the conflicts between school and university exist not because the organizations are so different, but because they are so similar - two bureaucracies, each with its work defined for it and each jealously guarding its turf.”

Working institutionally requires official recognition from both institutions of a number of aspects such as the tasks to be undertaken and services provided. As Margaret notes, partnerships *enable growth, to showcase the important work being done and to also seek support from other organisations.* As work commenced on the CCHAiR project, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was drawn up between PANI and USQ which gave due recognition to the importance of the partnership between these organisations. The MOU also included provision for Lee to have an office on the campus. As Lee revealed *otherwise I would have been sitting isolated in a tin shed – that would have had a huge impact on me, the collaboration and the outcomes for all – I*

am sure of it. Being within the university and sharing the physical space allowed for even ground, consistent communication, monitoring of the project between us, meetings, informal discussions, and mentoring. I also believe it elevated the status of the project to the participants and created broader connections with others at the university level. The importance of clearly outlining the expectations and provisions of both parties supports the finding of Lederer and Seasons (2005) that “partnerships must be tailored to perceived needs of both university and community to develop useful knowledge and skills – often called ‘capacity building’ and common in almost all collaborative projects” (p. 244). Lee was appreciative of the commitment Margaret demonstrated in *advocat[ing] this collaboration to the managerial staff of the University. To have the support and approval of the Dean in the ongoing development of a creative community hub was wonderful.* This support was also documented in the minutes of the Faculty of Education’s Assembly during the year which provided official recognition of the Faculty’s support. Farrell (2001) contends that shared vision, trust, support and mutual commitment are essential in collaborative ventures.

Margaret was impressed with PANI’s achievements and high standards. *This is a really important part of PANI and is what keeps it front and centre in arts education. It seeks best practice and strives for excellence. This is why I think other groups have a short ‘shelf life’, they have not carefully considered where they fit into their ‘environment’ and tend to also work in isolation so that the good work they are doing is not evident. It all seems to come down to communication – much like teaching – teachers cannot work in a vacuum either.* This perception is reflected in the work of Sawyer (2003) who emphasises the importance of effective communication channels in collaborative ventures. Bresler (2002) found that issues such as “space, reflection, trust, shared decision making, and monitoring one’s subjectivity correspond with much of the general education research regarding school-university partnerships” (cited in Burton & Greher, 2007, pp. 19 – 20). PANI had already undertaken some evaluative studies of their work in schools and Margaret believed that the organisation was able to engage with the university due to their prior experience and expertise. Lee revealed that *at the time there was no other grass roots arts/education organisation that I could connect to regarding a partnership model with a university ... I’m sure they may have existed but again it’s not kind of out there in schools ... I think we have paved the way.*

As Lee and Margaret discussed their involvement with institutions they also agreed that increasing accountability has ensured that qualitative and quantitative research outputs are vital in securing institutional support. In addition, institutional support which has already been secured in relation to a project provides legitimacy and acknowledgement. Lee reveals *It’s about having something tangible to put into the hands of those that you are trying to engage. It also means once the conversation with that person is finished they are still holding the evidence and perhaps are reminded to do something with it! We see it as leverage. It also has status being documented by the university and sealed with the university logos!* The dissemination of the research was mutually beneficial for Lee and Margaret as it demonstrated the effectiveness of the art residencies at the school and community level. As Kennedy (1997, as cited in Hutchens, 1998) notes, individual scholarship is an academic duty, “but it must be balanced with a culture of collegiality and collaboration to address major social issues” (p. 36). In addition, we undertook this project within our discipline area of the arts. Malcolm and Zukas (2010) describe disciplinary work as a “morally and socially purposive activity” (p. 499). On reflection, Margaret

felt to some extent she had inadvertently challenged what Ruth (2008, p. 104, cited in Malcolm & Zukas, 2009, p. 503) describes as “the inauthenticity demanded by managerialist fabrications” which can seem like a “violation of the ‘academic self’” (p. 104) by engaging in an arts project which was not a stated priority research area of the university.

PANI has committed considerable time and effort to producing research outputs which have culminated in a number of publications related to their community arts engagement (Baguley, Free & Fullarton, 2011; Free, Nalder & Fullarton, 2009; Fullarton, Baguley & Free, 2009), in addition to a number of research presentations. During November 2010 Lee was invited to present the findings of the CCHAiR project at the Faculty of Education’s Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Symposium. She revealed in her narrative the importance of such an opportunity and linked this to the potential partnership between schools and universities. *Being part of the presentation to academics was inspirational. Come to think of it I really feel it would be so uplifting and rewarding for mid-career teachers to have this experience - to work collaboratively with researchers in order to add spark to their teaching life in schools.* Unfortunately the literature reveals there is much work to be done to strengthen relationships between schools and universities in order to diminish tensions which arise through their respective institutional cultural differences (Burton & Greher, 2007; Cozza, 2010; Lefever-Davis, Johnson & Pearman, 2007).

Arts Advocacy

In her passionate and direct way Lee began her narrative *I say quite intensely that I have lived, slept and breathed PANI for the last 10 years. I never set out with an intention of its life plan but as it came to life, grew, experienced great success and evolved: strategies, steps and decisions needed to be taken; its energy shaped and direction required. My passion and conviction for the arts and belief in what has been created and what has been affected is central to driving this vision.* Lee’s passion and advocacy for the arts is evident in the life choices she has made and the amount of time she has willingly given as a volunteer to enhance engagement for people of all ages through the arts. PANI is located in an area which has been identified as lower socio-economic and in her role as both an art teacher and member of PANI she takes on the role of ‘creative broker’. This merging of two words, one with artistic connotations, and the other traditionally linked with business, is described in the UK Creative Partnerships Program as someone who moderates “the tensions that exist between the centrally established priorities for education and those generated locally” (Creativity, Culture & Education, 2012). As Lee reveals *it’s about keeping it real and progressive, each time building on what we have done and creating and pushing our projects further to make it relevant, exciting and key to engaging teachers.* Due to Lee’s extensive experience as a teacher in a range of challenging and alternative settings she is empathetic to the classroom teacher and aware of the rigid parameters often set by daily demands and routines.

Both Lee and Margaret are passionate advocates for the arts, however, these roles not only helped to facilitate the successful completion of the evaluation of the project, but also added another dimension to their arts advocacy. As Lee reveals *I guess there is a kind of hierarchy perception or stereotyping that exists in education and that higher education teachers represent the top order and on it goes up the line ... in the same way that it exists in schools ... sometimes there is a void between the people and the tower. I felt very pleased that my experiences and up*

to date knowledge of curriculum and practice in schools was of curiosity and interest to others. Lee and Margaret share similar discipline interests, utilise practical approaches and have extensive teaching experience which make them 'natural' allies. They are both people who are prepared to think creatively and laterally and to assume leadership responsibilities when required. In this respect they tend to fit Lieberman's (1992) definition of 'boundary spanners', those people who are comfortable and seen as legitimate in both schools and universities. Lieberman contends that such people able to span both worlds "tend to be desirable leaders for these kinds of collaborations. But not many such people exist" (p. 154). Rhine (1998) further adds that boundary spanners may avert the clash between "the 'ivory tower' of academia and the 'trenches' of teacher practice" (p. 30).

The following recommendations have been drawn from our experience of working on the CCHAiR project and provide advice for those wishing to engage in a project between a community organisation and the university sector. It is important to note that collaboration is a complex process and there are a number of templates and proformas used by the business sector to encourage its success. However, essentially collaboration relies on the people involved and as Johnston-Parsons (2010) reveals "both democracy and collaboration are ideals, never fully achieved and always in process, and one can find some schools and groups that are much more collaborative than others" (p. 288).

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Ensuring leaders are facilitative and value the skills and expertise of all participants

It is essential in a collaborative endeavour that leaders are sensitive to both task and process, and involve themselves in the work required. A facilitative leader needs to take their role and responsibilities very seriously. They should be recognised as someone who has good knowledge in their discipline area as well as possessing both organisational and interpersonal skills. Their leadership should enable participants to feel a sense of autonomy and control in a framework that values their skills and expertise. The establishment of rapport in a collaborative group can only occur if relationships have first been fostered within the group, or they develop organically during the collaboration. Becoming part of a group can be inherently risky for individuals, and demonstrates a degree of trust or willingness on the part of the participant. This trust needs to be reciprocated by the collaborative group. As Sowers (1983) reveals "the capacity of two people to function together almost as one mind is not only the most efficient of all possible working relations. It is also a profound human experience. But by its very nature it cannot be had simply by the asking" (p. 96).

Recommendation 2: Ensuring collaborative endeavours are mutually beneficial

It is important that the needs of people and/or institutions are clearly understood in order to ensure the collaboration provides mutual benefits. Careful planning and communication is essential as too often true collaboration "is more often advocated than practiced" (Johnston-Parsons, 2010, p. 287). The group must share a vision which will in turn contribute to the formation of a group identity. As individual identities become less important than the group process or product, known as the 'third entity' (Pullen, Baguley & Marsden, 2009), an

authentically collaborative experience is engendered. However, the mere act of working in a group is not, of itself, collaborative. For as Lederer and Seasons (2005) reveal “collaborative structures such as alliances need to be understood as ambiguous, complex and dynamic so that practitioners convening them or policy makers promoting them clearly understand the enormous challenges which collaboration presents” (p. 256).

Recommendation 3: Providing adequate support and resources to ensure the collaborative endeavour will contribute to the wider body of knowledge

Being aware of current policies and projects in the discipline area/s of the collaboration and being able to articulate the nature and extent of its contribution is vital in attracting support and funding. The responsibility for bringing together a diverse range of people to work towards a common goal necessitates the provision of adequate resources. These resources include elements such as facilities, materials, and funds. If the collaborative group is under-resourced the achievement of its goals will become problematic. In some situations volunteers are providing their skills and time – which although more intangible – are important assets to a collaborative group. This in-kind support needs to be equally valued. Gardner, Metcalfe, Pisarki and Reidlinger (2006) reveal that if a collaborative group consists of sound individual relationships and networks, these can often foster the collaborative process if institutional support is lacking.

Conclusion

This paper has provided an insight into a partnership between two arts education leaders in the school and university sector. The collaboration between these sectors is critical, particularly in the current arts education landscape which requires these types of linkages to remain viable and relevant. The collaboration described in this paper provided an opportunity for university researchers to access school sites and for the community group, consisting of school teachers, to acquire research skills in data gathering and analysis. This partnership has enabled both groups to publish qualitative and quantitative research which is relevant and meaningful to the school and university sectors.

As an initiative developed and implemented by the Australia Council for the Arts, the CCHAiR project is an example of best practice which provides a model for future projects between the school and university sector. Lederer and Seasons (2005) propose that “additional research in the area of university and community relations is warranted to further understand and maximize success of such future collaborations” (p. 256). Most importantly this paper reveals the importance of the subsumption of egos in order for the third entity, in this case the CCHAiR project, to exist independently of the researcher participants and produce outcomes which are measureable and significant in arts education. In addition, their previous experience in schools, advocacy for arts education, similar cultural backgrounds, alignment of personal qualities and traits, connection with and approach to specific interest areas of the arts and a sense of responsibility and guardianship in ensuring the integrity of the arts and providing data which confirms their positive effect on learning have all contributed to the success of this vital collaboration.

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