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Work-related learning with the arts: developing work skills with the performing and visual arts

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Work-related learning with the Arts

Developing work skills with the performing and visual arts

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

Doctorate of Education

University of Wollongong

Claire Manning
BA, MEd

Faculty of Education
2007

Certification

I, Claire Manning, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Doctorate of Education, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other university or academic institution.

Claire Manning

Contents

Certification.....	i
Contents	ii
List of tables and images.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background and focus	1
Purpose of the study and research questions.....	3
Theoretical framework.....	4
Significance of the study.....	5
Need for the study.....	6
Research design.....	7
<i>Performing arts learning environment</i>	7
<i>Visual arts learning environment</i>	8
Defining the arts	9
Benefits of learning with the arts.....	10
The arts and work-related learning.....	11
Limitations.....	12
Thesis structure.....	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
Introduction.....	15
Lifelong learning	16
WORK-RELATED LEARNING.....	17
The work related learner	20
<i>Adult learner</i>	20
<i>Experiential learner</i>	25
<i>Emotions and learning</i>	27
<i>Enjoyment and learning</i>	29
<i>Enjoyment and work-related learning</i>	31
Workplaces and learning	33
<i>Employability skills framework</i>	34
<i>Learning in the workplace</i>	35
<i>Determinants of successful work-related learning</i>	36
<i>Return on investments (ROI)</i>	37
<i>Creativity</i>	40
LEARNING WITH THE ARTS.....	42
Benefits the arts provide society.....	43
Learning in arts institutions	45
<i>The contextual model of learning</i>	48
Benefits of learning with the arts	49
The arts and work-related learning	51
<i>Performing arts</i>	52
<i>Visual arts</i>	54
<i>Music</i>	55
<i>Creative Writing – storytelling and poetry</i>	57
Conclusion.....	57

Chapter 3: Methodology	60
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	60
Research frameworks.....	61
<i>The contextual model of learning</i>	61
<i>The employability skills framework</i>	62
Rationale for qualitative research.....	64
Case study design.....	65
Research period and method.....	66
Data collection techniques.....	67
<i>Semi-structured interviews with the participants</i>	68
<i>Interviews with arts learning providers</i>	71
<i>Participant reflections of learning</i>	72
<i>Review of documents</i>	74
Ethical considerations.....	74
Cases – defining and pseudonyms.....	75
Data analysis.....	76
Conclusion.....	78
Chapter 4: Case Study Descriptions	79
Introduction.....	79
ARTS LEARNING PROVIDERS	79
National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA)	79
Creative Escape.....	81
The cases.....	82
NIDA PARTICIPANTS	83
Arcadia	83
Background and expectations.....	83
Immediate reflection of the NIDA learning experience.....	87
Thoughts 6 months after NIDA course.....	89
Aristotle	91
Background and expectations.....	92
Immediate reflection of the NIDA learning experience.....	94
Thoughts 6 months after NIDA course.....	96
Leunig	98
Background and expectations.....	99
Immediate reflection of the NIDA learning experience.....	101
Thoughts 6 months after NIDA course.....	102
Matisse	105
Background and expectations.....	106
Immediate reflection of the NIDA learning experience.....	108
Thoughts 6 months after NIDA course.....	110
McSeveny	113
Background and expectations.....	113
Immediate reflection of the NIDA learning experience.....	116
Thoughts 6 months after NIDA course.....	117
Shakespeare	119
Background and expectations.....	119
Immediate reflection of the NIDA learning experience.....	121
Thoughts 6 months after NIDA course.....	122

CREATIVE ESCAPE PARTICIPANTS	123
Escher	123
Background and expectations.....	124
Immediate reflection of the Creative Escape learning experience.....	126
Thoughts 6 months after Creative Escape course.....	128
Kozo	131
Background and expectations.....	131
Immediate reflection of the Creative Escape learning experience.....	134
Thoughts 6 months after Creative Escape course.....	136
Renoir	138
Background and expectations.....	138
Immediate reflection of the Creative Escape learning experience.....	140
Thoughts 6 months after Creative Escape course.....	142
Conclusion	144
Chapter 5: Analysis – Contextual Model of Learning	146
Introduction	146
PERSONAL CONTEXT.....	148
Motivation and expectations.....	148
Interest and prior knowledge and experience.....	150
Choice and control.....	156
SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT	158
Within group sociocultural mediation.....	158
Facilitated mediation by others.....	163
Culture.....	168
PHYSICAL CONTEXT.....	170
Advance preparation.....	170
Setting.....	171
Design.....	175
Subsequent reinforcing events and experiences.....	181
Conclusion.....	182
Chapter 6: Analysis – Employability Skills Framework	185
Introduction.....	185
Employability Skill Development – potential	186
NIDA – Performing Arts Learning Environment.....	186
Creative Escape – Visual Arts Learning environment.....	188
Employability Skill Development – findings	189
Participant findings: identification of work skills.....	191
Communication.....	191
Teamwork.....	197
Initiative and enterprise.....	201
Self-management.....	205
Lifelong learning.....	210
Problem solving.....	213
Planning and organising.....	216
Conclusion.....	217

Chapter 7: Discussion and Recommendations **219**

Do adult learners find it beneficial when work-related learning incorporates the use of the arts?.....	220
<i>What motivated the participants to learn with the arts?</i>	220
<i>What were the learner expectations and were these expectations met?</i>	222
<i>What were the significant social and physical aspects?</i>	224
What specific employability skills can be drawn out from work-related learning with the arts?	226
Main findings and recommendations from this study.....	227
Recommendations for further investigation.....	229
Final thoughts	231

References **232**

Appendices

- Appendix 1** – Contextual Model of Learning (Falk & Dierking, 2000)
- Appendix 2** – Employability Skills Framework (DEST, 2002)
- Appendix 3** – Declaration of Learning Summary (MOLI)
- Appendix 4** – Contextual Model of Learning Analysis– all comments
- Appendix 5** - Employability Skills Framework Analysis – all comments
- Appendix 6** – NIDA & Creative Escape Course Information
- Appendix 7** – NIDA & Creative Escape Employability Skills Framework Analysis Tables

Tables

Table 3.1	The Contextual Model of Learning	62
Table 3.2	Employability Skills Framework	63
Table 5.1	The Contextual Model of Learning	147
Table 6.1	NIDA Corporate Performance Course – Employability Skills Analysis Summary	187
Table 6.2	NIDA Women in Business Course – Employability Skills Analysis Summary	187
Table 6.3	Creative Escape – Through a Looking Brush Workshop – Employability Skills – Analysis Summary	188
Table 6.4	Creative Escape – Contemporary Acrylics Workshop – Employability Skills – Analysis Summary	189
Table 6.5	Employability Skills Framework – Communication	191
Table 6.6	Employability Skills Framework – Teamwork	198
Table 6.7	Employability Skills Framework – Initiative and enterprise	202
Table 6.8	Employability Skills Framework – Self Management	206
Table 6.9	Employability Skills Framework - Lifelong learning	210
Table 6.10	Employability Skills Framework – Problem solving	213
Table 6.11	Employability Skills Framework – Planning and organising	216

Images

Chapter 1	The Persistence of a Memory – Salvador Dali	1
Chapter 4	Arcadia - Tom Stoppard (Cover)	83
	Aristotle – Persuading Aristotle, Peter Thompson (Cover)	91
	Leunig – Goat – Leunig Calender 2005 Michael Leunig	98
	Matisse – La Danse (1912) – Henri Matisse	105
	Shakespeare – Rick Geary Image	119
	Escher - Sky & Water 1 (1938) – M.C. Escher	123
	Kozo – The Mirror (1978) - Kozo	131
	Renoir – The Oarsman at Chatou (1879) - Renoir	138

Abstract

In the last decade there has been a trend to incorporate the arts into work-related learning. The purpose of this study was to explore work-related learning utilising the arts to determine the benefits of this approach to learning. This study was designed to investigate how work related learners, predominately adult learners, could benefit from learning with artistic processes.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge and current limited research available on learning with the arts for work related development. Qualitative research was conducted in two arts environments, visual and performing, that offered work-related learning opportunities. This was undertaken using case study design where nine cases provided a snapshot of what was experienced when involved in work-related learning experiences.

An analysis of nine participants' perceptions of learning with the arts was undertaken firstly by exploring the individual learning from the personal, sociocultural and physical perspective using the Contextual Model of Learning developed by Falk and Dierking (2000). Secondly, to discover the potential of learning with the arts for work related skill development an analysis of the participants' reflections describing what was gained in these arts learning environments were analysed using the Employability Skills Framework (DEST, 2002).

Significant benefits for the individual adult learner are explored as a result of this study. For the workplace, this research presented evidence, based on participant perceptions, that employability skills could be developed when learning with the arts. Such skills identified during this study included assistance in the development of communication, initiative and enterprise, teamwork, self-management and lifelong learning skills.

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