



Evaluation of the HEARTS project 2004–2006

executive summary



An initiative funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA)



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Background

In 2002, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (EFF) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF), both with well-established interests in arts education, conceived the HEARTS (Higher Education, the Arts and Schools) project with the intention of strengthening the initial training of primary school teachers in the arts. Previous research had revealed the extent to which the arts had been marginalized in initial teacher education (ITE) (Rogers, 1998, 2003), and highlighted an increasing demand from schools that newly qualified teachers bring some arts expertise into schools.

By the start of HEARTS activities in 2004, changes in education policy had created the opportunity for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to take more control over their ITE curriculum. At the same time, schools were expected to become more innovative in their teaching and to tailor their own curricula to local needs. *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003) also acknowledged the role of the arts in supporting learning, and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) was developing approaches to teaching creativity across the curriculum. Given this, the HEARTS sponsors believed that, with encouragement, HEIs might be persuaded to place greater priority on the arts within their ITE curricula.

Pupils on HEARTS visit to Site of Special Scientific Interest



This summary gives information about the support for the programme, the activities carried out, how the programme aims were fulfilled, what the outcomes and key messages were and what the future holds.

Supporting the programme

A funding consortium was established comprising EFF, CGF, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Teacher Training Agency (now the Training and Development Agency for Schools – TDA) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA). During the academic years 2004/6, six HEIs were given financial and practical support to introduce new programmes of arts work into their curricula. Canterbury Christ Church University, The University of Winchester and the University of Plymouth were funded for the academic year 2004/5 (HEARTS 1) and Manchester Metropolitan University, Sheffield Hallam University and Goldsmiths College for 2005/6 (HEARTS 2).

The selected HEIs were supported in their endeavours by the HEARTS management team. The support for both HEARTS 1 and 2 included two residential meetings to help HEIs plan and monitor project progress. These gatherings allowed discussions within and between the teams developing the HEARTS programmes in the HEIs, as well as presentations and practical arts sessions. Each HEI also had management visits and support, evaluation team visits and a weblog or progress update facility. A website (www.hearts.uk.com) was established where the full HEARTS report is available.

Activities

Each participating HEI devised programmes of work that would offer

- innovation/experimentation
- trans-disciplinary work
- partnership
- continuity and sustainability
- dissemination.

Activities in the six participating HEIs included:

- a project to develop the use of the vocabulary of artistic creative processes, culminating in team teaching programmes by groups of students working across the art forms
- the integration of performing arts and carnival across a primary PGCE course
- a programme of artist-led workshops in an arts centre, involving students, teachers and tutors, culminating in a performance to share learning
- a visit to a Site of Special Scientific Interest by students and school pupils, which served as a stimulus for presentations in different art forms
- conferences to explore the place of the imagination in learning, which enhanced the content of an established school experience preparation module

- lectures exploring the nature of creativity, accompanied by workshops with artists in various art forms, leading to creative assignments by students submitted on CD-Rom.

Fulfilling the programme aims

At the outset, the HEARTS management team set the criteria against which the success of the programme would be judged. A summary of the evidence to indicate the extent to which this has been achieved is presented below.

Impact on ITE

In some cases, new courses have been developed from the programmes devised as part of the HEARTS projects. In others, the HEARTS experience has altered the

Second planning residential, Foxton



content and forms of delivery of existing courses. Many students referred to a new realisation that education could be about more than directed learning.

Resources

Tutors have accumulated skills and experiences, contacts, partnerships and confidence that are a resource for the future. Reports and evaluations provide insights into the process of developing the arts in ITE, and other materials (for example, Powerpoint presentations) provide illustrations of the approaches that have been developed.

Dissemination

The programme has been documented and illustrated on the HEARTS website, and disseminated through academic articles and conferences, including the conference of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET).

Research

Self-evaluations by each HEI and an external evaluation by NFER have studied the process and outcomes of the project. Research has been part of the process of learn-

ing in each HEI, e.g. through a literature review on the place of the imagination in learning, and research into the lexicon of the creative process.

Holistic approach to arts in schools

Cross-curricular learning, within and/or beyond the arts, has been a feature of all projects. This illustrates the potential for the arts to be a central, rather than subsidiary, part of the curriculum.

Transforming the ITE curriculum

There is evidence that participating HEIs are allocating more time to the arts as they redesign their courses. While changes in the national context may mean that other institutions are doing much the same, the testimony of course managers suggests that the process has at least been accelerated and probably extended through involvement in HEARTS.

Informing policy

The support from key agencies and their involvement in advisory meetings and other HEARTS events suggests

Students and pupils prepare to explore



that considerable attention has been paid to HEARTS over a sustained period. Further efforts and some events to advance this are planned.

Positive impact on schools

A number of schools were directly involved in hosting students who applied their HEARTS learning in their teaching practice. Teachers were involved in some of the workshops and events organised as part of the HEARTS programmes. Many students expect that their learning through HEARTS will inform their work as teachers.

Outcomes for participants

A number of specific outcomes for participants were evident as a result of HEARTS. These were largely present across both HEARTS 1 and 2. Outcomes were explored for students, tutors, the institutions, artists and schools.

The outcomes for **students** were:

- acquisition of new knowledge and skills
- new approaches to learning
- changes in classroom practice

- cross-curricular learning
- enhanced awareness of creativity
- appreciation of off-site learning and curriculum enhancements
- enjoyment
- personal development
- enhanced confidence in employment prospects.

The outcomes for **tutors** were:

- strengthening of collegiality within HEIs
- partnerships beyond the HEI
- regenerated enthusiasm
- increased status within their institution
- skills development/staff development
- developments in cross-curricular working.

The outcomes for **HEIs** were:

- enhanced profile and status for the arts
- material gains
- developments in assessment of creative learning



- the legacy of HEARTS in new or modified courses.

The outcomes for **artists** were:

- new experiences of working within education
- stronger relationships with schools
- development of teaching techniques.

The outcomes for **schools** were:

- positive benefits experienced from having visiting artists in school
- workshop sessions provided continuing professional development
- stronger partnerships with HEIs
- resources for arts education.

All six projects introduced approaches that were new to the current context in each HEI, and were new to the vast majority of the participating students. There was also evidence that risk taking was part of the experience for students, tutors and schools. However, the quality of work by students in schools came under scrutiny in more than one HEI. A lack of rigour, and less attention to

learning some essential skills were cited as possible ‘collateral damage’ at this exploratory stage. However, the opportunity to explore the arts at their own level and to devise their own teaching programmes was seen both by tutors and students as an important experience for trainee teachers.

Three key messages

Increased collaborative working was often the first outcome of HEARTS cited by staff in HEIs. Despite time constraints within the context of ITE, there could be greater professional dialogue between tutors, and efforts should be made to enable this more widely.

Students who have studied under the national curriculum over recent years have largely experienced teaching to pre-determined outcomes. They expressed some surprise and even delight that **it is possible to enable pupils to explore and find their own creative outcomes**. However, some of these students appear to have had little experience of self-directed learning. Consideration should be given to ensuring that all primary teacher training students experience creative

Carnival workshop



learning challenges at their own level during their courses.

Trans-disciplinary and cross-curricular learning, with the arts as a central focus, were a feature of all of the HEARTS projects. Creativity and the imagination were explored through the project. While some relaxation of the national curriculum is being considered by policy makers, overcrowding and time pressures remain a major concern for many teachers. Various efforts are being made to create a coherent and integrated curriculum that pupils can experience as relevant and connected learning. The HEARTS projects, with their focus on the arts, were examples of how subject areas can come together meaningfully both for teachers and learners.

The future

The level of interest from HEIs to join the HEARTS project, the enthusiastic involvement of the participating HEIs and the extent to which positive outcomes were achieved would suggest that there is an appetite for further work in this field. Tutors from each of the HEIs involved to date have committed themselves to

disseminating their experiences. Some have expressed a view that the opportunity should be extended to other HEIs. This view is shared by some of the funding partners. While it may not be necessary to continue with the current level of support, it may well be possible to use the experience of previous participants to help another cohort of HEIs to develop the arts component of their courses.

References

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In the deer shelter, Yorkshire Sculpture Park





National Foundation for Educational Research
The Mere Upton Park Slough Berkshire SL1 2DQ
tel: 01753 574123 fax: 01753 691632
email: enquiries@nfer.ac.uk
www.nfer.ac.uk

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