

Research Project Summary

Research Title	Music for Learning for Life
Name	Anja Tait
Dept/Institution	NT Music School
Final_Report_Received_Date	22/07/2005

Project Officer Comments

A full copy of the Executive summary is filed on DOC2003/004623

This research was a pilot project utilised performing arts processes and music skills development as a conduit for engagement, teaching, learning, and measuring improvement in English literacy and numeracy. This project purposefully integrated intensive music education in urban upper primary classroom programs.

Summary

This report has outlined the results of an evaluation of the impact of arts-infused teaching-learning. The report presents both qualitative and quantitative evidence for the impact of this approach upon educational outcomes for students and upon professional learning outcomes for teachers.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the report are drawn together under seven areas similar to the way in which they were reported in chapter four, as follows:

1. Attendance

The key conclusion that is drawn in relation to attendance is that the numerical findings of students' attendance do not necessarily correlate with outsiders' perceptions of those records: (a) Some students perceived to have improved in attendance in fact did not. However, what did happen was that these students became highly visible and engaged in the school community. That is, attendance records are not necessarily a good relative measure of student engagement and participation in learning.

(b) A student who was described as an "irregular attender" was found to have actually improved his attendance rate throughout 2003. This compared starkly with the attendance rates of the whole school enrolment and Indigenous students specifically, both of which had dropped.

2. Literacy

(a) Risk taking was evident in the increased number of test items target students attempted in state-wide benchmark testing for literacy (MAP tests).

(b) Although not statistically significant, target students' mean improvement in reading age was 1 year, 8 months over a nine month period.

3. Numeracy

(a) Students generally achieved statistically significant higher maths ages in Term 4 compared with Term 1, 2003. A highlight was that an Indigenous student demonstrated the greatest improvement in maths age of 4 years, 8 months, adjusted for the passing of time (nine months).

(b) An analysis of the MAP test items for numeracy highlighted the learning tasks that students responded to incorrectly or did not attempt. Qualitative data provides evidence of students' participation in these learning tasks and engagement with the related mathematical concepts, not visible in the written responses required for MAP testing.

4. Arts

(a) Very few students who participated in this arts-infused teaching-learning approach had prior formal classroom based experiences in music.

5. Teachers

(a) Teaching practice showed a marked transformation in a number of ways: quality of student-teacher relationships, competencies in music pedagogy, a sense of efficacy and confidence.

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(b) The model of professional learning used in the intervention enabled transformations in teaching practice, which appear to have contributed to improved outcomes for students.

6. Whole-school planning

(a) Both schools have included music for learning as an approach that works in their Literacy and Numeracy Plan. An arts-infused teaching-learning approach was developed, trialled and rigorously evaluated in each school, with a focus on explicit literacy and numeracy teaching using arts-based texts, materials and pedagogy.

(b) In School A, the Principal was directed by the School Council to include the ongoing employment of the Artist-in-Residence in the school action plan for 2004.

© In School B, the Literacy and Numeracy Coordinator successfully secured ArtsNT/DEET funding to engage the Artist-in-Residence to work with upper primary students, with a literacy and music focus in 2004. Subsequently this short term project was awarded further funding from the ASSPA committee in the school, and a small federal grant.

7. Partnerships

(a) Effective partnerships were built between stakeholders in the school community, including Indigenous staff, teachers, school leaders, and students. The process had begun and potential was demonstrated for a similar approach to engage families in their children's learning.

(b) Sustainable outcomes were achieved in the area of teacher transformation: teacher practice remains flexible with teachers reporting improved quality of relationships with students. However, without ongoing joint planning, team teaching, and in-school mentoring teachers' sense of efficacy is compromised.

Research Project Summary

Research Title The International Study of Leadership in Education:
Learning from School Reform - Processes and Outcomes

Name Assoc Prof Helen Wildy

Dept/Institution Murdoch University

Final_Report_Received_Date 21/07/2005

Project Officer Comments

Preliminary Report on Data Analysis

The preliminary report summarises the findings of a questionnaire completed by school principals across Australia and across school jurisdictions. The questionnaire was designed to elicit school principals' perceptions of decision-making in their schools. Within this context the questionnaire addressed the issues of accountability to education authorities, autonomy in decision-making, and the efficiency of participatory decision-making.

The intention of the questionnaire was to inform the discussion of school leadership in a context of schools restructuring in three domains of decision-making. It was hoped that the results would indicate:

- a. Principals' perceptions of decisions for which external influence is salient, in systems that proclaim decentralised decision-making,
- b. Domains in which principals perceive they act autonomously when the rhetoric is a culture of collaboration, and
- c. Domains in which collaboration is costly.

The study indicates that the participating principals perceive there is only one domain of high external influence, in the area of funding for capital works programmes. This is expected, and the overall agreement by principals that internal sources (ie staff and themselves) influence their decision-making mostly supports the proclamation of decentralised decision making. On the question of autonomy, the study also indicates agreement with the culture of collaboration. The areas in which non-neutrality was demonstrated and where the principals made decisions unilaterally were to be expected. Finally, it was found that there were no areas of decision-making where principals perceived that the costs of sharing decision-making outweighed the benefits.

The study gave a snapshot of Australian principals' perceptions about decision-making during 2003 and, although evidence has shown that principals have had difficulty embracing the competing demands of school restructuring, the study indicated that principals from different jurisdictions were now supporting its progress throughout Australia.

Copy of Preliminary report filed on 2003/2863

Research Project Summary

Research Title	Survey to evaluate usage of The Real Game series kits in schools and non-school organisations
Name	Jennifer Coughran
Dept/Institution	DEST
Final_Report_Received_Date	22/07/2005

Project Officer Comments

Colmar Brunton Social Research (CBSR) was approached by The Department of Education, Science and Training to conduct research into The Real Game (12-14 years) as used in schools and non-school organisations.

The research involved a self-enumeration survey of all 746 organisations who had purchased The Real Game on or before December 2003. Following the quantitative phase, 6 telephone in-depth interviews were conducted with users to further elaborate on the findings. The research was conducted between May and October 2004.

Key Findings:

Almost all users surveyed currently own and/or use The Real Game, the Make it Real Game or The Be Real Game (95%). The remaining 5% failed to answer these questions. The Real Game is by far the most common, with 87% of users indicating that they currently use this Game. One-third (30%) use The Be Real Game and 11% use the Make it Real Game.

Just under half of all users have delivered The Real Game 1 to 2 times (46%), and a further 20% have delivered it 3 to 4 times. However, it should be noted that 72% of those delivering the Game only once or twice purchased between 2003 and 2004.

Non-school organisations were the most likely to have used The Real Game 10 times or more (36%), and Catholic schools were most likely to have purchased and not used the Game (16%).

The qualitative findings indicated that length of ownership of The Real Game, preparation time and delivery time of the full Game may have impacted on the number of times it has been delivered.

Most organisations (62%) had between 1 and 4 staff members who had delivered The Real Game, and 55% of organisations delivered to between 20 and 149 participants.

Although the majority of users (70%) had delivered The Real Game to participants aged 13-14 years, almost half (49%) had also delivered to participants 15-16 years of age. The qualitative findings indicate that a number of users felt that the Game was flexible and engaging enough to be suitable for participants from a range of ages.

Future use of The Real Game may be expected to be strong, with 78% of current users indicating they are 'likely' to use the Game in the future. Furthermore, 83% indicated they are likely to recommend the Game in the future, including 55% who are extremely likely.

Overall, there is good use of The Real Game among schools and non-school organisations among those who have purchased it. This provides a strong base for DEST should it wish to offer new or different products to organisations in the future.

CBSR suggests that this type of user research is repeated in the future to ensure that The Real Game continues to meet user needs. DEST may also wish to include in future research obtaining feedback from Real Game participants i.e. students who provide valuable insight into the experience of playing the Game and its impact on subject, career and life choices.

It should also be noted that this survey was conducted only with organisations who had purchased The Real Game. It therefore cannot provide information to DEST regarding why some schools have not purchased The Real Game. DEST may wish to consider investigating this issue further given the positive impact The Real Game is perceived to have for organisations and participants.

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A copy of the full report can be found at www.realgame.gov.au under 'What's New'