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**“New Paradigms: The Arts in the Core Secondary Curriculum – Cutting
Edge Research and Practice in Australia and the United States.**

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Introduction

This paper presents an overview on links, either through research or practice, between the arts and the general secondary curriculum in Australia and the United States. The aim is to look at the potential scope and application of the arts in the secondary school curriculum in relation to the all-round development of the human personality. This factor lies at the centre of educational quality which aims to achieve the full intellectual potential of students; life skills; adaptable, flexible characters with a solid grounding in the best human values

It is important to re-look and re-think current educational models in the light of links between the arts, sciences and humanities. Research in this field indicates that human intelligence reaches its greatest potential when a holistic approach to learning is achieved.

An holistic, symbiotic education in the arts, humanities and the sciences develops all aspects of human potential. Current educational models need to be challenged; horizons broadened; and new thinking stimulated in order to provide links in learning that generally are absent in contemporary educational practice. Current educational practice streamlines students into one field or the other, diminishing the opportunity to develop in the unchosen field.

The purpose of this paper is to identify new developments in the Asia Pacific Region and the United States where the arts are a unifying principle in a quality education. This is discussed in the context of multi-disciplinary learning and integrating the arts into the general curriculum at the secondary level.

Other related issues are presented in the quest for maximising human potential. Political, economic, spiritual and social issues are equally important when considering the role of quality education for the future. Marginalised groups in society, the poor in developing countries stand at greater risk of being completely left behind in the rush for economic development. Ethical concerns in quality education for the future must ensure a good education for all.

Recognition of the Field

Current evidence in the field of education indicates that specialised areas of knowledge are considerably enhanced in a multi-disciplinary learning environment with other, previously unrelated areas of ability. This holistic approach to learning allows human intelligence to reach greater potential. Specialised training can in fact lead to a depleted ability to cope in this rapidly changing world. This theory is at the cutting edge of new thinking in education, linking disparate disciplines that remain segregated in most curricula world-wide. Outcomes from major programmes researching in this area are presented in this paper.

Educational theory anchoring the argument for revising cognitive practices in education is exemplified by the theoretical work of Howard Gardner and his theory of Multiple Intelligences, of the Harvard Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Project Zero has, amongst other things, as its mission, the need to understand and enhance thinking and learning and creativity in the arts, sciences and humanities at the individual and institutional levels. This paper is written from the perspective that quality education reform needs to engender a holistic approach incorporating all disciplines.

Contemporary issues need to be taken into account if this is to be achieved. These include the advances in technology, science and the information age; the new trend of globalisation which affects countries politically and economically; the increased emphasis on social, cultural and personal understandings due to the diminishing borders of once alien cultures and nationalities; the exponentially expanding domain of knowledge the new post-modern philosophy which carefully studies, criticises and “deconstructs” scholarly texts. A quality education is also incomplete without adhering to the principles of multiculturalism.

Issues of multi-disciplinary learning and teaching of the arts with the humanities and sciences are critical. Research studies and secondary classroom examples are presented here, highlighting practical outcomes and the latest developments linking the arts into the general secondary curriculum. Also the aim is to empower teachers as agents of change and enhance the opportunity to provide quality education and outcomes-focussed curriculum development.

The Value of an Arts Integrated Curriculum

The arts in a secondary school education facilitates learning and provides a general enjoyment of education through creative experiences. This enables students to understand the meaning of humanity; to experience what human beings do uniquely which is giving life experience form through an array of aesthetic symbols. Researchers have been able to clarify the claim that a prominent role of the arts in a secondary school curriculum actually improves academic achievement. There is apparent value in the search for linking the

arts in the curriculum, compared to a non-arts curriculum, to improved academic achievement.

Current secondary educational practice streamlines students into specialised fields. Cutting edge research indicates that specialised areas of education are considerably enhanced when the arts are incorporated into the sciences and humanities. This holistic approach to learning allows human intelligence to reach greater potential. Specialised training, can in fact, lead to a depleted ability to cope in this rapidly changing world. The truth of the matter is that the arts can, in fact, be the catalyst to unlock old attitudes and achieve much greater retention rate in classes. An arts related curriculum can increase interest in the subject matter, give students confidence in themselves and provide new ways and means to learn. Above all, by integrating the arts into learning, the subject automatically becomes far more attainable and students feel stimulated to learn.

Best practices of quality education in the Asia Pacific Region and the United States are presented. These examples use the arts for facilitating holistic, multi-dimensional educational outcomes for secondary education. However, the involvement of the arts in the broader school curriculum and the benefits they provide, is a very new area that requires considerable work for the future. Therefore, this paper will provide material for a burgeoning need that can only significantly improve the quality of education.

EXAMPLES OF THE ARTS BEING INTEGRATED INTO THE CORE SECONDARY CURRICULUM TO ACHIEVE HOLISTIC OUTCOMES FOR A QUALITY EDUCATION

A number of examples of the arts being integrated into the core secondary curriculum to achieve holistic outcomes are as follows:

Australia and the Asia Pacific

Music

1. Bernadette McNamara is the Manager of *Musica Viva in Schools*. This is a successful Australian model of presenting live music to students in schools. *Musica Viva* has been operating in Australian schools for the past 17 years. It is a programme bringing the immediacy of live music into the classroom for students and provides valuable support for teachers in the form of curriculum and professional development courses. The *Musica Viva in Schools* Programme is Australia's most extensive music education programme, reaching 350,000 students annually. Its aim is to expose children to a wide range of live music experiences within a framework that allows the live performance to be integrated into the whole education process. The programme is more than just a concert – it has three main components:
 - resource materials for the classroom teacher
 - professional development courses for the classroom teacher
 - live performance by the group in the school

Integration with other curriculum areas

The resource materials also include a section to help teachers integrate the music with other curriculum areas. Some suggestions include activities related to:

- Languages other than English
- the Arts
- Studies of Science and the Environment,
- Health and Physical education
- Mathematics and Science. In Science, students might research some of the unique Australian animals, investigate which species have become extinct and which are endangered.

Fine Arts

2. Basil Hall teaches printmaking in the School of Fine Arts, Northern Territory University, in the Northern Territory of Australia. He runs a collaborative programme with Aboriginal artists from seven or eight communities in Central Australia assisting these communities to run workshops, train artists to run their own business in printmaking and print editions of prints. Although this is not directly applied to secondary teaching, the example of this experience is particularly relevant to this conference.

Basil claims the challenge for him lies in working with Aboriginies in remoter communities, to learn the tremendous depth of skills they already possess and to try those skills in a new medium, and to work out his role in the collaborative process. He says his challenge is learning new ways of imparting information which do not rely on his language or assumed knowledge.

One example is the two workshops which were run in Utopia, a poorly – serviced settlement north-east of Alice Springs. Artists here are amongst the most famous and talented in the country but live in very poor conditions. Over the years, priceless paintings have been handed over in exchange for small amounts of cash or goods. In recent years an arts center with a resident white arts advisor has been established, and work is now primarily being produced and sold through the center. It is one of the few substantial buildings in Utopia and the men and women who work there are extremely proud of it. Apart from wonderful paintings on canvas, Utopia is now famous for batik works and is moving to producing works on paper. Life skills emanate from the arts based programme, providing sound examples of how the arts integrated into community life provide a full range of skills and real-life experiences.

Film

3. Elizabeth Gunn uses Indonesian film and video as a way of teaching both cultural differences and the many layers of Indonesian society in Australian secondary schools. Film, she claims, is an essential mode of communication for Australians of all ages. In Australia we make television programmes which reflect our culture, presenting images, stories and characters that audiences can interpret and analyse in

order to make sense of Australian society. The VCE English program (years 11 & 12) now includes film as an integral part of the course, indicating the value the community places on the ability to analyse film texts. European language teachers have easy access to films to augment their courses. South East Asian films are relatively few in number, but when obtained they can offer insights into these complex societies.

Learning from Borobodur is a film that seeks to explain the meaning of some of the illustrations carved on the walls of the Borobodur stupa in central Java. The film is an excellent introduction to the temples and to the issues of diversity of religions in Indonesia, particularly because it was originally made in what has been for over 200 years a mainly Muslim society, but which was previously Buddhist. The carved illustrations were chiseled more than 1000 years ago and narrate moral fables and the life of Buddha. Animation is an excellent form of communication for secondary students, as well as primary, with students relating easily to the fables and find the deciphering of meanings challenging.

Water and Romi is a film dealing not with tradition but with the life of the poor. Its deeper impact comes not so much from the extent of poverty, the environmental pollution and the living conditions but from the attitude of quiet acceptance, their philosophical resignation and their ongoing concern for their families. There are many levels of learning, apart from sociological, geographical, language etc for Australian secondary students to be gained from watching the art of film such as this in their traditional curriculum.

The World of Work and the Arts

4. Upper secondary school arts courses and the links that can be made to general education, prove that success can be achieved linking secondary education, arts programmes and the world of work. One way that education systems in Australia have tried to address the problem of high youth unemployment has been more explicit links between secondary school, an arts education and the world of work. For example, in Australia the Mayer Key Competencies (1992) aim to put “education to work”.

The Mayer Committee Report states that young people are aiming to enter a world where the workplace demands are changing rapidly. It suggests that future workplaces will require broadly defined rather than specialized work roles requiring creativity, initiative and strong social and personal skills. The committee concluded that in order to gain skills in these areas young people need a general education. Skills gained from subjects such as music, dance and all the arts enhance all the competencies for finding work, solving problems, using technology, having cultural understanding etc. The role of key

competencies in relating an arts education to the world of work may act as the bridge between general and vocational education

Dance

5. *Bangarra Dance Theatre Company* have been educating Australian students through their music, dance, art and customs of the indigenous peoples of Australia, from both the Island and the mainland cultures. This is a unique experience in the general school curriculum, as the company awakens the images and voices of their ancestors enriching their contemporary art form with a great spirit. The word *Bangarra* means to make fire and is from the *Wiradjuri* people, the largest indigenous language group in New South Wales. Customs, habits, rituals, myths and legends are expressed through dance and comfortably fits into secondary history, art, geography, sociology, language and religious classes. Issues of culture race and discrimination are delicately handled through their representation of the art forms of the *Bangarra Dance Theatre Company*.

United States of America

Visual Thinking

6. The Visual Thinking Curriculum (VTC) is a secondary school based programme developed by the Museum of Modern Art in New York City (MoMA) that aims to help students learn how to think by talking about art. The programme has been developed and refined over the last decade, and is currently used in many New York secondary schools. It has also been adapted to international contexts. It is believed that the VTC helps them transfer those skills to other disciplines and contexts. MoMA is collaborating with Harvard's Project Zero for formal evaluation and developing pilot tests geared to enhance the benefits to teaching across the disciplines.

Ethics

7. The Atlas Communities Project for secondary school students is designed for schools to ask ethical questions of "what is justice?" and "what does it mean to be alive?" Students take responsibility for their own learning, and teachers act more like coaches than lecturers and judges. All members of the school community have a voice in decision-making. This project is aiming to break the mould of existing schools and plan and design schools for the new century.

Life Skills

8. Further projects revolving around ethics, taking responsibility and delivering holistic, life skill programmes are being conducted by Project Zero in a number of schools. This work is being evaluated and monitored in collaboration with leading researchers and Universities such as Yale, Brown etc. Some of these projects include,
 - a. Active Learning Practices for Schools
 - b. Parent Partners

- c. Rounds at Project Zero
- d. Rubrics and Self-Assessment Project

Visual Arts

9. *Safe Havens* is a series of projects examining educational effectiveness in community art centers that focus on education in economically disadvantaged communities. Perceived as safe from physical, emotional, intellectual and cultural harm, these safe havens are the work of a number of visual and performing artists. These artist educators are offering secondary school children who may have fallen out of the traditional schooling system, alternative pathways for success and fulfilling lives.

These centers are filled with potential and success stories, at the same time with disappointment and failure. Funding cuts in the arts have been a major handicap. Many of those involved see these drawbacks as challenges to overcome as their belief in the philosophy and service they provide is the dominating factor.

Music, Visual Arts and Creative Writing

10. Arts Propel has been a five year collaboration with the Educational Testing Service and the teachers and administrators of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, using the combined instruction and assessment in three art forms: music, visual arts and imaginative writing. The goals are to understand the variety of ways in which the arts can contribute to students understanding.

All projects are part of Harvard's Project Zero. Project Zero has a large number of well-established programmes and research studies in schools. There are too many to talk about here but they are able to be accessed through their literature and publications.

UNESCO, INSEA and IDEA projects in the arts for secondary students based in the Asia Pacific region Asia Pacific Region

The following projects are but a few of the projects collaboratively organised by UNESCO, INSEA and IDEA. The examples presented here are aimed specifically at secondary school students and the project with their outcomes can be viewed on the web pages listed.

1. New Zealand – Normal Classroom Teaching: An Academic Year in a Predominantly Maori School. Ngaruawahia High School is a rural public school with approximately 430 students, 70% of which are Maori. The programme is aimed at students ranging from 15 to 18 years, is essentially student centred and focuses on issues of perception, insight, knowledge, culture, and the needs and capacities of each student. The process and outcomes of the project were aimed at improving future performance and developing self-esteem and pride in the culture of the Maori people. The exceptional artwork can be viewed at <http://insea.unb.ca/idea/ages/15-18/newzealand02r.html>

2. **India – Use of Throw-Away and Waste Materials.** Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya in New Delhi is a composite model government school in a deprived rural area. The social- cultural aspect of the project involved students from 15-18 years of Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian religions from general, scheduled castes and tribes and backward classes.

Most of the students were first generation learners, with arts and crafts foundations from their families. Aluminium foil waste was collected and the students chose jewellery design as the theme. The pieces of jewellery was of folk style of Haryana 9a state of North India, next to Delhi). The girls gave the work an original quality, possibly based on the fact they were from a rural background. The outcomes were the high level of creativity, their enjoyment of the project and the students' realisation of the worth and value of their folk-crafts. This project was an excellent example of arts and crafts helping to overcome issues of the boundaries caused by caste, religion and money and the feeling generated of a sense of oneness, and achievement. The project can be viewed at

<http://insea.unb.ca/idea/ages/15-18/india08r.html>

Overcoming adversity and meeting the challenges of daily existence require the abilities, skills, habits and knowledge that the arts in the secondary education system are able to provide. Looking at major U.S and U.K. research projects clearly they do not research how to teach the arts more effectively, as there is a substantial body of knowledge in this area. Instead, research is conducted in methods of attaining a number of skills, basic competencies and knowledge areas which would connect the arts with broader educational goals.

Quality education with an arts focus for the future of an holistic African education for life skills

This paper has demonstrated the value of an arts integrated curriculum at the secondary education level. An arts based programme integrated into the secondary school curriculum helps develop the opportunity for acquiring responsible behaviour for life-skill programmes, enhancing values in a social context and increasing the opportunity for the full potential of the student.

In order to understand the concept of acquiring responsible behaviour for life-skill programmes, it is important to focus on life's important values. Students are trained to carry out work, but that work needs to be good in two ways: exemplary in quality but also responsible. Such responsible education cannot be completed in the early years of schooling but reaches its greatest impact in the years of secondary education. Adult years are too late. Parents and teachers must embody a responsibility in their own lives and seek to nurture a sense of responsibility in all young people.

Also, knowledge in the field of healthcare it is essential to develop responsible behaviour for life skill programmes, for combating the growing problems of drugs and HIV/AIDS. Again the arts are great communicators for secondary schooling on issues that are considered delicate and difficult to handle or as a means of providing new pathways of relaying messages.

Community health improvement stems from a knowledge base at home and school. Education has a covenant with the community and families of school age children to improve its health status. The future is about self-designing, self-sufficient, healthier communities. There are many examples of community reform efforts that are now underway using the arts in the vital role.