

**REFLECTING ON THE VALUE OF ARTS INTENSIVE PROGRAMING IN
YUKON TERRITORY 1993 – 1994**

By

Lionel Colaci

B.A., University of Regina, 2009

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN
MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEADERSHIP

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 2017

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to look at the importance and value of teaching art in schools. While there are published academic papers that discuss the value of teaching arts at the secondary school level, there has been no study conducted on the MAD (Music, Arts, and Drama) program that was piloted in Whitehorse, Yukon in 1993 – 1994. The researcher was interested in documenting the participants' experiences in a secondary school immersive arts program that had no set curriculum. The methods of investigation used were questionnaires and interviews with former MAD students who attended the pilot program from 1993 – 1994. The questionnaires and interviews were conducted in the summer of 2017. Out of twelve possible participants contacted via encrypted email, only six of the alumni were available to reflect on their time in the MAD pilot program. The researcher collated the results of the interviews and questionnaires and analyzed them for emergent themes. The researcher found that these six participants had a positive experience in being exposed to an intensive arts program and they felt that by being exposed to arts in a secondary school setting helped them learn, or enhance, 21st century job skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving, collaborative skills, and empathy.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take the time to thank my parents, whose unending support has been a source of constant inspiration. I would like to thank Ross Peterson and Jeff Nordlund who brought the MAD program to the Yukon. I would also like to thank my peers who attended the MAD program in its pilot year and those that participated in this study. Finally, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Simon Blakesley and Dr. John Sherry, and my supervisor, Dr. Andrew Kitchenham.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study examined the MAD (Music, Arts, and Drama) program in its pilot year of 1993 - 1994. The goal of this study was to investigate the extent to which this program empowered students in a northern high school setting, the importance the participants placed on different arts disciplines while attending public school, and how arts education related to future leadership values, job prospects, self-reflection, empathy, and self-identity. This study documented the experiences of participants, analyzed them, noted themes that emerged in order to produce a set of recommendations to share with educators and to investigate if funding for the arts in school is valid, necessary, and useful.

Purpose of the Study

The Yukon MAD (Music, Art, and Dance) program began as a pilot program in 1993. It was brought to the Yukon Territory, Canada by two local educators who were working at the high school level for many years. The MAD program was unique in relation to classes that were available to students at a local high school, as it was not set up with a specific curriculum. It was meant to operate as a Democratic or Free School. Democratic schooling came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s, and remains a controversial method of learning that goes against the normal school vision. A.S. Neill founded the first Democratic School, The Summerhill School, in Lyme Regis, England in 1921. The Summerhill School currently accepts students from age five to 12. The pedagogical tenets which arose from Neill's logic are:

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- 1) To provide choices and opportunities that allows children to develop at their own pace and to follow their own interests. Summerhill does not aim to produce specific types of young people, with specific, assessed skills or knowledge, but aims to provide an environment in which children can define who they are and what they want to be.
- 2) To allow children to be free from compulsory or imposed assessment, allowing them to develop their own goals and sense of achievement. Children should be free from the pressure to conform to artificial standards of success based on predominant theories of child learning and academic achievement.
- 3) To allow children to be completely free to play as much as they like. Creative and imaginative play is an essential part of childhood and development. Spontaneous, natural play should not be undermined or redirected by adults into a 'learning experience' for children. Play belongs to the child.
- 4) To allow children to experience the full range of feelings free from the judgment and intervention of an adult. Freedom to make decisions always involves risk and requires the possibility of negative outcomes. Apparently negative consequences such as boredom, stress, anger, disappointment and failure are a necessary part of individual development.
- 5) To allow children to live in a community that supports them and that they are responsible for; in which they have the freedom to be themselves, and have the power to change community life, through the democratic process. All individuals create

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their own set of values based on the community within which they live. Summerhill is a community which takes responsibility for itself. Problems are discussed and resolved through openness, democracy and social action. All members of the community, adults and children, irrespective of age, are equal in terms of this process. (Cunningham, 2000, General Policy Statement).

The Summerhill School's website notes that:

Children below the age of 12 have their own teachers and classrooms with multi-activity spaces. In Class 1 (aged 5-9) the teacher can provide a timetable for the week, or organise activities in response to the children's needs and wishes. Class 2 (aged 10-12) have a sign up at the beginning of term for a wide variety of subjects and activities/projects. The Class 1 and 2 spaces are carefully designed to allow the children to engage in independent as well as timetabled activity.

The principle of the timetable is to allow the students to make informed choices within the context of a structured day. (Summerhill, 2017 para. 4.)

The MAD program was set up to give students a chance to explore many aspects of arts without the conventional boundaries associated with high school, much like the Summerhill School. In the MAD program, there was to be no timetables, no classes with desks, no period bells, and it allowed for unfettered creativity and self-exploration in a safe environment. Students who were interested in applying to the MAD program were given a one-page application to

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discuss with their parents. Interested students had to fill in the application with their parents and did not need to perform at an audition. The only caveat was that there was only a limited amount of space in the program, and for the 1993 – 1994 school year, acceptance was given on a first-come – first-served basis – as long as the applicant’s intention was serious. Once accepted into the program, the students attended the program in the newly constructed, multi-million-dollar state-of-art Yukon Arts Centre, located off the high school campus, to create and learn about art performance during their semester of study. The hours were the same as school, but often students chose to stay later working on projects (personal communication, July, 2017).

Students met at the Arts Centre at 8:30 in the morning, and after a brief class conference where each student explained what they would be working on during the day, were left to self-direct their learning. However, this did not mean that the MAD program students could do nothing all day. The two teachers had a strict policy that each student had to submit a project, using any art discipline of their choice, by the end of each week. These projects could be individual or collaborative. Extensive documentation of methodology and processes—along with the actual finished project—was also required for evaluation. Each day ended with another conference to check on progress and make a plan for the following day. Students were encouraged to seek out collaborators, peers, and teachers who could help them to learn and/or document a new technique. Documentation of projects could be accomplished in many ways; through journaling, video recording, scrapbooking, and so forth. While the students were working on their individual or collaborative projects each week, they were also working in a larger-scope project which, by the halfway point of the MAD program, was shown as an Arts

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Night Celebration where parents, fellow high school students, and the community at large could come and watch MAD students perform. There were three showings of this event and it was treated as a play, with students operating the soundboards, lights, set design, and changing backdrops, as well as performing. After these performances, the MAD students and teachers decided to create something truly ambitious: write, direct, score, and perform their own musical. Various MAD program students wrote and performed original songs, others collaborated on the script, while other students worked on set design and construction, rigging lighting, recording engineering, stage direction, and make up and costume design. The teachers were there to guide the students with suggestions, but left the actual mechanics of how to mount a 2.5 hour-long original musical to the students. This gave the MAD program students the opportunity to multi-task via various roles, and utilized every student's interest and skill-set, as well as push some out of their comfort zone.

It bears to mention that the MAD program continues to this day, albeit in a vastly different form. The MAD program today is not held at the Arts Centre, but rather in a school annex that was formerly a downtown Whitehorse elementary school. This was not the only change. Three years after the pilot program started, the program became so popular that candidates were required to submit a portfolio of their work as part of the application process. Once their portfolio was accepted, they had to pass an audition. The MAD program now has a set curriculum that is focused on the arts, but not as liberal as the class of 1993 - 1994 experienced. There is less time for exploring and creating original works. The MAD program

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now performs established Broadway musical productions such as *Grease*; *Bye Bye Birdie*; *Mary Poppins*, and *Fiddler on the Roof* and no longer does completely original musicals.

This study focused on the MAD program class of 1993 - 1994 in order to discover how the Democratic education model shaped the participants' lives during their time in the program and to investigate whether it had any lasting impact, either positively or negatively, on their post-secondary lives.

Background of Study

According to the Government of Yukon Socio-Economic Web Portal, at the time of the creation of the MAD program, the City of Whitehorse, Yukon had a population of 23,221 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Whitehorse was, and still is, the major hub of the Yukon. It is the capital city, which houses federal and territorial governments, law building and RCMP headquarters, as well as its only college, library, territory archives, international airport, one of three hospitals in the territory, and about 90% of the population of the entire territory. The majority of the participants in this program have since moved away from this town and have gone onto find work in various fields. The researcher was interested in finding out how those students fared in the workforce and whether the MAD program helped them or not in their lives. The researcher was a participant in the MAD program during the pilot year, but will not document *his* experiences, rather only those of his fellow participants.

Importance of the Study

This study was the first to examine a Northern Canadian high school's pilot program that was focused on a complete immersion in the arts of drama, music, writing, visual arts, and stage design. There have been other studies of magnet schools and open-enrolment schools in the past, but these studies were focused on athletics or outdoor education programs such as the ACES program (Achievement, Challenge, Environment, and Service) which is held in remote locations across the territory; the OPES (Outdoor Pursuits and Experiential Science) 9 and PASE (Plein Air et Sciences Expérientielles) 9 which integrates Science 9, Social Studies 9, Physical Education 9 and Outdoor Pursuits; CHAOS (Community: Heritage: Adventure: Outdoors: Skills); and the Experiential Science Program (see <http://www.fhcollins.ca/wood-street-school.html>).

The five aforementioned programs took place in Whitehorse at the same time as the MAD pilot program was initiated. Presently, there is still only one arts-intensive program, however there are five separate programs that are geared towards sports, science and the outdoors. These five programs can be taken from Grade 9 to Grade 11, throughout the different semesters, while the MAD program is offered to students in Grades 9 – 12. While there is no denial that sports and its effects on the success of students in a high school setting is well documented and popular, arts, by its very nature, are open to interpretation, and draw on human emotion, expressions, experiences, and requires thoughtful analysis of context and content.

With the current interest and funding being invested in arts education in some public schools, and the movement for incorporating Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math

(STEAM) programs into school curriculums, the researcher was interested to find out whether the MAD pilot program empowered students in a northern high school setting. The researcher hoped to achieve this by considering other perspectives, interviewing alumni of the program, as well as highlighting the importance of arts in formal education.

Researcher's Bias

As a child, the researcher had never excelled in sports, and did not connect with the world of athleticism. Art was a way to express himself in a creative way. The researcher also acknowledges a potential bias, as his experience in the MAD program was extremely positive. However, the researcher was not interested in documenting *his* experiences, but rather those of his fellow participants. He strictly asked questions to those participants and documenting their experiences and not his own.

The researcher acknowledges that he has been concerned over the last few years as schools across Canada have been cutting funding for music and arts in general, while funding and resources for sports and physical activity routinely increases. This study does not suggest to undercut the importance and value of sports programming, but rather to give credence, validity, and importance to the arts as a way of engaging students and learning practical skills.

Choice is something that the researcher believes is an essential element in teaching through honouring the arts. The researcher has used this in his own practice. As an elementary school teacher, he allows his students to present a project as either a standard essay, a student-created film, an original song, or a short play. This is not to say that the researcher believes that students never need to know or practice how to write an essay – they do. But for some students,

it may be more engaging to show their learning in a different, perhaps unconventional way. In his own experiences, the researcher has found that students enjoy the freedom to express themselves in different formats and the quality of the presentation is upped as the students now are invested in something that “speaks to them”. This is perfectly consistent with contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. The researcher feels that his experiences in the MAD program demonstrated to him that there are many ways to show learning that are not tied to solely written output that many high schools at the time favored as a means of assessing student learning.

Conceptual Lens

The researcher conducted interviews with the students of the graduating classes of this program in 1993-1994 and found out how they applied what they learned during their time with this specialized program. The method planned to use for this research was phenomenological research. The researcher feels that this approach best suits this study because it focuses “...on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, pp. 57-58). The researcher chose this format because he firmly believes that giving a democratic school setting to 17-18-year-old students is a phenomenon - something that is impressive and extraordinary. Creswell, citing Maustakas, lays out the procedures for this type of research as: “...identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one’s own experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). Transcendental phenomenology also allows the researcher to “...analyze the data by reducing the information into significant states or quotes and combines the statements into

themes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). This study could have also been undertaken by way of narrative existential phenomenology, which is described by Heidegger as:

...how the being of beings (things) show themselves to us as a revealing of Being itself.

For Heidegger the phenomenological question became: How can we let that what shows itself be seen in the very way that it shows itself from itself? Heidegger's existential phenomenology is also often referred to as ontological phenomenology (concerned with being). (van Manen, 2002, p. 201).

It was the researcher's hope that by collecting interviews, surveys, and by having the students involved in the pilot program respond to artifacts created by them during their involvement in the MAD program, phenomenological themes will come to the surface, allowing to identify common experiences, issues, results, and to catalogue participants' recommendations for present and future educators.

Limitations

The potential limitations and weakness of this study is related to the small sample size. While 12 former students of the MAD program were contacted and all seemed interested in sharing their stories, only six sent in their responses and agreed to be interviewed during the timeframe necessary in order to complete this project.

Summary

This chapter introduced the MAD (Music, Arts, and Drama) program within the context of its creation; the importance of this study; explains the researcher's interest in the pilot year of the MAD program; and the researcher interest in how the program might have affected its participants in their adult life.

The MAD program was a chance to explore arts and be creative without a set curriculum, while still being accountable for progress and self-learning. This is the first study of an immersive arts program in a northern setting and it was conducted as a phenomenological research, in the belief that a democratic schooling for 17-18 years old students in the Yukon was something out of the ordinary. This chapter also discussed the limitations of the study that emerge from the small sample of MAD participants (50% of total respondents); however, in subsequent chapters, the hope is that the data collected from the questionnaire and interviews will show that there was ample opportunity for participants to express themselves.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Drawing on research in neuroscience, much of the current educational research looks at the effects of music and art on the brain, and at how different educators are pioneering ways for incorporating art in their classrooms. Harvard-educated Howard Gardner is famous for cataloguing Multiple Intelligences. His theory is that children (and adults) have different ways of showing intelligence. The intelligences he catalogued and described are: musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. This was done in order to show that there were different modalities and ways of learning. In later years, he added that existential and moral intelligence might also be worth including after more research was done.

Mark K. Smith (2008), a researcher and educator based in London, who is currently a member of the steering committee overseeing social pedagogy standards in the UK, writing about Gardner's early life, explained that "His parents had fled from Nürnberg in Germany in 1938 with their three-year old son, Eric. Just prior to Howard Gardner's birth Eric was killed in a sleighing accident. These two events were not discussed during Gardner's childhood, but were to have a very significant impact upon his thinking and development (Gardner, 1989). The opportunities for risky physical activity were limited, and creative and intellectual pursuits encouraged." (Smith, 2008, para. 6).

Gardner (2000) suggested that, by looking at classical cultures, educators can help create what he referred to as the whole child. He writes that "Classic cultures also look to certain disciplines as particularly important in the formation of the whole person: through knowledge of

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certain key texts; the mastery of music and poetry; the training of the body...and at least the rudiments of rhetoric, measuring, medicine, music, and astronomy” (Gardner, 2000, p. 34).

Gardner (2000) also noted the possible organizational role that music has in a child’s life. He found that “a number of intriguing studies suggest that learning a musical instrument in early life may yield positive consequences in other cognitive domains, including those valued in school” (Gardner, 2000, p. 82). This is important to the researcher’s project as in the MAD program encouraged students who had no developed musicality to learn an instrument by exploring and figuring out how to play music without lessons (personal communication, July 2017).

Rick Stiggins (2007), the retired founder and former president of the Assessment Training Institute in Portland, Oregon, is an educational researcher who has done a great deal of work on balanced assessment in schools. Stiggins (2007) suggested that students be given the opportunity to show what they know in a manner that allows them to make that knowledge their own and express themselves in a way that is meaningful to them. Gardner (2000) thought that: “we ought to configure education to allow two outcomes: (1) students encounter material in ways that allow them to access their content, and (2) students have the opportunity to show what they have learned, in ways that are comfortable for them yet also interpretable by the surrounding society” (Gardner, 2000, p. 73).

The question that should be asked is: why are subjects like art and music important? In Daniel J. Levitin’s (2008) book, *The World in Six Songs: How the Musical Brain Created Human Nature*, made a case for why music is important in life:

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For many of the world's preliterate cultures, memory and counting songs remain essential to everyday life. As the early Greeks knew, music was a powerful way of preserving information, more effective and efficient than simply memorizing, and we are now learning the neurobiological basis for this (p. 2).

Levitin (2008) quoted folk musician Pete Seeger, who said: “Musical force comes from a sense of form; whereas ordinary speech doesn't have quite that much organization. You can say what you mean, but with painting or with cooking, or other arts, there is a form and a design to music. And this becomes intriguing; it becomes something you can remember. Good music can leap over language barriers, and religious barriers and politics” (Levitin, 2008, p. 13). Levitin (2008) proposed that where language might fail to translate over borders, and cultural divides, art is a powerful way of conveying a message. Levitin (2008) claimed that the development of the brain's prefrontal cortex created a common method of thought that can be found in art. He explains that:

This new neural mechanism gave us the three cognitive abilities that characterize the musical brain. The first is *perspective-taking*: the ability to think our own thoughts and to realize that other people may have thoughts or beliefs that differ from our own. The second is *representation*: the ability to think of things that aren't right-there-in-front-of-us. The third is *rearrangement*: the ability to combine, recombine, and impose hierarchical order on the elements in the world. The combination of these three faculties gave early humans the ability to create their own depiction of the world—painting, drawing, and sculpture—that

preserved the essential feature of things though not necessarily the distracting details. These three abilities, alone or in combination, are the common foundation of language and art. Language and art both serve to represent the world to us in ways that are not exactly like the world itself, but which allow us to preserve essential features in our own minds, and to convey what *our* minds perceive to others. The awareness that what *we* feel is not necessarily what another is feeling, coupled with our drive to create social bonds with others, gave rise to language and art, to poetry, drawing, dance, sculpture...and music. (Levitin, 2008, pp. 15-16).

What Levitin (2008) suggested is that the abilities of perspective-taking, representation, and rearrangement are common in the foundation of language and art, and that by valuing the arts, we learn self-discovery and gain understanding of our world as we view it, and therefore lends itself to empathy because just as we understand that art is allows us to “convey what our minds perceive to others”, we implicitly understand that other people’s art allow us to view the world through their perspective.

This concept is echoed in one of the studies cited the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, republished in *Arts Education in America*. In it, neuro-education researchers at John Hopkins University found that arts integration, which emphasizes repetition of information multiple ways, provides the advantage of embedding knowledge in long-term memory “... (and that) The rehearsal and repetition of information embedded in multiple domains may cause an

actual change in the physical structure of neurons” (Stevens, Jr., Lion, Campbell, et al, May 2011, p. 77).

In *Education and the Arts: Educating Every Child in the Spirit of Inquiry and Joy*, Dr. Mariale Hardiman (2016) noted:

...the arts are the essential platform upon which language and logic have developed. More than an anthropological sideshow, the arts constitute a direct connection between what we experience and who we are.

Considering this fundamental role in the developing human mind and the growth of civilization, one must wonder why today we segregate the arts in our social structures and educational disciplines, making them apart from, instead of a part of, our everyday experiences. How did the “artful mind” become viewed as different from the “intellectual, academic mind”? How have the arts become marginalized in the way we educate our citizens? How did the visual and performing arts—painting, sculpture, design, music, dance, theater, cinema and poetry—become relegated to fringe subjects in modern views of school curricula? (p. 1).

Hardiman (2006) is concerned about focusing on what she refers to as non-ephemeral subjects such as “social studies, science” that we, as a society, have gained something, but we have also lost something as well. She also notes that it is often difficult to get true statistics on art participation and instruction in schools, as “There is conflicting information about the extent of arts programming in schools. A survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics during the 2009-2010 school year reported that 94 percent of elementary and secondary schools

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offered music and 83 percent offered visual arts, although the number of theater and dance programs offered were significantly lower, at 3 and 4 percent, respectively” (Hardiman, 2016, p. 4), but that “in some cases, a brief exposure to an art class during the year may have been reported as participation in arts instruction. Arts participation also may have been reported if students were exposed to an occasional assembly or an after-school or community-based program. Even if one assumes that the survey accurately portrays some level of appropriate arts instructional programs, Zubrzycki (2015a) points out that 1.3 million students still have no access to music education and about 4 million have no access to the visual arts (Hardiman, 2016, p. 4).

Researcher Hardiman explained her worry about this trend:

Results from longitudinal studies by the National Endowment for the Arts found a significant relationship between arts education and various measures of academic achievement, especially for children in low-income communities, [and that] [w]hile correlational studies do not make the case for a causal relationship between the arts and learning, still, these findings provide important contributions by showing areas in which arts programming may be associated with better school outcomes. For example, Catterall and colleagues found that students from low-income schools who had higher levels of arts experiences than peers without the same experiences were more likely to complete high school, attain higher grade point averages, enroll in college, become more involved in community activism, and express greater interest in current affairs (Hardiman, 2016, p.5).

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Hardiman cited a study by Brown, Benedett and Armistead (2010) that examined the effects of arts instruction on assessments of school readiness and vocabulary development. She writes that Brown, Benedett and Armistead “...found that early learning of music, creative movement, and visual arts classes correlated with higher school-readiness skills. Students attending arts-enriched schools for two years showed greater gains than those with only one year of attendance. Both groups of students, those attending for one year and those attending for two years, demonstrated greater receptive vocabulary than counterparts at a comparison school without robust arts programs” (Hardiman, 2016, p. 5).

But why is exposure to art education important to Hardiman and other educators? If North American schools are constantly falling behind in Math and Science metrics, what could arts education possibly offer to schools? Hardiman wrote:

Drawing on research in cognition, Perkins (1994) presents arguments that endorse the use of the arts as a means for cultivating reflective thinking that motivates and engages students in all areas of learning. The benefits of looking at art include the development of dispositions of thinking, which he refers to as reflective intelligence—a set of skills, alertness to opportunities to utilize those skills, and the inclination to use them. Similarly, in the research compilation *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, Deasy (2002) reports multiple studies that suggest the benefits of the arts for general learning in non-arts subjects, including self-motivation, social skills, tolerance, empathy, persistence and positive peer interaction (Hardiman, 2016, p.6).

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Educators are constantly trying to instill self-regulation, tolerance, empathy, persistence, and positive peer interaction in their students in order to make society a more open and accepting place. The research reported above seems to confirm that teaching various artistic disciplines helps students achieve this goal more easily.

Furthermore, various workforces are demanding that employees think creatively and problem-solve in unique ways. Hardiman cited research by Catterall and by Dwyer noting that “Catterall (2002) highlights that the arts help not only in academic skills, but also with social skill development by increasing a student’s ability to solve problems and reduce conflicts. Perhaps the benefits of the arts in promoting thinking dispositions and social development are further explanations for why students who participate in arts programs in schools demonstrate higher academic achievement and better school attendance than those who have little or no arts participation (Dwyer, 2011). (Hardiman, 2016). She drew on her own research from 2012 and from other researchers to suggested “...that the arts can influence not only areas of academic attainment and engagement in learning but also creative thinking and problem-solving, which have become a signature focus in the call for teaching 21st century skills. Spearheaded by organizations such as the Partnership of 21st Century Schools, those skills essential to a successful career are collaboration, effective communication, innovative thinking, and creative problem-solving.” (Hardiman, 2016, p. 9).

Hardiman cited the study *Studio Learning: Motivation, Competence, and the Development of Young Art Students' Talent and Creativity* by Susan M. Rostan, noting that Rostan (2010) argues that engaging in high-quality arts learning has been shown to develop

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creativity and provide an advantage for related forms of critical thinking. She also cites Dunbar's work *Arts Education, the Brain, and Language: Learning Arts and the Brain: The Dana Consortium Report on Arts and Cognition* from 2008 where Dunbar and others found:

...how the arts promote creativity and lead to anatomical changes in the brain.

Comparing cognitive differences between students who participated in performing arts experiences with those who did not, results of fMRI studies showed that during tasks that required creative thinking, the performing arts group showed increased activity in the left frontal lobe, often associated with higher-order mental processing. Using standard measures of creative thinking, Dunbar also found that the students who had been engaged in the performing arts were more likely to generate creative ideas than peers who had no experiences in the performing-arts. (Hardiman, 2016, p.9).

Those worried that adding more dedicated arts in schools would be a detriment to core subjects like math and science, Dr. Hardiman has found research that might put those minds at ease. She writes:

Within traditional content instruction, the arts have recently played an important role in the teaching of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Adding the arts to the acronym, the STEAM movement has recently gained traction, likely in response to the often-espoused need for a more creatively productive workforce to increase U.S. global competitiveness. A recent bipartisan Congressional STEAM Caucus focused on the need for the

interdisciplinary study of science, design, art, and education. John Maeda, president of the Rhode Island School of Design and co-host of the STEAM Caucus, describes the core of the STEAM movement: “In da Vinci’s time when expertise in art and science had not yet matured to the polarized state in which they exist today, they coexisted naturally... it is clear to me that even current practices in scientific research have much to gain by involving artists in the process early and often. Artists serve as great partners in the communication of scientific research; moreover, they can serve as great partners in the navigation of the scientific unknown (Hardiman, 2016, p.10).

At the end of her paper, Dr. Hardiman explained succinctly why teaching and incorporating arts into an academic setting is vital:

Educators know that what gets measured is what gets taught. Moreover, how we test largely drives how instruction is delivered... As part of this sea change in the field, policy-makers and educators would move away from a slavish reliance on multiple-choice tests to judge the quality of teaching and learning. Instead, new metrics could be designed to measure performance and competencies that promote creative problem solving, allowing students to use multiple, authentic ways to demonstrate mastery of content, skills and concepts. Changes in assessment systems will encourage innovations such as inquiry-based learning, including the “Maker movement”, where students are encouraged to tinker and build using simple materials of varying complexity from Legos to 3D printing software. The

reform of assessment systems will also embolden teachers to move beyond the silos of compartmentalized subjects to build bridges across different curricular offerings. In education, policy change is inevitably glacial. We do not change the philosophy or the practice until we absolutely have to. With only one-third of eighth-graders meeting proficiency standards in math and reading (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), the time for change is now (Hardiman, 2016, p.11).

Hardiman seems to be suggesting that if we continue to pour resources and money into getting students to meet proficiency standards in math and reading, and the increase in student proficiency standards are negligible, then perhaps there may be a way to integrate learning within an arts context and allow for more creativity when it comes to problem-solving. It could be argued that not all adults use math separately and during a one-hour block of the day; we use math in context – in relation to – other things we are doing. Perhaps by teaching reading and math in conjunction with the arts, it may make it more appealing to students and form new neural pathways in their brains.

In essence, music, drama, and art – in all its forms, are a way of representing what we know to ourselves and to the world. It is also a powerful communication tool that is highly organized, purposeful, and abstract. If one thinks of what remains of a culture, such as the Roman Empire, Macedonia, Egypt, etc... the artifacts that remain, and the way we interpret how they lived, what their values were, is Art and can give humans a sense of permanence in history. Whether it be paintings, architecture, poems, music, or clothes, it is how we understand not only our world today, but past worlds.

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Some of the reasons to promote the arts in education are highlighted in *Arts Education in America*. The researchers found:

Persistently high dropout rates (reaching more than 50% or more in some areas) are evidence that many schools are no longer able to engage and motivate their students. Students who do graduate from high school are increasingly the products of narrow curricula, lacking the creative and critical thinking skills needed for success in post-secondary education and the workforce. In such a climate, the outcomes associated with arts education – which includes increased academic achievement, school engagement, and creative thinking – have become increasing [sic] important” (Lewis & Lee, 2012, p. ix).

In their study for the National Endowments for the Arts, republished in *Arts Education in America*, researchers Nick Rabkin of University of Chicago, and Dr. E.C. Hedberg, researcher at University of Chicago, note that “By the 20th century, progressive educators, including John Dewey, the leading educational philosopher of the time, began asserting that learning in the arts was essential to a complete education” (Rabkin & Hedberg, February 2011, p. 35). Rabkin and Hedberg seem to suggest that by fostering arts education allows for a more fully developed and more well-rounded academic.

In the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, republished in *Reinvesting in Arts Education in America: Winning America’s Future Through Creative Classrooms*, Stevens, Lion, Campbell, et al. found that “Arts integration models, the practice of teaching across classroom subjects in tandem with the arts, have been yielding some particularly promising

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results in school reform and closing the achievement gap. Most recently, cutting-edge studies in neuroscience have been further developing our understanding of how arts strategies support crucial brain development” (Stevens, Jr., Lion, Schmidt Campbell, et al, May 2011, p. vi).

Furthermore, it was highlighted that “Policymakers and civic and business leaders, as reflected in several recent high level task force reports, are increasingly recognizing the potential role of the arts in spurring innovation, providing teachers with more effective classroom strategies, engaging student in learning, and creating a climate of high performance in schools” (Stevens, Jr., Lion, Schmidt Campbell, et al, May 2011, p. vi).

In the forward to The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, published in *Arts Education in America*, former US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan writes:

I’ve also seen the power of arts education as an education leader. When I was the CEO of Chicago Public Schools, I became convinced that arts education is an integral part of school reform...Studies showed that students at the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE) Schools performed better on standardized assessments than student who attend school that did not integrate arts and sciences...[and that] it’s an unfortunate truth that many schools today are falling far short of providing students with a full experience of the arts that helps them engage and succeed in other academic areas and build skills that would serve them well in the innovative economy. Too often students are saddled with boring textbooks, dummied-down to the lowest common denominator. As this report documents, the arts significantly boost student achievement, reduce discipline

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problems and increase the odds that students will go on to graduate from college.

(Duncan, May 2011, p. 2).

Duncan suggested that by promoting arts education may be a way to get students interested in other curriculum areas – and looking forward to learning those subjects through an aesthetic lens.

The Arts Education Partnership, or AEP, “was created in 1995 and is a division of the Council of Chief State School Officers, dedicated to securing a high-quality arts education for every young person in America. It is a national coalition of more than 100 education, arts, cultural, government, business, and philanthropic organizations.... [to] offer a snapshot of how the arts support achievement in school, bolster skills demanded of a 21st century workforce, and

Walker, Tabone, and Weltsek (2011) found that:

Arts education helps make learning matter to students by giving them a medium to connect new knowledge to personal experiences and express what they have learned to others. Students who are typically disengaged in school are more likely to participate in arts and arts integrated classes than in classes where the arts are absent, and students who receive arts integrated instruction have higher attendance than those who do not. (cited in Stevenson, 2013, p. 3).

Among the other numerous studies cited in this research brief, Stevenson notes that there has been substantial research done in the USA on how teaching art in its various forms can:

“Develops critical thinking... In a world where students must frequently wade through a sea of information to determine which facts are trustworthy and relevant to a particular topic, critical

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thinking skills are key to college readiness and lifelong learning. Arts education develops students' critical thinking skills—including skills for comparing, hypothesizing, critiquing, and exploring multiple and alternative viewpoints.” (Stevenson, 2013, p. 3). She also found that engaging students in arts education prepares them better of the 21st Century workforce as it:

Equips students to be creative. Arts education develops creativity, one of the top five skills employers prize for the 21st Century. Students receiving an arts-rich education perform better on assessments of creativity than do students receiving little or no arts education. Performing arts students, for example, show greater flexibility and adaptability in thinking than their peers... Strengthens problem solving ability. The arts develop reasoning skills that prepare students to solve problems. Students who study the arts, for example, score higher than their peers on tests measuring the ability to analyze information and solve complex problems, and are more likely to approach problems with patience and persistence... Builds collaboration and communication skills. In the arts, students learn to articulate their intentions, receive and offer constructive criticism, and listen actively to others' ideas. Art making allows students to experience what it feels like to be active members of a community and to work as a team to determine and achieve common goals... (and) Increases capacity for leadership. Students who participate in the arts develop leadership skills, including decision-making, strategy building, planning, and reflection. They also prepare to use these skills effectively by

developing a strong sense of identity and confidence in their ability to affect the world around them in meaningful ways (Stevenson, April 2013, p.4).

Summary

This chapter has shown that by drawing on research in neuroscience, much of the current educational research looks at the effects of music and art on the brain, and at how different educators are pioneering ways for incorporating art in their classrooms. Looking at the numerous studies cited in this literature review, there is ample evidence that teaching art in its various forms can develop critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving that are key to college readiness and lifelong learning.

Gardner presented the theory that people have different ways of showing intelligence. The intelligences he catalogued and described are: musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. This was done in order to show that there were different modalities and ways of learning. In later years, he added other intelligences may be added to his theory after more research. Gardner also suggests that by looking at classical cultures, educators can help create what he refers to as the whole child. He explained that by looking at classic cultures are valid in formation of the whole person. That through knowledge and mastery of music and poetry can help learners become ‘whole learners’. Gardner also noted the possible organizational role that music has in a child’s life.

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. Stiggins suggests that students be given the opportunity to show what they know in a manner that allows them to make that knowledge their own and express themselves in a way that is meaningful to them. The question that should be asked is: Why are subjects like art and music important?

Levitin proposes that the abilities of perspective-taking, representation, and rearrangement are common in the foundation of language and art, and that by valuing the arts, we can learn self-discovery and understanding of our world as we view it. This lends itself to empathy. Just as we understand that art allows us to explain and show the world as we, as individuals see it to others, we implicitly understand that other people's art allow us to view the world through their perspective.

This chapter has also presented findings from neuro-education researchers at John Hopkins University that discovered that arts integration, which emphasizes repetition of information multiple ways, provides the advantage of embedding knowledge in long-term memory; elaborating on the above research, Hardiman explains succinctly why teaching and incorporating arts into an academic setting is vital. By focusing on what she is referring to as non-ephemeral subjects such as “social studies, science” that we, as a society, have gained something, but we have also lost something as well. Hardiman notes that if North American schools are constantly falling behind in Math and Science metrics, then perhaps it is time to try something radical: incorporating more arts into the curriculum.

Educators are constantly trying to instill self-regulation, tolerance, empathy, persistence, and positive peer interaction in their students in order to make society a more open and accepting

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place. Research reported in this Study confirms that teaching various artistic disciplines helps students achieve this goal more easily.

This plays into the assessment philosophy put forth earlier in the chapter by Stiggins that there are different ways of showing learning, and that these ways can be equally valid. In the MAD program, students were encouraged to show what they know or learned in novel ways.

The researcher strongly believes that it is important to give students the control over the way students show their learning. By allowing students to be creative, they access different parts of their brains, and perhaps can become more engaged and even more flexible in their learning. Many educators have noted that format need not necessarily be dictated by content. By showing students that the teacher is willing to accept various formats for meeting the learning outcomes, or curriculum competencies, students can be inspired to take more risks – which, in itself is, an essential skill. Furthermore, various workforces are demanding that employees think creatively and problem-solve in unique ways and fostering arts education seems to do just that.

Chapter 3: Research Paradigm

The main focus of this study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of those who participated in the MAD pilot program, and to find out the extent to which these experiences shaped the participants as aspiring artists and people in their daily post-secondary lives. The researcher feels that educators need to better understand the experiences of budding artists in the classroom. No study of the MAD program has been done in the Yukon, and therefore its impact may not be fully understood for some time without further study. If one considers the time, money, and volunteer efforts in school and after-school sports programs, there is no question that the public-school support for the arts in northern Canadian settings falls well behind. Northern Canada by its own nature is isolated and limited in arts, music and drama events, and a school program could well motivate aspiring artists into exploring this field of work.

Methodology

The research methodology chosen for this project is phenomenological narrative. The researcher believes that phenomenological existentialism would be the best fit for this particular project, as this method "...involves the careful description of aspects of human life as they are lived; (and) emphasis on the importance of individuals and their freedom to participate in their own creation. It is a psychology that emphasizes our creative processes" (Boeree, 2000, p. 123). Within the use of phenomenological existentialism, the information will be derived from the participants' observations and reflections – hence reliance on narrative within the proposed study.

Method

The data collection method included individual interviews and proposed focus groups discussions. In order to complete the project, the researcher used: a computer with internet access and Microsoft Word; a current American Psychology Association Citation Manual, 6th edition; encrypted e-mail used specifically for communication between researcher and participants; a digital recorder, for face-to-face interviews; Skype and Audacity software; WhatsApp encrypted communications app; and a secure, locked office with a fire-proof safe, to store all data.

Participants' Recruitment

Participants in this study were selected from MAD pilot program students who took part in its activities in the school year 1993 - 1994. Out of a total of 12 potential participants, six alumni agreed to be interviewed in the timeframe given. Participants were contacted via a Facebook user group. This was used only as a 'first contact' means of gauging alumni interest in recruitment to this study. Once participants responded that they were interested in sharing their experiences in the MAD pilot program, all further contact was done via encrypted email and through end-to-end encrypted messaging apps like WhatsApp. Once alumni responded with their interest, they were then sent a form. The form was an overview of the study, their potential roles in the research, and how their responses would be used. A consent form explained that the interview should take approximately one hour and would be conducted at the best location for them. The sessions would be audio-recorded. If a face-to-face interview was not possible, the questions would be emailed to the participant via secure and encrypted email. Participating MAD alumni would also be given a transcription of their own interview and asked to verify its

authenticity and accuracy of intent. The consent form also acknowledged that participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to interested parties, but that it would be limited to the time taken to read this consent form and the time it takes to participate in the actual interview and answering the questions. The researcher explained in the consent form that there were no known or anticipated risks to subjects by participating in this research but some questions or statements could evoke an emotional response. If emotions are raised, the researcher encouraged participants to either let the interviewer know or skip the question. The researcher also provided contact information for counselling services, if required.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations for this study were taken very seriously. The researcher adhered to the guidelines as laid out in The Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) (2014). This document states that all ethical considerations must be undertaken before research is to begin. The researcher submitted his project proposal to the Research Ethics Board (REB) at UNBC beginning in August of 2016 before the recruitment of participants. After many revisions, the research proposal and questions were approved on April 25th, 2017. The REB deemed that this study posed minimal risk to participants and satisfied UNBC's protocols and standards. Only when the researcher was given final written approval from the REB did the recruitment of potential participants in this study begin.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Potential participants were initially contacted in early May 2017 via Facebook – however, the researcher must stress that Facebook *was not* used in any other way once participants agreed to contribute to this study. MAD 1993 – 1994 alumni were forwarded an encrypted email with an information sheet explaining this project and invited officially to participate.

Each participant was given a pseudonym and their current location will not be disclosed in this study. The researcher made sure that no distinguishing characteristics would be evident to those who read the project. Furthermore, each participant who was interviewed was given their interview answers in order to ensure that their answers were interpreted correctly and participants will receive a final copy of the study once approved. Each participant identity and responses was kept in the strictest confidence. Each participant was told verbally at the beginning of each interview, and through a signed waver, that they would be able to pull out at any moment during the interview and writing phase of the study without consequence.

The data collected was kept in a locked safe in the researcher’s office, which also had a lockable key entry. The data will be stored for six months after the study completion date. All paper data will be then shredded and all electronic data files, including transcribed interviews, audio recordings, and emails will be digitally shredded with the program File Shredder.

Consent

All participants that expressed interest in reflecting on their time in the 1993-1994 MAD pilot program voluntarily signed the informed consent form prior to data collection. The

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informed consent form contained an invitation to participate in a study then entitled “A Look and Reflection at the Value of Arts Intensive Program in the Yukon Territory 1993 – 1994” (now titled “Reflecting on the Value of Arts Intensive Programming in Yukon Territory 1993 – 1994”) as part of the requirement of a Masters in Multidisciplinary Leadership at the University of Northern British Columbia. The consent form explained that the purpose of the research was to explore the value of an immersive arts program like the MAD program at the secondary school level and to give current and future educators an insight into what might work and what kinds of learning opportunities and skills opened up to students who participate in arts education. The consent form further explained that interested MAD alumni were uniquely positioned to share their experiences on this distinctive program. The consent letter went on to clarify the process and roles of participants and the researcher in this proposed study. If interested participants agreed to take part, they would have a series of semi-structured questions posed by the researcher. The questions would be about their experiences in the MAD program during its pilot year and how it affected their lives afterwards. All participants were given the questions in advance. The consent form also clarified that if the subject agrees to participate, they would be able to withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. Furthermore, if participants stated they wanted to withdraw from the study, their data would not be used in the analysis and that it would be destroyed unless they expressly requested that the information they had provided up to the time of their withdrawal be included in the study. The consent form also described the potential benefits associated with this study were varied and included, but not limited to: becoming more self-aware of the experiences they had during their participation in the

MAD program; and understanding the importance of promoting the arts education in a high school setting. Finally, the letter stated that this research study will be accessible to the public through UNBC when completed and that all aspects of this study would follow the strict guidelines set forth by the Research Ethics Board of UNBC. The letter in its entirety can be found in the Appendix 1 of this study.

Interviewing

When possible, the interviews were conducted in person, at a time and location convenient to the participant. If participants could not meet face to face, they were given the opportunity to submit their answers via secure encrypted email, or via WhatsApp tele-conference. The researcher feels that this was important because the more comfortable the participant feels, the more open they might be to reflect on their time in the MAD program. If face-to-face interviews and WhatsApp tele-conference was not possible, the participants were given the option to be sent the question via encrypted email. Participants could then send their data via secure, encrypted email to the researcher. This was only conducted with the full consent and knowledge of the participants involved. The interviews were transcribed and resubmitted to the participants to ensure that they were an accurate record of the participant's responses. The participants who agreed to being interviewed were given questions at least two weeks before the actual interview took place, so that they would have time to reflect on their experiences. The researcher had hoped to conduct a focus group interview at a later date, while pre-assumed that those who have given their reflections in writing, or in one-on-one interviews, would not necessarily want to be in a focus group. Unfortunately, focus groups were not undertaken as the

logistics of arranging a common time proved difficult as most participants live elsewhere in Canada and Europe.

Research Questions

The UNBC REB-approved research questions submitted to the participants were:

1. Do you recall how your parents reacted when you decided to enter into the MAD program?
2. What are some of your strongest memories, both good and bad, of the MAD program?
3. What were your personal challenges in the program and did the program challenge you in a specific way that you were not expecting?
4. What did the MAD program teach you that you did not learn in a regular classroom setting?
5. How did you personally collaborate with your fellow students? Give specific examples. Was there conflict during collaboration, and if so, how did you reach an agreement?
6. How did the MAD teach you how to problem solve creatively?
7. How did a regular school setting compare to the MAD program?
8. Post high school, did you find that the MAD helped, or hindered your chances to attend post-secondary educational institutions? Explain how.
9. What opportunities, if any, opened up due to the exposure of an intensive arts education?
10. What did you learn about yourself during your time in MAD program?
11. What would be your recommendations about arts education in public schools?

Data Analysis

Each participant's responses were analyzed by looking at common experiences and themes. Out of the 11 questions posited to the research participants, five lend themselves naturally to a Likert Scale. The researcher chose a five-point scale for the five questions, as William M.K. Trochim notes that these questions can "...can be rated on a 1-to-5 or 1-to-7 Disagree-Agree response scale" (Trochim, 2006). This thematic analysis was done in accordance to the methods chosen for this project and by transcribing interviews and seeing emergent themes appear. Five of the 11 research questions were given a five-point Likert Scaling where participants' answers were analyzed for their attitudes towards their own experiences. A list of responses to individual questions was further analyzed for common threads and themes. The researcher found that many of the six participants' answers illustrated common themes and reflections of their time in the pilot year of the MAD program, and similar recommendations on the importance of arts in public schools.

Project Outcomes

The results from this study will be used to develop a set of recommendations for current and future educators. The hope is that programs like the MAD program will be considered, strengthened and supported as a result of this study and that more attention will be given in the future when educators consider the kinds of teaching options and learning opportunities they make available to students in northern Canada. The final draft of the study will also be made available to all subjects who participated in this research.

Summary

This chapter presented how this study was conducted to gain an understanding of the experiences of those who participated in the MAD pilot program, and how it shaped the aspiring artists in their post-secondary lives. The research methodology was phenomenological narrative, with information derived from the participants' observations and reflections. For data collection, the researcher used a various technologies to interview participants in this project from MAD Pilot program. The researcher only focused on students who took part in the school year 1993 – 1994, which was the pilot year. A total 50% of potential participants agreed to be interviewed in the given timeframe.

After many revisions, the research questions were approved by the Research Ethics Board at UNBC and were deemed minimal risk for research, meeting all protocols and standards. The interested participants were sent via encrypted email, with an invitation to officially take part in the study. Their confidentiality and anonymity was paramount and all data collected kept locked in safe in the researcher's office.

When possible, interviews were conducted in person; if respondents were unavailable to meet in person, then they were contacted through secure email, or the end-to-end encryption communication app WhatsApp. MAD alumni were then given questions at least two weeks in advance, so that they could have sufficient time to reflect on their past experiences.

Participant's responses were analyzed by looking at common experiences and themes. Of the 11 questions, five lend themselves naturally to a Likert Scale. The researcher chose a 5-point scale for the five questions and created tables to illustrate the data. The results from this study

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will be used to develop a set of recommendations for learning opportunities in northern Canada for future educators and stakeholders.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

Results of Research

Of 12 potential participants approached, only six responded within the time frame requested. For the purposes of discussion, pseudonyms will be used. Those participants were: Charlotte, currently a musician; Tom, currently a construction worker in southern BC; Blue, a staging and lighting worker for an international touring group; Cosette, who did not identify her current occupation; Deacon, who holds a degree in Music, is a musician, private music tutor, and currently works at a music store in BC, and Rose; who owns and directs an award-winning dance choreography company in Europe. The only experience they had in common is they grew up in Whitehorse, Yukon and attended the MAD program within its pilot year in 1993 – 1994. Their willingness to respond to the questionnaire and to give the researcher their time, as well as their candid responses was greatly appreciated. The participants were asked a series of questions ranging from about their time in the MAD program, how it subsequently shaped their post-secondary school lives, and what their thoughts were on teaching art in school. The researcher was interested in knowing if attending an intensive arts program with no set curriculum like the MAD program enhanced their school experience, and what they learned as a result of participating in the pilot project. The researcher was also intrigued to learn if there were any practical skills that the participants feel they learned easier in an experiential program compared to a normalized classroom setting.

Parents' reaction to arts immersion (MAD) program. When participants were asked by the researcher to recall how they entered into the MAD program and how their parents reacted as it was a pilot program with no set curriculum, the answers varied. One former student, Tom, recalled that:

My Mom thought it was a good idea when I told her. My Dad was probably just happy I was doing something after school besides getting into trouble and smoking pot (personal communication, July 2017).

Another former student, Cosette, elaborated that it was not only the program itself that attracted her, but it was a chance to make up the graduating credits she needed.

My parents were fairly supportive as far as I can recall. I had always been interested in the performing arts, I had taken voice lessons since my arrival in Whitehorse, and I had been active in my school's choir and drama club at the high school I had attended in Nova Scotia, so it wasn't a surprise that I was interested in this program.

Also, I had nothing to lose. You see, although I was supposed to graduate in 1993, I failed Grade 12 Chemistry by 4% and therefore did not have enough credits to actually graduate. Due to the Yukon exams being graded in BC, I only found out that I had not graduated in August of 1993. For this reason, I had to do an additional semester, and as the semester did not end until January 1994, the earliest I could graduate was in 1994. I figured that I may as well sign up for MAD [program] for my second semester (personal communication, July 2017).

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Rose, another former student, is now a successful dance choreographer in Europe, and has worked with former child-soldiers in Africa. She recounts

... asked my mom. She remembers thinking it was a good thing. I had become disillusioned with the high school and she felt I wasn't being challenged enough. She remembers the program was sold as being located at Yukon College (located next to the Arts Centre) so we would be exposed to higher learning. I think she was hoping we'd be in college level classes. Despite that, she was glad there was an outlet for my creativity, [and] dancing.

I've been very lucky that she has been extremely supportive of my dancing. In addition, she credits the program with saving my younger brother and I both from dropping out of high school (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon was in a different situation, as his mother did not live in Whitehorse and his guardian was terminally ill. When asked how his parents felt about him attending the MAD program, he says "My parents were not part of the decision process for this" (personal communication, July 2017).

Another former student, named Blue, currently works for an international touring company doing staging, recalls that her parents were reluctant to let her attend the MAD program. She explained:

Initially they [her parents] were not happy; they wanted me to become a pharmaceutical engineer or something else that wasn't in the Arts because the Arts doesn't pay. It took close to a year to convince them I should go into it they agreed,

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reluctantly, if I got 80% in all my core courses and took AP [Advanced Placement] classes as well I could do it the next year (personal communication, July 2017).

Strongest memories. Some of the strongest memories former participants had were about working in a creative environment, and being given dedicated time and space to create.

Cosette recalled “...building sets. Trying to remember my lines of plays. Another memory was of traveling around the Yukon with a one act play with some of the class. There were morning meetings in the green room of the Arts Centre each morning where students would make a plan for the day of what they were going to be working on. This had to be approved by the teachers before any work could begin” (personal communication, July 2017).

One student, Charlotte, remembered that one of the teachers would pick her up from home in the morning “...so I would show up for rehearsals” (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon reminisced that attending the MAD program allowed him time to work on music, and form different relationships with his teachers. He explained that it was the first time in his life where he did not feel belittled and minimized by his teachers:

Being able to form a band was amazingly positive and being given the time to work on that band and original songs as well as sucking at cover songs.

The most bitter-sweet memory was having a full-on yelling match with one of the teachers. He never pulled the teacher card but instead treated me as he would a fellow musician. It was the first time I had to assert myself for what I believed in and stood my ground against an adult. It was also the first time I didn't feel belittled by a teacher. That

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single moment was one of the greatest shaping moments for me. I still owe him an apology (personal communication, July 2017).

Many students reflected on the way the MAD program students would lean on each other and back each other. Cosette reflected:

I remember the laughter and camaraderie more than anything. We were a clever group of individuals who seemed to all speak the same language. I think that we may have all felt like misfits up until then who didn't really belong anywhere, and finally, we were home (personal communication, July 2017).

Rose echoed the sentiment above, saying that:

Overall, I do remember the sense of 'belonging' that had eluded me up until that point. There was something incredibly fulfilling to find out there were other "art fags" out there in the unforgiving world of high school. And what's more, they were all interested in something that I had never heard of. The exposure to all these other people and their individual passions was a gift. We were all so different to each other but everyone somehow was accepted in all their eccentricities and for the first time, being different was celebrated. The camaraderie of the misfits (personal communication, July 2017).

One strong memory that was echoed by several former students was the transformative power of being in a safe space to create art without judgment. Cosette explained:

I remember the incredible transformations that took place within our group. There was one guy who, like me, had to do an extra year of high school. He never really

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seemed to be all that into the performing arts, and to be honest, I thought he just joined because he thought it would be an easy credit because that's how he talked about it.

Somewhere along the way, he must have changed his mind, because he turned out to be a rather good actor. Ironically, I can't turn on the TV these days without seeing him in some show or other (personal communication, July 2017).

Another student, Rose, recalled "...making some god-awful choreography that I was almost embarrassed about but remember that without this chance to try stuff out, I might never had got up the nerve to try it out somewhere else" (personal communication, July 2017).

Rose now used some of the same exercises learned with during her time in the MAD program with her own students today, noting:

I remember the amount of time and energy we were encouraged to put into our journals and I admonish my students to do the same now. Even though I do remember spending about a day at the end of every day filling in all the blank entries with creative writing just to hand it in (personal communication, July 2017).

A former student recalled being diagnosed with acute suicidal depression in high school and how being allowed to create art allowed the student to feel better and more engaged in school (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon also echoed this sentiment because his guardian passed away during his time in the MAD program. He explained to me that "My guardian passed away during my time in the program. It was a good place to hide with plenty of support and distraction" (personal communication, July 2017).

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One student recalled that fears of lack of a set curriculum in the MAD program were unwarranted, as:

Quite plainly it kept me out of trouble. We were so busy working on projects and ideas that there was little time left for getting wasted. That's not to say that getting wasted didn't happen, it just didn't happen with the frequency that it used to.

It may be an overstatement but without this program, I wouldn't have graduated. I was skipping a lot of classes and couldn't really see what I was getting out of the education I was receiving up until that point. The model, the work, and the location all helped. I was interested, engaged, excited and finally had an outlet for all that latent creativity that wasn't valued in the regular high school (personal communication, July 2017).

Cosette pointed out that the support that her fellow peers gave her when she forgot to be onstage during one part of a student written play.

In our main production, *The Epic of Troy*, I had two roles. One was as an actual character, Cassandra a Greek princess, and the other was as a member of a group of Amazon warriors. So, I had this one scene as Cassandra and at the end of that scene I would walk off stage, another scene would take place, and then I would walk back on stage for the following scene, and then my next scene after that was as an Amazon warrior. This involved a costume change and some pretty significant war paint.

During this particular show, when I walked off stage initially, I forgot that I had another scene as Cassandra prior to my scene as an Amazon warrior. I headed back to the

dressing room and got changed and started to put on my war paint. Meanwhile, my co-star for my scene as Cassandra was left on stage to improvise for a rather long and awkward time, until my classmates came to get me to remind me. To this day, I feel sick to my stomach when I think about that incident. I will forever be grateful that my co-star was as quick and clever as he was; he was a real star that day (personal communication, July 2017).

Personal challenges. When asked what were the former students' personal challenges or issues they had to deal with in the program, some echoed that they were "...pretty happy to be given the opportunity to be part of the class. If challenges regarding the class as a school thing came up I didn't hear about them or they went over my head" (personal communication, July 2017). In contrast, others felt insecure about their talents.

One student explained:

Self-confidence and self-esteem were a huge challenge for me. Although I was accepted and treated as a contributing member of the group, I remember feeling like an impostor. Everyone was so talented; they could sing or dance or play an instrument, or they could draw or paint, or write amazing plays. They all seemed like self-starters, with a clear vision and motivation. I liked to sing and dance and I liked to act, but I felt like I had to be directed and choreographed. I very much enjoyed creative writing, but I lacked the confidence to share my writing with others (personal communication, July 2017).

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When former students were asked how the program challenged them in a specific way that they were not expecting, time management was brought up on several occasions during the interviews. One student explained:

I did not expect the amount of work that was required after regular school hours. This was only in the few weeks immediately before our final production ran. I also had a part-time job after school hours, so I would go to school, then head to work for 5 hours, and then go back to the Yukon Arts Centre for rehearsals. It was very rewarding, but also very exhausting (personal communication, July 2017).

Another student recalled how her old friends came to see a performance, and when her old friends reacted negatively to the performance, it didn't bother her as much as she thought it would – in fact it made her reassess her priorities:

I remembered an occasion where my 'old' friends (the ones I used to party with) came to one of our performances and their reaction was pretty negative. At the time, I remember feeling surprised that I wasn't bothered. In fact, I remember thinking they just didn't get it. This was a standout moment for me, because I realized I had grown up and away from them. I had a new focus, and I had something to be proud of. They were still the same. I realize only now that that episode was one of the real moments where I realized that if I wanted to do this (i.e.: dance, make art) I was going to have to leave the Yukon (personal communication, July 2017).

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Blue noted that her personal challenge was that she was introverted, and the welcoming atmosphere of the MAD program allowed her to mitigate her introversions. When asked about personal challenges in the program, she elaborated:

My challenges were, I was an introvert and I didn't like people looking at me, I didn't necessarily have stage fright I just didn't want to be the center of attention.

It came from looking so different than everyone and always being stared at. I was kind of hoping I could just do choreography music composition and pre-recording, and stay out of sight but that was not the case and I was forced to be on stage and be comfortable with it (personal communication, July 2017).

Unique learning experiences. When the subject was broached in the interviews about how working at the Yukon Arts Centre was a creative endeavor unlike the traditional high school setting, many participants noted that the skills they learned in the MAD program taught them how to do things that were difficult to learn in a classroom setting. One participant mentioned that he learned how to write plays and create sets. Others discussed how they learned how to play musical instruments. Another noted that it created a strong work ethic and pride in the MAD program students:

It reinforced a great work ethic and instilled a wonderful sense of pride and responsibility. We were working together as a team to bring about this wonderful finished product; an original musical production.

It was really incredible that we wrote the script, wrote the musical score, made the costumes, designed the lighting and the set, choreographed the dance and fight scenes,

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were responsible for the sound editing, did up the promotional materials, did the make-up, acted, danced, sang. We were all so incredibly proud of this work, and we gave it our all. We were accountable for every aspect of production. I have never participated in anything that has ever made me want to work so hard and love every minute of it (personal communication, July 2017).

A different student mentioned similar challenges. Rose noted that:

Checking the ego at the door. A challenge even as an adult, very difficult at 16 when you have literally no idea what you're doing. We had to take responsibility for what we did and if something failed it was up to us to figure out why and to fix it or approach it differently next time.

It's also very challenging to be working all day and night, day in and day out with the same group of people, working intensely, with lots of personalities for such a long time. Add hormones and teenage thinking and it could get very hairy. But again, this was exceptional practice for the real world of working in the arts with big teams, short deadlines and intense relationships.

Saying that, the challenge of writing, producing, directing, marketing, etc. our own show each year was hands down the best part of the program. We had to do everything. Things we hadn't done before, things we were terrified to do (sing!). We had to work collaboratively. Personalities clashed, opinions differed, but you had a show to put on. So, you did it. This was one of the greatest lessons I learned and have carried through even to today (personal communication, July 2017).

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Blue notes that being in an immersive art program allowed her to see the bigger picture and be part of something bigger than each individual involved. She said that she “think[s] the program gave a better idea of how to look at the big picture. Your part isn't necessarily the most important thing going on, and that all small pieces put together makes the big piece” (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon similarly reflected that it he learned how to adapt his skill set to what other needed and to check his ego at the door. He noted:

I had to learn to work with other musicians as well as dancers and actors. I had to learn how to adapt my musical visions to what their needs were. This didn't always work well for the ego (personal communication, July 2017).

One former pupil of the MAD program noted that what the process of going through the program taught her was expansive and multifaceted:

Problem solving, resourcefulness, resilience, leadership, supporting, listening, risk taking, challenging others in a constructive way, receiving and acting on criticism. Overcoming fear. Teaching to and learning from my peers. Budgeting, scheduling, multi-tasking, autonomy, responsibility, accountability. Empathy and compassion.

How to market a show, how to run a box office, how to sword fight...collaboration, collaboration, collaboration. Being a part of a real, functioning, team. Not the team of some corporate attempt at building employee loyalty; the type of team where being a member means you are a part of some kind of fantastical machine

that requires all these moving parts to work and you are at the same time one or more of those parts and one of the mechanics at the same time.

I learned in a very embodied and practical way that to put on a show (or in fact, do anything well), it's the strength of the team that makes it work, not the star. And if any of those machine parts don't work, you either find a way to fix it, or the whole thing falls apart. Everyone and their contribution is integral (personal communication, July 2017).

Collaboration, conflict, and creative problem solving. Another question that was asked by the researcher was how the MAD program students collaborated with their peers and how they dealt with conflict within collaborative activities.

One former student recalled that she "...assisted with song-writing, set design and costume design" and "acted as a soundboard for ideas" for other students (personal communication, July 2017).

Another student remembered that "There were occasional personality clashes, but nothing that made collaboration between students impossible" (Personal communication, July 2017). Other participants in this study mentioned that when there was conflict, students were encouraged by the teachers to work it out and reach a compromise. Blue notes:

Of course, there was conflict; there is usually a lot of strong-willed people in this industry. Sometimes it was as simple as trying one idea and then trying the other and see which one worked/looked better. Sometimes it was a fundamental issue as to which way the script would go when you had two or three writers working together. they would go

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off write their own separate things and present them all and we would vote on it (personal communication, July 2017).

When asked about dealing with conflict in the MAD program, Rose reflected that:

I think the fact that you had to come back every day made it imperative to sort out problems with people. Again, you had the shared goal of putting on the production - whichever one you were working on at the time- so the objective was to make the show. And hopefully make it good. If you had personal differences or creative differences with someone, you had to find a way to make it work because the alternative was to look like a dick on stage (personal communication, July 2017).

Another participant, Cosette, reflected how empathy played a role in resolving conflict:

A part of our routine activities was creative problem solving, so that was just part of the regular training in order to encourage the creative process.

One way in which it taught me to problem solve creatively was to get me to learn to see others with empathy. As we were a rather large group, with many different personalities, we often had to learn to see each other's side of things in order to be able to arrive to a suitable solution. It also encouraged me to focus on people's strengths rather than their weaknesses in order to be able to empower them to solve their own issues (personal communication, July 2017).

One student explained that:

At some point, there comes the realisation too that you are not an island and no matter how good your idea is (or you think it is), you can't make it happen without a

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team of craftspeople working together. So, you start from the common ground rather than the difference of opinion (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon, a musician and music shop salesperson, further explained the pressure of collaborating, but how it taught him lessons that he feels it would be difficult to learn in a normal classroom setting:

There was always conflict with creative minds. It was a great lesson for the professional world. One instance I had written a piece that was difficult to create a dance to so they requested some percussion to outline the odd time. After realizing it sucked with percussion I wrote an entirely new piece that night. Submitted it and they said they preferred the old piece and they'd make it work.

When there is a deadline and others are waiting on your contribution to add to you learn there is no quitting and that sometimes you have to realize it can't be “perfect”. [And] It's ok to get input from your contemporaries (personal communication, July 2017).

Blue noted a similar sentiment in the MAD program. She elaborated by saying that:

You had to collaborate with the other students all the time. You can't always do a project on your own. Somebody has an idea and you help facilitate getting their idea to fruition. Whether they need actors, dancers, help choreograph something, stage fighting, building a set piece or prop, everybody needs help it's not something you can do on your own (personal communication, July 2017).

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Further, Blue pointed out that the intense working hours of MAD program allowed for bonding experiences that allowed students to empathize with each other. She elaborated by saying:

... we had all been working together for 5 months on the final project, and it was a chance for us all to go out and not think about it, a lot of bonding went on didn't seem like it, but when we came back (after a break) we were able to tolerate each other more, or see their vision more clearly (personal communication, July 2017).

Another former student of the MAD program noted that communication was extremely important, as she recalls it taught her that "...on a team or a crew everyone needs to see the vision and know their part in it" (personal communication, July 2017).

Comparing regular school setting to MAD's. When participants were asked how being enrolled in the MAD program was a different setting than a regular classroom setting, all participants related that they knew they were a part of something special by being removed from a high school classroom setting and were ensconced in the Yukon Arts Centre for the semester and being given the freedom and time to create art.

Tom explained that:

sitting in a desk at the high school compared with a whole different setting that had catwalks and a green room, [and] a rehearsal room with a giant mirror. The instructors gave us a lot of freedom. Everyone in the program wanted to be there, and not in the traditional school (personal communication, July 2017).

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Blue elaborated further by saying:

It was drastically different in normal school. It was like Fame (the 80's TV show) where people burst out in song dancing down the hallway, vs. Friday Night Lights (90's jock run school). I would get picked on for being short, flat, had glasses, band geek Asian just about anything they could find different with me at regular school. [In the MAD program] Everybody was accepting of everybody else's differences because we were all different. Our classes were directed towards us and what skills we needed to further our MAD program involvement. English classes were geared towards drama students, like script writing, script analysis, instead of learn to write this poem and here read this Shakespeare play. It was here, read this Shakespeare play and in a 1940s theme tell us/show us what he saying. Our gym classes were geared towards us as well instead of basketball, hockey, baseball, soccer, we had choreography, dance, stage combat, body awareness. We also didn't sit at a desk for most of the day or ever for that matter. We found corners of rooms to collaborate and write and dance (personal communication, July 2017).

Cosette also noted that the unfettered freedom allowed for budding artists to find themselves through art, noting that:

It was less structured than a regular school setting, which allowed for a lot more creative and expressive freedom. We had a routine that we adhered to, but we were not confined to any one classroom for the entire day. There was a certain amount of flexibility

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incorporated within the program, presumably to allow for unfettered creativity (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon noted that it was the first time, in a high school setting, he felt that his opinions mattered:

It taught me that I am valid. My opinion is valid. My talent is valid. It is ok to stand up for something you believe in. It also taught me that failure is a lesson and that sleep is an option for the creative mind. Regular school was more concerned with adherence to a system. You had to fit the mold. One size fits and judges all. With the MAD program, I gained the confidence to be myself and that there is an entire group of people that don't fit that mold and we flourish when we are giving the opportunity (personal communication, July 2017).

Rose, the dance choreographer, explained extensively about the difference between a regular high school setting and the MAD program structure.

As mentioned, I wasn't doing so well in the regular high school. I was scoring high on tests but getting terrible grades. I had a real problem with authority (still do I think), there were some questionable teaching practices going on and I called teachers out on them (with parental support) and I was just bored so I skipped a lot. I was bullied and felt very disconnected or outside the 'regular' high school experience. We had some appalling teachers in that high school. To this day, I don't know how they kept their jobs. On the flip side, there were some teachers who went out of their way to try keep kids like me

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motivated and engaged. The format of classes in the regular school setting left no room for exploration or creativity (personal communication, July 2017).

She went on to note that in Europe, where she lives and teaches dance currently, “Traditional school settings lack the time, finances, and resources to allow teachers to TEACH. The experience I have in Europe is that young people are taught to answer tests” (personal communication, July 2017). She feels that the collaborative process of the MAD program, and the teaching of practical skills and the ability to think outside the box and solve problems creatively. She further elaborates:

Those tests aren’t for young people to demonstrate they understand and comprehend a concept or idea; it’s to test if the teachers have taught the test, and students, teachers and parents all know it. It’s disheartening to say the least. We have a culture now where the test has become the focus, and schools use the test results to gain funding from the government and to tout their placement in league tables which parents use to decide which school they want their kids to go to.

It’s a competition for resources and you’re not judged on your ability to teach, engage, and inspire; you’re judged by how many students do well on the test. Political meddling is a major contributor to this situation, as with each successive government, we have the latest ‘plan’ to revolutionise the school system. It hasn’t happened and the tests are being doled out to younger and younger students. 11 year olds are writing government issued tests that will decide what ‘stream’ they will be in for the rest of their academic career.

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This practice is so terribly short sighted and does such a disservice to students. It doesn't prepare them for life. It doesn't give them the tools to think critically, or 'outside the box'. And yet, when you ask business leaders, the thing they are desperate for is creative, 'outside of the box' thinking people. Industry and society are changing at such a rapid pace that the traditional school model was failing to keep up before... now I feel it's almost irrelevant (personal communication, July 2017).

Influence of MAD program on post-secondary school opportunities. When participants were asked about whether pursuing a post-secondary education was hindered by their participation in the MAD program, as it was an art-based program, a few participants explained they 'did not try for College or University' (Personal communication, July 2017). Blue, set worker for an prestigious international entertainment touring company, noted that her participation in the MAD program was able to secure her position in a post-secondary setting. She explained that:

I think it (the MAD program) was really great and facilitating me getting into college. I took theater production at Grant MacEwan University and one of the prerequisites was working backstage or on stage having a basic knowledge of what goes on. It gave me a head start that other people didn't necessarily have (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon also found the MAD program invaluable moving forward into a post-secondary setting. He explained that:

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[A teacher in the MAD program] accompanied me on piano for my audition for music university. We recorded it in the Arts Centre. It was an awful audition and I didn't get into my first and only choice. I had to re-evaluate and changed my direction that lead down a much better path that ended with a performance degree with scholarship from UBC (personal communication, July 2017).

He went on to give credit to the MAD program, its structure, the teachers, and the opportunity to create art, claiming that if not for MAD, “it (post-secondary education) just wouldn't have happened” (personal communication, July 2017).

When asked the same question, Rose explained that the MAD program helped her in a post-secondary setting and allowed her talents to be spotted by others:

Attending the MAD program started in motion a chain of events that saw me study contemporary dance and subsequently pursue a ‘career’ in dance. Though that journey was a long one. I have been equal parts blessed and equal parts lucky.

The MAD program gave us exposure. I was ‘spotted’ by a local dance teacher and choreographer at a performance we did for an awards show. She came backstage to invite me to attend her classes. She taught me my first choreography class -2 years after I graduated! - She showed me modern dance, which I didn’t even know existed... I credit her with pushing me - for 8 years! - to finally go to dance school. She even wrote my referee letter. If I hadn’t done that show, I don't know if I ever would have met her (personal communication, July 2017).

Influence of MAD program in future opportunities. When participants in this study were asked what opportunities, if any, opened up due to the exposure of an intensive arts education, Blue noted that despite a personal tragedy, she knew that being involved in the Arts was in her future. She explained: “I wanted to be a musician or a dancer when I grew up it showed me how much work how much continuous work was needed to be able to achieve even small goals. I was also in a car accident shortly after high school, I wasn’t going to be able to take dance at college because I couldn’t walk anymore. I still wanted to be in the arts, so I decided to take technical (courses)” (personal communication, July 2017).

Cosette noted that “I don’t know specifically if it was a factor in my acceptance to post-secondary educational institutions, but as I believe that most of them seem to seek out well-rounded individuals, I suspect that it would have contributed [but] due to the exposure that I received through my performances with the MAD program, I was invited to become part of Yukon’s cultural contingent for the 1995 Winter Canada Games in Grande Prairie, AB. My experience in the MAD program also allowed me the opportunity to be employed as part of Acting Up Entertainment, a theatre company in Gander, NL.” (personal communication, July 2017). Rose elaborates that:

...because we had to create and produce our own show each year, I gained experience in the actual production side of things which I’d never really known much about. Moving forwards, the first company I founded was in events management and the experience of managing projects has helped me in my professional life immensely. This was even more valuable when times were lean as a dancer because I was in a position to

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direct and produce my own projects. Not only did this become another stream of possible income, it got me through my training by running fundraising events, and those events became integral to the development of my international projects. So, each of those was a stepping stone based on the experience of the last going all the way back to the MAD program (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon noted that it was challenged him to find new ways to collaborate with his peers. He explained that “Working with musicians is one thing but having to work out of my art was a great eye opener and actually enhanced my thought process when approaching what I do to this day” (personal communication, July 2017). He explained that other opportunities opened up for him as a result in the participation of the MAD program. He feels that he learned skills that allowed him to attend “University, owning a recording business, learning to write music, music theory basis. Learning to work with social anxiety as it pertains to performing. I can be hard to work with. Other people have great ideas and don't be afraid to go with it. If I have a good idea I have to stay up as long as it takes to have enough of the idea written or recorded so that the feeling of the idea cannot be mistaken (personal communication, July 2017).

Self-discovering through MAD program participation. When former MAD program students were asked what they learned about themselves as a direct result of their enrollment in the MAD program, Blue observed that she “learned I might not be as creative as I thought I was but I was very technically minded and able to facilitate others in having their ideas come through” (personal communication, July 2017). Tom, who now works in construction in Southern BC, notes that he “...came into myself a little better. I expressed myself. I found out

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that I could do things on my own and not because I "had" to for school" (personal communication, July 2017). Cosette stressed that the healing power of art, and being in a space and program that fostered creative thinking and self-worth were invaluable. She explains that through the program, she learned that: "...that I had value. It seems like such a silly and simple thing to say, but it was life-changing for me. At the time, I was in an abusive relationship and my self-worth was non-existent. As I stated earlier, I felt like an impostor at first, I did not feel like I had any talent or worth. My abuser had stripped me of all self-esteem, and I really didn't know who I was anymore. I thought I was stupid, un-talented, ugly, and completely unremarkable. Through my experiences with the MAD program, I discovered that I had talent, I had a voice (literally and figuratively), and I was respected and valued by my peers. This allowed me to open myself up to the possibility that if these people that I admired and respected so much thought I was worth something, then maybe I owed it to myself to believe it as well. This allowed me to break free from that abusive relationship, so that I could be free to believe in myself again (personal communication, July 2017).

Rose remembered that being enrolled in the MAD program, she was able to find self-worth as well:

Until I joined this program I had thought my little dance shows and plays were just little diversions --- or was told that at least. The validation that came with the program did a huge service to my self-confidence and worth. It also proved to me that I did want to dance beyond just a hobby... It just took me a while to get there (personal communication, July 2017).

Participants’ opinion on value of arts in public school. The final question that was posed to the former MAD program students was what would be their personal recommendations about arts education in public schools based on their own experiences. Each participant noted that while arts are arguably subjective, and difficult to assess in terms of secondary school marks, that arts programs have an intrinsic value to students as it fosters self-awareness, self-reflection, creative thinking, empathy, and problem solving. Tom, a construction worker currently in southern BC, notes that he would “...hear the stories on the news about budget cuts in education, and how there’s never enough to go around. This has to change. Give students options such as the MAD program” (personal communication, July 2017). Blue explained that her suggestion would be to:

stop cutting funding [for] people that don't fit into normal schools; [they] need somewhere to feel useful and [they] need [to know that] art isn't just a thing hanging on a wall in a museum for just as many people there are just as many ways to express it. I work for an international entertainment touring company as one of my main jobs. The competition for these jobs is high, you are not just competing with people from your city, it's from all over the world. 475 people applied for my first job with the touring company, they narrow it down to 10 for the tour to look at, then they narrow[ed it down] to 3 [people] to interview. I believe one the things that put me ahead of the others was my well-rounded background, that I started in high school, from creator to performer to stage manager to technician. The ability to work well with others, not back stab, be malicious, or discredit others, basic play nice in sandbox is missing from current society. The arts

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teach you these things. As well as to roll with the punches, The improv “yes and...”. I also work as a roadie for rock and roll tours as a lighting tech, rigger, head carp, and production manager. I work for the local opera as a dresser, on movies as a scenic painter and lighting board operator. The ability to make yourself multifaceted is essential in today society, and it all stems from learning what your made of, and I learned that in MAD program (personal communication, July 2017).

Deacon believed that the importance of specialized programs like the MAD program allowed him a path to graduation. He feels that with “More programs like this, less kids would drop out. Less kids would feel like garbage about themselves” (personal communication, July 2017).

Rose explained that for a student who is disengaged in school and in life, arts education could be a life-line for that child:

I now make my living as an artist, facilitator and advocate. I collaborate every single day with other artists, educators and craftspeople. And I work often with young people who are about to go down (or are on their way back from) a dark path. I fight for those kids in particular because I know that being given that chance to explore and value their creativity can literally save their life. I cannot imagine how I would have done any of those things if I hadn’t had the opportunity of an arts education (personal communication, July 2017).

Cosette echoed a similar sentiment, noting that she can't encourage funding for arts education in a school enough, as she feels it fosters all the creative and self-worth skills that all employers and society are looking for.

I find it disheartening when I see that art programs are often the first ones cut due to budgetary constraints. An education is not complete without some arts training. We get taught math and science and language and history but what will we do with it, how will we evolve as a society, if we don't have the arts to inspire us? What good is having one without the other? It's like being given a set of lungs but not being allowed to breathe.

I also think it is important that arts education should be seen as crucial a component to a well-rounded, complete education as physical education is. In our society, we wouldn't dream of cutting physical education because we are aware of its positive effects on physical and mental health. In this age where we are becoming ever more aware of promoting mental health in an effort to prevent mental illness, it's strange that we should not also value the benefits of an arts education in the same way (personal communication, July 2017).

Discussion

In this section, the researcher will present the interpretation of the results from the interviews with the six participants. Using a rating system, the researcher outlines the participants' responses through an analytical method.

Analysis emerging from participant's answers

After tabulating all the MAD program students' responses, the researcher found a few responses that could be shown using a Likert 5-Point Scale. According to Saul McLeod, a Psychology (BSc) Tutor at The University of Manchester, "Likert (1932) developed the principle of measuring attitudes by asking people to respond to a series of statements about a topic, in terms of the extent to which they agree with them, and so tapping into the cognitive and affective components of attitudes...(and) In its final form, the Likert Scale is a five (or seven) point scale which is used to allow the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement." (McLeod, 2008, p.1). The researcher felt that this a useful way to visually show the respondents' attitudes towards the questions.

When participants were asked if they recalled how their parents reacted when the participants decided to enter into the MAD program, one participant's parents were very supportive, two were supportive, one was unsupportive of the program, and one did not consult with their parent because the guardian was deceased by the time the MAD program was announced.

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Table 1.

Parents' Reaction to Arts Immersion (MAD) Program

Score	5	4	3	2	1
	Very Supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Unsupportive	N/A(did not consult)
Rose		✓			
Deacon					✓
Cosette	✓				
Tom		✓			
Blue				✓	
Charlotte					✓

When participants were asked if they recalled how their parents reacted when the participants decided to enter into the MAD program, one participant's parents were very supportive, two were supportive, one was unsupportive of the program, and one did not consult with their parent because the father was deceased by the time the MAD program was announced.

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Table 2

Influence of MAD on Creative Problem Solving

Score	5	4	3	2	1
	Very Helpful	Helpful	Neutral	No Helpful (Hindered)	N/A
Rose	✓				
Deacon	✓				
Cosette	✓				
Tom		✓			
Blue	✓				
Charlotte		✓			

Participants found that the MAD program was valuable in helping them to learn creative problem solving, with four participants finding their experiences in the MAD program were very helpful and one respondent finding the MAD program ‘Helpful’.

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Table 3

Influence of MAD Program on Post-secondary Opportunities

Score	5	4	3	2	1
	Very Helpful – Crucial	Helpful	Somehow Helpful	Neutral (Neither Help or Hinder)	Hindered
Rose	✓				
Deacon	✓				
Cosette			✓		
Tom				✓	
Blue	✓				
Charlotte			✓		

Perhaps the one of most interesting responses was to the question: “Post high school, did you find that the MAD program helped, or hindered your chances to attend post-secondary educational institutions?” The researcher assumed that there would be some participants who had to take upgrading classes in a post-secondary institution in order to enter into a degree program, however, that did not seem to be the case, with three participants responded that their experiences in the MAD program were crucial, two participants found that their experiences were somewhat helpful in a post-secondary setting, and one respondent was neutral, as they did not attend a post-secondary institution of any kind.

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Table 4

Influence of MAD Program in Future Opportunities

Score	5	4	3	2	1
	Much Helpful – Crucial	Helpful	Somehow Helpful	Neutral (Neither Help or Hinder)	Hindered
Rose	✓				
Deacon	✓				
Cosette	✓				
Tom				✓	
Blue		✓			
Charlotte		✓			

When asked what opportunities, if any, opened up due to the exposure of an intensive arts education, three former MAD program students found that exposure to an intensive arts education was crucial to the opportunities opened up for them; two respondents found their experiences helpful, and one respondent found it neither helped nor hindered his future opportunities.

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Table 5

Participants' Opinion on Value of Arts in Public School

Score	5	4	3	2	1
	Extremely Important	Important	Continue at Present Level	Decrease Time and Funding	N/A
Rose	✓				
Deacon	✓				
Cosette	✓				
Tom		✓			
Blue	✓				
Charlotte		✓			

Finally, when respondents were asked what would their recommendations be about arts education in public schools – whether it is important for a well-rounded education – all participants in this study answered that they felt that arts education in public schools is extremely important or important for a well-rounded education.

Summary

Recalling the research cited in Chapter 2, there has been a recent impetus in understanding the value of teaching arts in education. With the recent movement in some schools to incorporate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) into school programing, we see that art can be incorporated into learning to engage students. The six participants in this study noted that they did not feel like they fit into the mainstream high school system. Many participants did not feel engaged in their learning environment and some felt ostracized or ignored by their peers and teachers. This chapter showed parents' reaction when entering MAD. One respondent said parents were very supportive, two respondents said their parents were supportive, one parent was unsupportive, and one participant did not consult with their parent due to the guardian suffering from terminal illness.

All participants found the MAD experiences were helpful; with four finding it very helpful and one respondent finding their experience helpful and it was valuable in helping them to learn creative problem solving. When participants were asked if they believed that their time in the MAD program either positively or negatively impacted their chances at the post-secondary school level, 50% of participants (three) responded that their experiences in the MAD program were crucial to helping them in their post-secondary life, two respondents found that their experiences were somewhat helpful, and one respondent was neutral, as they did not attend a post-secondary institution. Four former MAD students found that exposure to arts in school was crucial in the opportunities that opened up for them; two respondents found their experiences helpful, and one respondent found it neither helped nor hindered his future opportunities.

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All participants in this study answered that they felt that arts education in public schools is important for a well-rounded education. When respondents were asked what their recommendations would be about arts education in public schools, all participants believed that funding and time for arts in school should be increased.

By looking at the five questions coded with The Five-Point Likert scale, the researcher noticed that that the majority of the respondents' answers are in the range of Very Helpful, Crucial, or Extremely Important to Helpful or Important in terms of their experiences in the MAD program. There were a few responses that the participants answered either Neutral or Somewhat Helpful. There were no negative responses to any of the questions. This leads the researcher to conclude that the MAD program had a positive influence on the lives of the participants.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

In the 2017-2018 school year, Yukon officially adopted and implemented the revised BC curriculum redesign which has a strong focus on creative thinking. According to the BC Ministry of Education curriculum website (2017a), the curricula for Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies “involves the ability to combine an empathetic understanding of the context of a problem, creativity in the generation of insights and solutions, and critical thinking to analyze and fit solutions to the context” (What’s New).

In the new BC *Art Education* curriculum, the teachers are expected to teach four Big Ideas. Those ideas are that:

Through art making, one’s sense of identity and community continually evolves;
Experiencing art challenges our point of view and expands our understanding of others;

Dance, drama, music, and visual arts are each unique languages for creating and communicating; [and]

Engaging in the arts develops people’s ability to understand and express complex ideas (BC Ministry of Education, 2017b).

This reiterates MAD students’ observations on learning about themselves, learning to empathize with their peers through collaboration, and assert their ideas in a way that mainstream schooling may not have fostered as easily.

Creative thinking is strongly encouraged throughout BC’s new curriculum redesign. The BC Ministry of Education published a document entitled *Creative Thinking Competency*

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Profiles, which can be found on the B.C. Ministry of Education (2017c) website. In it, it affirms that:

Creative thinking is deeply collaborative. New thoughts and concepts are built on combinations of existing thoughts and concepts. The ideas available as raw material for creative thinking depend on previous experiences and learning, as well as one's cultural legacy (para. 1).

Further on in the document, under the subheading *Generating Ideas*, the Ministry of Education also notes that: "Students may generate creative ideas as a result of free play, engagement with someone else's ideas, a naturally occurring problem or constraints, or interest or passion" (BC Ministry of Education, para. 4, 2017c). By looking at the responses of former MAD students, many noted that by being given the time to be creative and explore, they were able to build on ideas, experiment, and finally see them to fruition. All MAD students interviewed for this project mentioned the challenges and benefits of working in a collaborative environment.

Creative Thinking Competency Profiles explains the process that learners undergo when students have time to generate ideas. The BC Ministry of Education (2017c) explains that:

After students get creative ideas, they evaluate them, decide which ones to develop, refine them, and work to realize them in some way. This process of developing ideas may require building the necessary skills, sustaining perseverance, and using failure productively over time. It may also require

generating additional creative ideas to come up with solutions to problems along the way (para. 5).

Participants in this study mentioned that the (un)structure of the program allowed them to have time to generate ideas, collaborate with others, learn new skills, learn from their mistakes and refine their ideas.

The BC Ministry of Education (2017d) also published a document entitled *Positive Personal & Cultural Identity Competency Profiles*. In it, they note that “Students acknowledge their strengths and abilities, and explicitly consider these as assets that can help them in all aspects of their lives. Students understand that they are unique and are a part of larger communities” (para. 5).

When analyzing the results and looking at prevalent themes, all responses and experiences of these six students, it was striking to see a commonality in the responses to the questions. The researcher observed that each participant talked about learning empathy, the value of being given time and space to be creative, how to work together on a large project, and the value to introducing students to the arts education.

Furthermore, multiple participants mentioned that in today’s society many of us are asked to ‘think outside the box’, that employers want people who think and solve problems creatively. Recurring themes that came up in the analysis of the respondents’ answers were building relationships with diverse people, working together for a common goal, acceptance of self and others, empathy, and self-knowledge of skills and abilities, as well as overcoming weaknesses in a safe and supportive environment. The responding participants noted that many of these skills

were first introduced to them in the MAD program, and served them throughout their post-secondary school lives. All six participants found value in being immersed in an arts-rich environment.

Recommendations

Although the BC curriculum redesign has an emphasis on creative thinking, the findings in this study show that by giving students time in a fully immersive creative setting, allowed them to explore, plan, execute, and use failure productively. It allowed them to learn about the arts and learn about themselves. By incorporating art in the curriculum can give students the opportunity to awaken a latent talent that they may not know existed and challenge students in an engaging and novel way. The value and uniqueness of the MAD program during its pilot year was that students were encouraged to explore and given time to do so.

Art should be included in the regular mainstream curriculum in order to allow students to express themselves according to their preferred learning style. However, it is the researcher's belief that an after-school, summer camp, or dedicating a section of time in the semester to collaborate and prepare a project-based learning experience that encompasses varied curricula will be more effective and the value of the experience would be more lasting if we give students time to be creative.

Based on the results of this study, it is the researcher's recommendation that further study of the benefits of arts participation in school would be useful to understanding student self-worth, the value of working in a collaborative environment, and the importance of creative thinking. The researcher also recommends that more time and funding be given to schools to

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increase their arts programming, as it teaches students 21st century skills required in today's job market.

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APPENDIX 1

INFORMED CONSENT – INTERVIEWS



APPENDIX 1 INFORMED CONSENT - INTERVIEWS

Research Team:

Principal Investigator: Lionel Colaci – UNBC
867 667 3500 (Work); or colaci@unbc.ca
Supervisor: Dr. Andrew Kitchenham – UNBC
250-960-6707 or andrew.kitchenham@unbc.ca

UNBC
3333 University Way
Prince George, British Columbia
V2N 4Z9 Canada

You are invited to participate in a study entitled, *A Look and Reflection at the Value of Arts Intensive Program in the Yukon Territory 1993 - 1994*, that is being conducted by a researcher from the University of Northern British Columbia who are interested in your experiences with the MAD (Music, Art, and Drama) program (heretofore referred as IAP – Intensive Arts Program) that you participated in during the academic years of 1993 to 1994 in the Yukon. This study will be conducted as a graduate research project, which will be accessible to the public when completed.

As a participant in this program, you are uniquely positioned to share your experiences on this distinctive program. The interview will be audio-recorded, or emailed to each participant, and later, transcribed by the researcher. The transcribed interviews will be collated and analyzed by the researcher to find common themes, experiences, and comments.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will have a series of questions posed to you by the interviewer. The questions will be about your experiences in the IAP program and you will be provided with the core questions in advance.

The interview should take approximately ONE hour and will be conducted at the best location for you. Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the time taken to read this consent form and the time it takes to participate in the actual interview. There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research but some questions or statements could evoke an emotional response. If emotions are raised, the researcher encourages you to either let the interviewer know or skip the question. If any negative emotions are experienced, you are free to withdraw with no questions asked.

The benefits associated with this study are several and include: (a) assisting you in expressing views to the researcher; (b) becoming self-aware of your experiences you had during your participation in the IAP program; and (c) understanding the importance of promoting the Arts in a high school setting.

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Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be used in the analysis and it will be destroyed unless you expressly request that the information you have provided up to the time of your withdrawal be retained in the study.

In terms of protecting your confidentiality, the researcher will use pseudonyms for participants so that the real identities are not evident. The researcher may also change information or combinations of information (e.g., particular experiences in a particular role, identifying features, etc...), so that the participant's identity will be kept confidential. Be aware that there are limits to confidentiality due to the research being conducted in a small community context. As mentioned, all interview responses will be transcribed and analyzed by the researcher listed below who will be the only person who have access to the confidential data. All researcher will be kept on a password protected and encrypted computer.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected in a locked filing cabinet in each researcher's office and on password-protected and encrypted computers. The interview files will be saved on an encrypted data file with the researcher only having access to the contents. No other person will have access to the raw data. Once the data has been analyzed and aggregated to the research, the data will be kept for six months after publication of the project, then deleted. The researcher will use an SDelete command to delete the files. SDelete is a command line tool allowing to overwrite the free space on a hard disk so any previously deleted data becomes unrecoverable.

Any individual participant can also receive a copy of the research findings.

As a UNBC researcher, I have sought a review of the ethics application of this study and have received that review to conduct the study. You may raise any questions with the researchers and for any concerns or complaints you might have about the research, please contact the Office of Research at the University of Northern British Columbia (250.960.6735) or via email at reb@unbc.ca. Furthermore, you may contact the researcher's Academic Supervisor, Dr. Kitchenham at 250-960-6707 or andrew.kitchenham@unbc.ca if you have questions or would like to discuss the research.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator, please do so at colaci@unbc.ca, or 867.667.3500 (work).

Signature

Printed name

Date