Igniting a spark?:

An investigation into how an Irish arts partnership can support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education

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Abstract

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In recent years, arts partnerships have increased in popularity as a means of delivering arts education in schools. Creating opportunities for both teachers and artists alike, arts partnerships can enhance a shared sense of purpose and mutual respect, while also developing creative skills, knowledge and expertise. Although many studies on both a national and international level have identified the successes and challenges of arts partnerships in schools, a gap in how these partnerships can support teachers' professional development regarding arts education still exists. Therefore, this study sought to investigate whether an Irish arts partnership - the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)* - could potentially support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education.

Presented in the form of an article-based thesis, three peer-reviewed journal articles formed the core of this thesis. A mixed-methods, multi-site case study in design, this study explored, analysed and documented the perspectives of teachers, principals, *CS* school co-ordinators and Creative Associates (CA) in eight primary schools, regarding how an arts partnership impacted on the teaching of arts education. Phase one of the study investigated the role of the Creative Associate (CA) - an arts broker within the *CS.* Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with Creative Associates, principals and school co-ordinators of the *CS*. Using a framework put forward by Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret (2015), the support provided by the CA was critically analysed. The establishment and development of stakeholder relationships was explored while emerging challenges were debated and discussed. Key findings indicated that the success of the CA was underpinned by their ability to build and nurture relationships, potentially ensuring partnerships have a sustained, meaningful impact on the teaching of arts education in schools. Phase two of the study explored primary teachers' perspectives, regarding whether or not the *CS* impacted on their teaching of arts education. Using online surveys which were both quantitative and qualitative in nature, this study targeted fifty primary teachers in the same eight schools. Key findings revealed that teachers engaged positively with the initiative. The benefits of a balanced approach between teachers and artists delivering the arts education curriculum also emerged. However, findings indicated that the *CS* had limited impact on teachers' confidence regarding the teaching of arts education overall. Consequently, strong reiterations for teacher professional development in arts education were emphasised throughout.

A synthesis of the overall findings indicated that participation in an arts partnership such as the *CS,* can provide rich opportunities for transformational learning to occur, through engagement in collaborative practice, facilitating agency and empowering all stakeholders. However, for a sustainable future in classroom-based arts education and to avoid partnerships becoming a support measure, teacher professional development in arts education needs to become an integral part of future arts partnerships. Results from this study will inform both policy and creative practice approaches to arts partnerships in schools, enabling the *CS* to further refine and develop its programme. This could have an impact on schools, principals, teachers and children, highlighting the significance of pre-service teacher training, in-service and continual professional development in arts education for Irish primary teachers.

Key words: Arts education; arts partnerships; teacher professional development; transformational learning; collaborative practice; teacher agency.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work. All quotations from other sources are duly acknowledged and referenced. This document as a whole is not the same as any that I have previously submitted or am currently submitting, whether in published or unpublished form, for a degree, diploma, or similar qualification at any university or third level institution. I am the author of this thesis and the principal author of the three articles which form its core.

Signature:_____ Date: 30th January 2023

Edel Fahy

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Maureen and Paddy Giblin, who instilled in me a deep passion for education and the arts. Responsible for introducing me to the world of music, drama and visual arts, you gave me ‘roots and wings’ and started me off on my learning journey. Your constant support and belief in me has been my guiding light throughout this thesis. You have made me the person I am today and I hope you are as proud of me as I am of you.

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List of abbreviations

ARIS.....Arts Rich Schools

CA….... Creative Associate

CPD……Continual Professional Development

CS……..*Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha*

CP…….. Creative Partnerships

DCU…...Dublin City University

DES……Department of Education and Skills

DHAG....Department of Heritage, Arts and the Gaeltacht

GEMS…Global Education Management Systems

GoI…….Government of Ireland

HEI…… Higher Education Institutes

LCI…….Lincoln Centre Institute

MIREC..Mary Immaculate Research and Ethics Committee

PCSP…..Primary Curriculum Support Programme

PPDS…..Primary Professional Development Service

Article publications

Fahy, E. (2022) Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?', *Social Sciences and Humanities Open,* (online first) https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2022.100390

Fahy, E. and Kenny, A. (2022) 'Bridging the gap': The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers, *Arts Education Policy Review,* (online first) https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2022.2037483

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

In recent years, art partnerships have become increasingly popular as means of delivering arts education in schools. Creating opportunities for both teachers and artists alike, arts partnerships can be invoked for a variety of reasons. Some are focussed on providing access to theatres, galleries, one-off performances and arts events, whereas others can encourage involvement in creative projects and performances (Hall and Thompson 2021). While many studies on both a national and international level have identified the successes and indeed challenges of arts partnerships in schools (Wolf 2008; Christophersen 2013, 2015; Kenny 2016, 2020; Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 2020; Partti and Vákevá 2018; Abeles 2018; Christophersen and Kenny 2018), a gap in the research regarding the impact of how such programmes support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education, still exists. Bearing this in mind, this study aimed to investigate and provide insights into how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS),* can 'ignite a spark', potentially supporting primary teachers in their teaching of arts education.

This chapter presents the aim and motivation which provided the stimulus for this study. In so doing, a rationale underpinning the overall research is outlined. A synopsis of the literature review is provided and the study's research questions are also outlined. As a primary teacher and teacher educator in arts education, this researcher articulates her positionality in relation to preconceptions and bias which potentially arose as part of the study. Finally, the structure of the thesis is set out and its integral components, referencing the content of each of the eight chapters, are also outlined.

1.1 Aim and motivation

The aim of this study was to investigate how an Irish arts partnership can potentially support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. A mixed-methods, multi-site case study in design, this study explored, analysed and documented the perspectives of teachers, principals, *CS* school co-ordinators and Creative Associates (CA) in eight primary schools, regarding how an arts partnership impacted on the teaching of arts education. This study also explored the role of the CA and how they 'bridged the gap' between schools, teachers and artists, potentially leading to increased sustainability of arts partnerships such as the *CS*

initiative. Examining primary teachers' perspectives regarding the impact of the *CS* on the teaching of arts education, the provision of professional development supports for teachers as an integral part of future arts partnerships was also explored. The timeliness of this research is significant as very little research has been undertaken on the *CS* to date. Consequently, it was vital that this investigation happened alongside the development of the initiative.

The motivation for this study emanated from two interrelated, educational concerns. The first related to this researcher's interest in teachers' continual professional development (CPD) in arts education. There is a large body of national (Craft 2000; DES 2005; NCCA 2005; Harford 2010; INTO 2010) and international research (Hanley 2003; Hall *et al.* 2008; Wolf 2008; Holdus and Espeland 2013) which examines the lack of CPD for teachers in arts education. For the majority of Irish primary teachers, the completion of initial teacher education concludes their professional development in arts education (Grennan 2017). Furthermore, Irish primary teachers have been provided with little or no financed arts education CPD since the roll-out of the 1999 *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (Coolahan 2008). This support was provided by the *Primary Curriculum Support Programme*[1] (PCSP) now *Professional Development Support for Teachers* (PDST). In light of this, calls for enhancing the professional practice of teachers through in-career learning have been expressed repeatedly by numerous educational stakeholders for more than a decade (DES 2005; NCCA 2005; NESF 2007 in Grennan 2017; INTO 2010). Therefore, by providing opportunities for teachers wishing to improve their pedagogical practice, this research aimed to investigate whether programmes such as the *CS* could have the potential to act as a professional development initiative (Kind *et al.* 2007; Kenny and Morrissey 2016), potentially supporting primary teachers in their teaching of arts education.

The second concern related to a need to investigate the factors that potentially impacted the teaching of arts education in primary schools, with a particular focus on the marginalisation of arts education and teacher confidence. It is widely acknowledged that the gulf between the 'lip service' given to arts education and the provisions provided within schools is widening (Bamford 2006; Robinson 1999, 2011). Increasing emphasis on literacy and numeracy nationally (Ó Breacháin and O'Toole 2013; Grennan 2017) and internationally

[1] [1] The PCSP was established prior to the launch of the revised primary curriculum in 1999 and was the result of many years of collaborative development and planning between the state Department and the NCCA. Its purpose was essentially to mediate the 1999 primary school curriculum for teachers through structured professional development underpinned by a partnership approach (Harford 2010, 353).

(Bamford 2006; Wolf 2008; Russell-Bowie 2010) has resulted in a significant decrease in funding and support for the delivery of the arts education curriculum. This marginalisation comes at a time when, paradoxically, considerable research reveals the benefits of arts education in its own right for children (Eisner 2002; Bamford 2006; Robinson 1999, 2011). Unfortunately, these educational reforms have also had a significant impact on teachers' confidence in teaching the arts (Russell-Bowie 2009, 2010; Morris *et al.* 2017). This perceived confidence deficit in relation to teaching arts education has been well documented both on a national (INTO 2010; Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 2020; Grennan 2017) and international level (Greene 1995; SERCARC[2] 1995; Garvis and Lemon 2013; Russell-Bowie 2009, 2010; Morris *et al*. 2017). Findings from *Irish National Teachers' Organisation* (INTO) document on *Creativity and the Arts in the Primary School* (2010) highlighted that most teachers in Ireland believed that their own lack of confidence and training in the arts acted as potential barriers to teaching the arts education curriculum. With this in mind, this researcher wished to explore how an Irish arts partnership could provide primary teachers with opportunities to develop their pedagogic practices, while supporting them to confidently teach arts education in their respective classrooms.

Situated within a conceptual framework underpinned by the theories of Maxine Greene, this study aimed to generate new knowledge relating to the potential impact of arts partnerships on the teaching of arts education. Advocating the transformative nature of the arts, Greene (1995) almost anticipates the popular emergence of arts partnerships and their presence in schools. Keenly aware of the benefits and contributions made by professional artists and creative organisations, Greene also acknowledged that teachers are "key to revitalisation of the arts in education" (Fuchs Holzer 2009, p.387). Therefore, if sustained over a long-term period, arts partnerships could have the potential to facilitate learning as a reciprocal act between artist and teacher (Christophersen and Kenny 2018). Findings from this study will inform approaches to arts partnerships in schools, enabling the *CS* to further refine and develop its programme, with particular reference to further provision of teacher professional development in arts education. Bearing this in mind, arts partnerships such as the *CS,* could hold strong promise to act as a potential agent for transformational learning, through engagement in agentic, collaborative practice.

This study also contributes to research on the role of the Creative Associate. As previously stated, this is particularly pertinent due to the fact that very little research has been

[2] Senate Environment, Recreation, Communication and the Arts Reference Committee

undertaken on this role at either a national or international level. Research findings could also contribute to the consultation review process of policy documents such as the *Art-in-Education Charter* (DES and DHAG[3] 2013) and ongoing developments of the draft *Primary Curriculum Framework* (NCCA[4] 2020). This will have an impact on primary schools, principals, teachers and children and could highlight the significance of pre-service teacher training, in-service and continual professional development in arts education.

1.2 Synopsis of literature

The following section presents a brief synopsis of up-to-date literature which permeated and informed this study. As previously highlighted, there is currently a significant gap in research regarding professional development for Irish primary teachers in arts education. Alongside this issue, policy choices such as 'collaboration', 'partnership' and the teaching artist have gained increased popularity as a means of delivering arts education in schools (Christphersen and Kenny 2018). Creating opportunities for teachers, artists and creative organisations, these types of initiatives have been found to be useful and interesting but can have limited impact on teaching and learning (Rowe *et al.* 2004).

1.2.1 The Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)

In Ireland, in-spite-of increasing pressures to raise national standards in literacy and numeracy, the past two decades have borne witness to the revival of such arts initiatives. Adhering to the *Arts-in-Education Charter's* (DES and DAHG 2013) commitment to promote arts education and the arts-in-education among children and young people (DES and DAHG 2013), the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)* was established in 2018. Since its inception, 462 schools including primary, post primary schools, DEIS[5] and special schools[6] have joined the initiative. Aiming to promote the arts and creativity in schools through a range of collaborative opportunities, the *CS* long-term aim is for "every school to be supported to fully embrace the arts and creativity, ensuring a positive experience and strong outcomes for children and young people" (*The Arts Council* website 2022). Due to the fact that *CS* is a relatively new programme (2018), research in relation to how partnerships such as these can potentially support Irish primary teachers in their teaching arts

[3] Department of Education and Skills and Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
[4] National Council of Curriculum and Assessment
[5] DEIS schools – Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools
[6] Special school - A school catering for children with special needs

education, is limited. Therefore, it was important that this research happened alongside the development of the programme.

1.2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Within the *CS* initiative, there are many roles and responsibilities – these will now be discussed in the following sections.

1.2.2.1 The Creative Associate

Each participating pilot school has the services of a Creative Associate (CA) for nine days across the school year and a grant to help them implement their plans over a two-year programme. Coming from a range of creative professionals and educators with an understanding of the arts and creativity (*The Arts Council* website 2022), the CA aims to match and address the needs of schools to arts and creative opportunities in their locality (*Creative Schools Guidelines* 2022). Acting as an intermediary between teachers, artists and schools, the CA can provide schools with scaffolds for new learning, supporting teachers to take risks and develop agency as arts practitioners (Sinclair *et al*. 2015). With this in mind, this research critically analysed the supportive role of the Creative Associate (CA), investigating whether they can 'bridge the gap' between schools, teachers and artists, so that spaces and opportunities are created for new learning can occur (Sinclair *et al.* 2015).

1.2.2.2 The Creative Schools Co-ordinator

As part of their participation in the *CS,* schools nominate a *CS* school co-ordinator who is a teacher (or principal) currently employed in the school. The *CS* school co-ordinator attends all required training courses and non-required courses, where possible. A one-day substitution cover per year per school is paid to facilitate *CS* school co-ordinators' attendance at required training courses. Throughout the duration of the initiative, the *CS* school co-ordinator works with the Creative Associate to implement and evaluate the *CS* plan. In this way, the school co-ordinator plays a pivotal role in mobilising their schools' engagement with the *CS* initiative (*Creative Schools* Guidelines 2022).

1.2.2.3 The principal and school management

For partnerships to be successful, schools need ongoing support from the principal and school management team (Sharpe 2006). Therefore, as school leader, the principal's role is instrumental in the initial *CS* application process and "can play a key role in enabling a multiplier effect" (Kenny and Morrissey 2016, p.88), throughout the duration of the programme. Bearing this in mind, perspective *CS* schools and principals articulate how they will "develop the arts and creativity from their current starting point" and how their "participation will support teaching and learning in the school" (*Creative Schools* Guidelines 2022, p.8). Schools also outline how they will support and mobilise their schools to engage fully in the initiative (*Creative Schools* Guidelines 2022). Therefore, the supportive role of the principal could be key to facilitating the initiative's capacity to potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education.

1.2.2.4 Artists and creative organisations

Empowering children and young people to develop, implement and evaluate arts and creative activity throughout their schools (*The Arts Council* website 2022), the *CS* works alongside artists, groups and organisations who make art by, with, and for children and young people (*The Arts Council* website 2022). Supported by their CA's practical experience and expertise, schools are enabled to develop sustained partnerships with artists, arts organisations and cultural sectors (*Creative Schools* Guidelines 2022, p.5). By working in this way, arts partnerships can be advantageous to schools, teachers, children and broader communities (Christophersen and Kenny 2018), by providing students with the opportunity to interact meaningfully with professional artists and creative organisations (Jeanneret 2011).

1.2.3 Arts education in Ireland

For the purposes of clarity, this research was located within the context of the provision of arts education in Ireland. Arts education[7] within the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999) comprises of the Visual Arts, Music and Drama curricula. The *Irish Primary School Curriculum* emphasises that the class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate arts education in their classrooms (GoI 1999). However, although the arts have played a major

[7] In a similar way, arts-in-education refers to "interventions from the realm of the arts into the education system, by means of artists of all disciplines visiting schools or by schools engaging with professional arts and cultural practice in the public arena" (DES and DAHG 2013, p.2). For the purposes of clarity, this research was located in the arts education curriculum.

part in the lives of Irish children, in practice the arts in primary schools in Ireland have been neglected over many years (Council of Europe 2010). Similarly reports such as *Creativity and the Arts in the Primary School* (INTO 2010) have emphasised that, because of classroom teachers' own poor arts experience at school, combined with a lack of confidence to teach the arts (Russell-Bowie 2010; Grennan 2017), there is a strong impulse for teachers to marginalise the arts in their teaching. Increasing emphasis on literacy and numeracy both nationally and internationally has resulted in a significant decrease in funding and support for the delivery of arts education curricula (Bamford 2006; Wolf 2008; Russell-Bowie 2009). This increased emphasis on high stakes literacy and numeracy testing could contribute negatively to arts programmes in Irish schools (Ó Breacháin and O'Toole 2013) and appears to be taking its toll on quality learning in arts education (Eisner 1993, 2002; Robinson 1999, 2011).

1.2.4 Redevelopment of the Irish Primary School Curriculum

Against this backdrop, the *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment* (NCCA) in Ireland are in the process of reviewing and redeveloping the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999). The challenges of the 1999 curriculum, including curriculum overload and increased time pressures on teachers (NCCA 2020) have been well documented. With this in mind, ongoing developments of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* support an integrated, inter-related approach to teaching and learning in arts education (NCCA 2020). Therefore, this research asserts that arts partnerships such as the *CS,* could have the potential to support teachers in their teaching of arts education in an integrated, inter-related capacity.

This review of literature explored whether arts partnerships can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education. Key theorists indicated that the pivotal aim of these programmes was to build trust and understanding among the partners (Wolf 2008; Christophersen 2013, 2015; Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 2020; Kenny 2020). However, if arts partnerships are to be an effective means of supporting arts education in schools, time must be given to build mutual ownership, allowing for risk taking and sharing of knowledge and expertise (Kenny and Morrissey 2016). With this in mind, the impact of arts partnerships such as the *CS*, could hold strong promise to act as an agent for transformational learning, potentially enabling and supporting agentic teachers in their teaching of arts education.

1.3 Research questions

The overall aim of this research was to investigate how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldanacha (CS),* can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education in primary schools. Subsequently, five research questions guided this study:

1) What were teachers' perspectives regarding teaching arts education and what were the factors that influenced these?

2) What impact did the *CS* have on supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education?

3) How did the Creative Associate support teachers in their teaching of arts education?

4) What were the successes and challenges which arose as a result of schools' and teachers' engagement in the *CS?*

5) How can schools inform and develop the support offered by the *CS* to teachers, to further enhance their teaching of arts education?

1.4 Positionality of researcher

Positionality reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study (Savin-Baden and Major 2013). It can influence both how research is conducted, its outcomes and results (Rowe 2014). Foote and Bartell (2011, p. 46) draw our attention to the fact that a researcher's positionality may "influence what researchers bring to research encounters, their choice of process and their interpretation of outcomes." Indeed Maxwell (2005) suggests that a researcher's positionality and experiential knowledge is a valuable source with which to scaffold the conceptual framework. Bearing this in mind, it was important that I noted my positionality in relation to this study, regarding how it influenced my interpretation and understanding of other's research and my own (Holmes 2020).

As previously highlighted, I proposed this topic as a result of an interest in teachers' continual professional development in arts education. A qualified primary school teacher, I have worked as a teacher educator in arts education on a national level for many years

(PCSP[8], 2005-2007; PPDS[9], 2007-2009). I am also presently teaching drama and music education in a university setting to pre-service teachers. Concurrent with one of the underpinning principles of the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999) which highlights that the classroom teacher is best placed to teach the arts education curriculum, it is my belief that all teachers should be in a position to confidently teach arts education (Music, Drama and Visual Arts) in their respective classrooms. However, discussions arising from working with teachers and pre-service teachers over the years would indicate that this was not always achievable for several reasons[10]. Therefore, it was apparent that ongoing continual professional development (CPD) in arts education for Irish primary teachers is much needed and necessary to develop their confidence, knowledge and expertise in these subject areas.

A further motivation for this research arises from my experience of working in an international school for six years as a music specialist. As Head of Music in GEMS[11] Wellington Primary School, Dubai, UAE[12](2009-2015), responsibilities of this position included: compiling and teaching schemes of work for all classes from Foundation Stage to Year 6 (Junior Infants – 6th Class); co-ordinator of GEMS Music Academy instrumental lessons in WPS[13] and musical and performance director for numerous school productions. This role also provided me with opportunities to facilitate CPD for classroom teachers in arts education across the UAE (GEMS Professional Development Trainer in Music and Drama, 2009-2015; Head of GEMS Performing Arts Network).

Allowing me to view things from the perspective of both the classroom and specialist teacher, this unique experience provided me with a wealth of new knowledge which further informed and enhanced my pedagogy. While Head of Music, I also completed my M.Ed. with the Institute of Education (DCU[14], 2012), engaging in a blended, online approach. One aspect of my studies investigated classroom teachers' attitudes to the specialist teacher teaching music. Findings from this small-scale study found that classroom teachers viewed the music

[8] Primary Curriculum Support Programme
[9] Primary Professional Development Service
[10] It has been found that pre-service and in-service teacher education do not provide adequate support for teachers to meet the expectations of the creative arts curriculum (Bamford 2006; Russell-Bowie 2009, 2009b). A lack of confidence and expertise in teaching some or all the arts forms, coupled with a lack of professional in-servicing of educators have impacted on the facilitation of arts education in primary schools (Mc Swain 2014). Increasing pressure from the Department of Education and Science to raise standards in literacy and numeracy has led to an increase in allocated time to reading and mathematics at the expense of other curricular areas, most notably the arts. Efforts to launch a more sustainable and coherent CPD arts education teacher policy have also been thwarted by the country's financial position in recent years.
[11] Global Education Management Systems
[12] United Arab Emirates
[13] Wellington Primary School
[14] Dublin City University

specialist as a potential teaching resource who can provide enhanced opportunities for their professional development, and endless possibilities for children's holistic learning in music education. My thesis then went on to investigate teachers' cross-cultural perspectives in relation to teaching and using drama in the classroom. Key findings indicated that, although drama was being taught and used in the classrooms of participating teachers, it was more likely to be used as a methodology. Consequently, calls for professional development and additional supports to be put in place in both curricula, so that teachers can teach and fully understand the place and importance of drama across the curriculum, were strongly emphasised.

These professional and personal experiences have brought a wide range of perspectives to my research, which in turn, have contributed to my overarching researcher positionality. As demonstrated, I have gained considerable expertise and experience in arts education and have witnessed first-hand the benefits, and indeed the challenges of teaching arts education. Drawing on this knowledge and experience which has infiltrated my own values as an educator, a mixed-methods, multi-site case study design (which was based on a thorough, triangulated data collection and analysis process) was chosen to undertake this research. Informed by this study's conceptual framework, which was shaped by Maxine Greene's theories of aesthetic education, this research came under the paradigm of constructivism. Acknowledging Greene's links to constructivism (Greene 2001), this research aimed to investigate and build upon previous research regarding the potential of arts partnerships to support teachers in their teaching of arts education. In this way, this study contributes to a robust research body upon which further research may be built.

1.5 Structure of thesis

This thesis is organised in an article-based format. Three of the chapters are articles which have been published in peer-reviewed journals. References will appear at the end of each of these articles. Figures and table titles which appear in the articles will be numbered in line with those in the rest of the thesis. The full reference of each of these articles are outlined below.

Chapter 1 presents a background to and a rationale for the study. In outlining the challenges which may face Irish primary teachers in relation to teaching arts education, this chapter contends that arts partnerships could offer opportunities for professional learning, supporting teachers to confidently teach arts education in their respective classrooms. The study's research questions were set out as was the positionality of the researcher in relation to the study. The structure of the thesis was also outlined.

Chapter 2 (Article 1)

Fahy, E. and Kenny, A. (2021) 'The potential of arts partnerships to support teachers: Learning from the field', *Irish Educational Studies*, (online first) https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2021.1929392

This chapter provides a review of the literature. Reviewed relevant literature relating to arts education and the curriculum, arts partnerships in schools, supporting arts education in schools and professional development for teachers in arts education, enabled this researcher to identify existing gaps and to build on a platform of existing knowledge and ideas in relation to these areas. The potential impact of arts partnerships and whether these collaborations can act a professional development initiative, to potentially enable and support teachers in their teaching of arts education is also explored. Literature is also critically reviewed regarding the facilitation of, and teacher professional development in, arts education.

Chapter 3 outlines the conceptual framework underpinning this research. Incorporating theories of thought regarding arts education and the capacity of arts partnerships to support the delivery of arts education in primary schools, this chapter constitutes a theoretical mapping of the knowledge and ideas, shaped by Maxine Greene's (1980, 1995, 2001) theories of aesthetic education. The influence of Dewey (1934, 1938) and Eisner (1993, 2002) on the work of Maxine Greene (1980, 1995, 2001) is also explored. This framework acted a means of informing and directing the proposed study. Existing empirical research arising from the literature review and the paradigmatic stance which permeates this research is also discussed and explored.

Chapter 4 outlines and rationalises the methodology employed to address the research aims of this thesis. A multi-site case study design that utilises a mixed-method approach was selected for this research project. Qualitative data was collected in the form of individual semi-structured interviews and both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered in the form of an online teacher survey. Analysis of the data, ethical issues and limitations as they relate to the research are also discussed.

Chapter 5 (Article 2)

Fahy, E. and Kenny, A. (2022) 'Bridging the gap': The role of the arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers, *Arts Education Policy Review,* (online first) https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2022.2037483

This article examined the role of the Creative Associate – an arts broker within the *CS.* Data was collected using semi-structured interviews in a purposive sample of eight Irish primary schools. Using a framework put forward by Sinclair *et al*. (2015), the support provided by the arts broker (in this case, the CA) was critically analysed using *nVivo*[15] software. The establishment and development of stakeholder relationships was explored while emerging challenges were debated and discussed. Findings from this article could contribute to the development of the role of the CA, leading to increased impact and sustainability of arts partnerships such as the *CS* program.

Chapter 6 (Article 3)

Fahy, E. (2022) Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?', *Social Sciences and Humanities Open,* (online first) https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2022.100390

This article explores primary teacher perspectives, regarding whether or not the *CS* impacted on their teaching of arts education. Online surveys, which were both quantitative and qualitative in nature, targeted fifty (n=50) primary teachers in the same eight Irish primary schools. Presenting an analysis and discussion of this quantitative and qualitative survey data, findings from this article could contribute to further provision of teacher professional development in arts education. Bearing this in mind, these findings could contribute to

[15] NVivo is a software programme used for qualitative and mixed-methods research. Specifically, it is used for the analysis of unstructured text, audio, video and image data, including interviews, focus groups, surveys, social media and journal articles.

ongoing development of arts partnerships such as the *CS,* ensuring they have a lasting, sustainable impact on the teaching of arts education in primary schools.

Chapter 7 offers a synthesis of the main findings. Using *nVivo* software, a thematic analysis of the three papers presented in this thesis resulted in three interrelated, macro-themes emerging. These included: transformational learning, teacher agency and collaborative practice. The conceptual framework which underpinned this study (Chapter 3) was used as a lens, through which the links between transformational learning, teacher agency and collaborative practice were explored.

The concluding chapter, **Chapter 8** seeks to discuss the conclusions arrived at through this research and highlight the contributions of this study to an emergent knowledge base on the impact of arts partnerships on arts education in schools. Recommendations for practice and policy are suggested while an outline for research that builds on the platform of ideas created by this study, is also presented.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The Potential of Arts Partnerships to Support Teachers: Learning from the Field

Preamble

The following article provides a review of the literature relating to arts education and the curriculum, arts partnerships in schools, supporting arts education in schools and professional development for teachers in arts education. The potential impact of arts partnerships regarding whether these collaborations can act a professional development initiative for teachers, is also explored. Literature is also critically reviewed in relation to the facilitation of, and teacher professional development in, arts education. This is a peer reviewed and published article in *Irish Educational Studies*[16] (May 9, 2021). The following is the citation for this article:

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Statement of authorship:
I hereby declare that I, Edel Fahy, am the principal author of this article. The following statements outline my contributions to the work:
• Substantial contributions to the conception and design of the work; the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of data for the work; AND
• Drafting the work and revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
• Final approval of the version to be published; AND
• Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved (ICMJE 2014).

[16] This journal uses the Chicago Manual Style of Referencing for citing and formatting reference entries.

The Potential of Arts Partnerships to Support Teachers: Learning from the Field

Abstract

In recent years, arts partnerships have gained increased popularity as a means of delivering arts education and arts-in-education in schools. Creating opportunities for both teachers and artists alike, arts partnerships can enhance a shared sense of purpose and mutual respect, while also developing creative skills, knowledge and expertise. Although many studies on both a national and international level, have identified the successes and challenges of arts partnerships in schools, a gap in how these partnerships can enhance teachers' professional development regarding arts education still exists. Therefore, this article discusses the potential impact of arts partnerships and whether these collaborations can act as a professional development initiative, to potentially enable and support teachers in their enhancement of arts education. The evidenced impacts, possibilities and indeed, challenges of such arts partnerships in schools are explored while arts partnerships approaches, policies and directions on a both national and international level, are also discussed. Literature is also critically reviewed regarding the facilitation of, and teacher professional development in, arts education.

Keywords: arts education; arts partnerships; teacher professional development; support.

2.0 Introduction

In Ireland, there is currently a significant gap in research regarding professional development for Irish primary teachers in arts education. Alongside this issue, 'collaboration', 'partnership', and the 'teaching artist' as policy choices have gained increased popularity as a means of delivering arts education (Christophersen and Kenny, 2018). Many studies on both a national and international level (Wolf 2008; Christophersen 2013; Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 2020; Partti and Vákevá 2018; Abeles 2018) have identified the benefits and challenges of arts partnerships in schools, yet a gap in how these partnerships can enhance teachers' professional development regarding arts education still exists. This article, therefore, presents a critical review of up-to-date literature in relation to arts education, arts partnership approaches, policies and directions within Ireland but also situates this literature internationally. In particular, literature is reviewed to provide a context for understanding the positioning of arts education in the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999) and how this relates to teachers' existing practices and professional development. The marginalisation of arts education on both a

national and international level and how this has impacted the teaching of the arts, is also investigated. Benefits, challenges and tensions associated with arts partnerships and the effect of school leadership on the success of arts partnerships are examined, while the potential influence of international partnerships on future developments is also explored. Examining whether these collaborations can 'facilitate professional learning as a reciprocal act between… artist and teacher' (Christophersen and Kenny 2018, 13), the somewhat controversial question of whether arts partnerships give teachers their full status as partners is also raised. Literature pertaining to the facilitation of, and professional learning in arts education for teachers, is also discussed.

2.1 The place of the arts in education

Engagement in arts education has been said to positively affect overall academic achievement, engagement in learning, and development of empathy towards others (Fiske1999; Eisner 2002; Wolf 2008; Russell-Bowie 2010). Although it is widely acknowledged that quality arts-rich programmes have positive effects on educational attainment and are beneficial to both the individual and society, problematically the arts remain on the periphery of education (Robinson 1999, 2011; Bamford 2006). Increasing emphasis on literacy and numeracy internationally has resulted in a significant decrease in funding and support for the delivery of the arts education curriculum (Bamford 2006; Russell-Bowie 2009; Wolf 2008). Reiterating Ken Robinson's (2011, 27) premonition that, 'a narrow, unbalanced curriculum will lead to a narrow, unbalanced education', this increased emphasis on high stakes literacy and numeracy testing could contribute negatively to arts programmes in schools (Ó Breacháin and O'Toole 2013). The consequence of such educational reforms on teachers' confidence in teaching the arts has also led to minimised instructional time to master both subject and pedagogical content (Morris et al. 2017; Russell-Bowie 2010). Eisner's (2002) warning that the art's position in the school curriculum symbolises to the young what adults believe is important still has resonance today and, unfortunately, appears to be taking its toll on quality learning in arts education.

In Ireland, increasing pressure from the *Department of Education and Skills* (DES) to raise standards in literacy and numeracy has led to an increase in allocated time to reading and mathematics at the expense of other curricular areas, most notably the arts. The earliest inception of *Better Literacy and Numeracy: A Draft National Plan to improve Literacy and Numeracy in Schools* (DES 2010) – declared that in the interest of the nation's youth, priority must be given to 'the improvement of literacy and numeracy over other desirable, important but ultimately less vital issues' (DES 2010, 11). While the revised strategy did not officially eliminate any subject area, it was highlighted by Ó Breacháin and O'Toole (2013) that the

natural marginalisation of other curricular areas – resultant from the increased focus on literacy and numeracy - thoroughly undermines the child-centred ethos of the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999). Grennan (2017) goes on to say that, while *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life* (DES 2011) has maintained the integrity of the seven diverse subject areas (Language; Mathematics; Social Environmental and Scientific Education; Arts Education; Physical Education; Social, Personal and Health Education and Religious Education) of the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999), 'it has both undermined significantly the artistic and creative elements of the language curriculum' (Grennan 2017, 69).

2.2 Arts education policy developments in Ireland

In-spite-of these increasing pressures to raise national standards in literacy and numeracy, the past two decades have borne witness to the revival of arts initiatives in Ireland. Within formal education, the arts have been greatly advanced by both policy and curriculum developments relating to the interdependent realms of arts-in-education and arts education most notably; *Artist Schools Guidelines* (The Arts Council 2006), *Points of Alignment – The Report of the Special Committee on the Arts and Education* (The Arts Council 2008) and *The Art-in-Education Charter* (DES and DAHG[17] 2013). According to the *Arts-in-Education Charter* (DES and DAHG 2013), it is possible to trace a developing distinction between arts education and arts-in-education through the 1980s and 1990s. While these two areas are co-dependent, for the purposes of clarity, this article will be located in the arts education curriculum.

Arts education within the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999) comprises of the visual arts, music and drama curricula. Commended for their ability to promote thinking, sensitivity, creativity, and imagination (GoI 1999), arts education enables children 'to develop their creative and imaginative capacities through artistic expression and response' (GoI 1999, 35). In a similar way, arts-in-education refers to 'interventions from the realm of the arts into the education system, by means of artists of all disciplines visiting schools or by schools engaging with professional arts and cultural practice in the public arena' (DES and DAHG 2013, 2). Complementing the pupil's own arts education and supporting learning in other curricular areas, the *Points of Alignment* (Coolahan 2008) document emphasises that arts-in-education practice makes artists and arts organisations available to school outside their

[17] Department of Education and Skills and Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

normal scope. With this in mind, the publication of *The Arts-in-Education Charter* (DES and DAHG 2013) reaffirmed the importance of arts education and arts-in-education in Ireland. An important stepping-stone towards developing a coherent policy on arts education (Halpin 2013), the charter reiterates the essential role played by the arts in the education of children and young people in Ireland (DES and DAHG 2013, 7). The charter also emphasises the need for joined-up, integrated collaboration across government departments, education agencies and arts organisations. Other responses have included partnerships between the Arts Council and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Residencies such as these have invigorated delivery of visual and performing arts in initial education programmes and enhanced the arts cultures of the HEI's in which they are based (Kenny and Morrissey 2016).

Although *The Arts-in-Education Charter* signalled a commitment to arts education from the Irish Government (Grennan 2017), Coolahan (cited in Wallace 2013) warned that 'it was no quick fix'. Blaney (cited in Halpin, 2013) was also critical of the charter, describing it as a 'working document, with potential, if re-worked.' She goes on to say that, for true progress to take place, a more collaborative approach to engaging artists and working with teachers needs to be adopted (Blaney cited in Halpin 2013). Halpin (2013) reiterates this noting that the charter needs 'more clarity and a more cohesive, sustainable structure if it is to achieve its aims to implement a strong arts-in-education practice in Ireland.' While this document focuses on encouraging schools to utilise the arts to 'enrich the curriculum and the wider life of the school' (DES and DHAG 2013, 17), it makes no real commitment to enhancing teachers' professional development in arts education. Aligning closely to the focus of this article, the need to recognise and support the primary school teacher as the facilitator of arts education, enabling the development of pupils' creative and imaginative growth is further highlighted by Ó Sé, Manley, Kitterick and Hallissey (2013). These authors emphasise that the aims of the *Arts-in-Education Charter*, will not be fully realised unless 'the place of arts in education is understood and placed in the context of the broader arts education programme as outlined, particularly, in our visionary arts curriculum' with 'true partnership being developed between schools, teachers and visiting artists' (Ó Sé et al. 2013).

2.3 Arts partnerships and schools

In recent years, partnerships have gained momentum in national and international educational settings. In the main, this has meant artists and companies offering pre-determined workshops to schools - these types of involvement have been found to be useful and interesting but can have limited impact on teaching and learning (Seidel et al. 2002; Rowe et al. 2004; Docherty

and Harland 2001; Harland et al. 2005). However, other approaches also exist. Christophersen and Kenny (2018, 3) highlight that these partnerships or ‘‘alterations’ can be hugely advantageous to schools, teachers, children, young people, and broader communities, as well as to the musicians themselves.’ It has been found that collaborative, respectful and equity-based partnerships (Bresler 2018; Holdus 2018) can provide students with the opportunity to interact meaningfully with professional artists which can have a significant, positive impact on student engagement (Jeanneret 2011, 43). This in turn can add value to their learning and appreciation of the arts (Manley cited in Wallace, 2013).

Adhering to the Charter’s commitment ‘to promote arts education and the arts-in-education among children and young people through the alignment of a joined up, integrated and collaborative approach’ (DES and DAHG 2013, 5), one of the charter’s primary aims was to introduce a national *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha* (formerly ARIS Arts Rich Schools) which incentivised and recognised primary and secondary schools to make the arts a key part of school life (DES and DAHG 2013, 5). Established in 2018, the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha* is a flagship initiative of the *Creative Ireland Programme* and is led by the *Arts Council* in partnership with the *Department of Education and Skills* and the *Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht* (*The Arts Council* website 2020). Aiming to promote the arts and creativity in schools through a range of collaborative opportunities, the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha* long-term aim is for ‘every school to be supported to fully embrace the arts and creativity, ensuring a positive experience and strong outcomes for children and young people’[18] (*The Arts Council* website 2020).

Encapsulating the essence of what an arts partnership such as the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha* can potentially achieve, research carried out by Partti and Vákevá (2018, 81) on a similar Finnish project confirmed that collaborative partnerships can ‘enable teachers to surpass their previous level of expertise by utilising each other’s expertise as a learning resource.**’** This partnership demonstrated how teachers developed pedagogical confidence in relation to the teaching of music in their classrooms. They discovered new personal qualities for improvising which are different from the critical thinking and competence promoted by the rest of the curriculum (ibid). Here, the importance of meaningful collaborations in arts partnerships, when artists and teachers trust and respect

[18] Since its inception, 462 schools including primary, post primary schools, DEIS (Delivering Equality of opportunity in Schools) and special schools (schools catering for children with special needs) have joined the initiative.

each other, comes to the fore once again. These findings are reiterated by Wolf (2008) who emphasises the collaborators' ability to work as colleagues, utilising each other's expertise and experience as their learning resource which, in turn, becomes the common denominator of a successful partnership.

Common to nearly all collaborative projects are the time and effort necessary to debate and negotiate goals and objectives, as well as methods of implementation among individual groups who have a stake in reaching their envisioned goals (Froehlich 2018). Nevertheless, Partington (2018, 160) draws our attention to the fact that the term 'partnership' can be highly problematic. Indeed, Bresler (2018) warns that these partnerships can limit and as a result, become less effective due to the fact that teachers sometimes feel they lack influence over these programmes (Christophersen 2013). This is a recurring conclusion within the teacher-artist collaboration field (Christophersen 2013; Christophersen and Kenny 2018; Holdhus and Espeland 2013; Snook and Buck 2014). An apparent 'twosomeness' between artists and students can make teachers almost redundant as teachers (Christophersen 2013). In order to regain a place within the classroom, teachers sometimes feel compelled to take on the role of helpers or mediators between artists and students (Christophersen 2013). Similar consequences of these partnerships are also highlighted by Holdhus and Espeland (2013, 6) who note that teachers may 'choose the easiest way and regard the concert and the visiting artist as an easily added value and a break away from the school routine.' Teachers see the value of partnerships but are unable to utilise its full potential in educational follow-up or preparation (Holdhus and Espeland, 2013). Their research would suggest that teachers seem to give away their definitional power in these matters, accepting that the artist is the sole decision maker in classroom planning and practice (Holdhus and Espeland, 2013).

Although outside artists and performers can support and enrich a school arts education curriculum, it is argued they cannot replace the class teacher who gives young people ongoing exposure and training in the arts (Wolf 2008). Wolf (2008, 93) goes on to say that 'for partnerships to be truly collaborative, the stream of learning must flow both ways.' Consequently, ensuring that 'the learning flows both ways' and that all groups are 'kept on board' often gives rise to tensions around remits and responsibilities within arts-in-education initiatives (Christophersen and Kenny 2018). For artists and teachers to work alongside each other, supporting, influencing and shaping each other's experiences (Kind et al. 2007), these challenges and tensions must be effectively managed. As argued by Kind et al. (2007), both artists and teachers need support in finding ways to develop artist and teacher selves. This

emergence of joint values and ownership (Wegner 1998 cited in Christophersen et al. 2018) is vital to the creation, development, and sustainment of an effective arts partnership. As is evidenced by some of the literature already discussed, the benefits and challenges of these types of partnerships have been well documented (Wolf 2008; Partti and Vákevá 2014; Christophersen 2013, 2015; Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 2020; Abeles 2018; Kenny 2020). However, a gap in how these partnerships enhance teachers' professional development regarding arts education still exists. Findings from these studies (Holdus and Espeland 2013; Wolf 2008; Christophersen and Kenny 2018) therefore begs the controversial question, 'are arts partnerships providing teachers with the opportunity to participate as partners on the creative, artistic journey, while enabling them to successfully implement arts education in their respective classrooms?'

2.4 Learning from international arts partnerships

Many international studies have also identified the benefits, challenges, and tensions as a result of engaging with arts-partnerships. Three international research projects are briefly evaluated to provide a snapshot of arts-partnerships in an international context. These partnerships are reviewed as to how they can inspire current directions and approaches, potentially informing future national and international arts partnership developments, with specific focus given to their impact on teachers.

2.4.1 Norway: The Cultural Rucksack

The Cultural Rucksack – Norway's national programme for the arts and culture – is provided in all Norwegian schools (primary and secondary) and is delivered by professionals in the arts and culture. Christophersen (2015, 366) draws our attention to the fact that, 'such programmes are perceived as valuable supplements to arts education on schools' and despite Norway's climate and geography, *The Cultural Rucksack* has managed to bring artistic and cultural work to children in all parts of the country (Christophersen 2015). Similar to the *Better Literacy and Numeracy: A Draft National Plan to improve Literacy and Numeracy in Schools* (DES, 2010) strategy in Ireland, a new curriculum was implemented in Norway in 2006 with the aim of improving basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills as improving competency in English, Science and digital technology (Christophersen 2015). These changes in education resulted in stronger emphasis on basic skills, testing and evaluation of measurable skills with less curricular time allocated to the arts (Saebo 2009 cited in Christophersen 2015, 368). Unfortunately, this seems to be a common international

phenomenon in arts education as highlighted by Bamford (2006, 11) who notes that, 'there is a gulf between the 'lip service' given to arts education and the provisions provided within schools.' With the arts under pressure in education in Norway, the government funded arts initiative *The Cultural Rucksack* seemed to provide pupils with access to 'high-quality, professional artistic and cultural productions' (Christophersen 2015, 365), bringing into schools, an artistic competence that was very different from that of regular classroom teachers.

Christophersen's (2013) research provides an interesting insight from teachers' point of view regarding the dilemmas, challenges and tensions which arose from their engagement in the programme. Teachers stated that they lacked influence within the programme which made them redundant as teachers (Christophersen 2013). Although not as competent as the artist in question, Christophersen emphasises that teachers are presumably more competent than the children. She goes on to say that 'teachers know their students and what levels of understanding, skills and attention to expect from them (2013, 13). Christophersen (2013) succinctly encapsulates the desired outcome from schools' engaging in an arts partnership – by keeping the connection between the children and the arts open when there are no artists present, teachers are enabled and empowered to maintain continuity with the arts and further growth. Surmising that debates about the *Cultural Rucksack* programme may prove relevant for discussions of international arts-in-education programmes, Christopherson's research (2015, 76) indicates that teachers did not always experience the same degree of ownership or influence as the artists. Bearing this in mind, it is important that aspiring partnerships such as the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha* give teachers their full status as partners on the creative journey, supporting and enabling them to successfully enhance arts education in their respective classrooms.

2.4.2 UK: Creative Partnerships

Creative Partnerships (CP) was set up in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1999 as a government flagship programme to engage teachers and 'our most gifted young people' to 'explore alternative cross-curricular methods of delivering creative learning' (Clennon 2009, 300). Joining together schools and cultural institutions to give children in deprived areas the opportunity to develop their creativity (Wood 2014), *Creative Partnerships* aimed to be different from previous artist-in-schools projects by offering opportunities for longer-term, sustainable partnerships between schools and the broader community (*Creative Partnerships* Website 2004). Supporting schools to fully embrace the arts and creativity, many parallels

can be drawn to this project and the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha.* Similar to Creative Associates in the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha, Creative Partnerships* places Practitioners (Schools Artists) in schools to deliver creative projects and Creative Agents work alongside Practitioners (Clennon 2009). Clennon (2009 301) goes on to explain that the Creative Agents are individuals who work with school staff to 'examine and identify continuing professional development opportunities for staff who wish to extend and explore their creative skills.' To give one example, UK Primary school teachers (similar to Irish teachers), can sometimes experience the pressure of teaching the *National Curriculum for Music,* especially if music is not one of their areas of speciality. Clennon (2009, 302) explains that 'many of the musical skills and processes that need to be taught, can only be successfully realised within the pupils by the teacher adopting a facilitation methodology.'

An evaluation of *Creative Partnerships* carried out by the National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER) found that the partnership had a positive impact on schools, teachers and pupils (Sharp et al. 2006, 42). The report revealed that, possibly, the major impact of *Creative Partnerships* had been felt on teachers, rather than on pupils themselves (ibid). The report went on to state that, 'if teachers are….adopting different approaches to teaching and learning that are transferable to their practice….this is a positive legacy of *Creative Partnerships'* (Sharp et al. 2006, 45). Highlighting the importance of keeping communication flowing between Creative Agents and teachers before and during the project work, the evaluation identified successful partnerships as those which 'placed creativity at their heart and included elements of CPD for teachers' (Sharp et al. 2006, 45).

Throughout its lifespan, *Creative Partnerships* was associated with the arts curriculum, partnerships with creative practitioners, social justice and deprivation and after 2008, employability and the economy (Wood 2014). However, the report (Sharp et al. 2006, 46) found that the 'absence of an effective national infrastructure meant that Creative Directors felt that they lacked support and guidance in the early stages of *Creative Partnerships'*. Other evidence put forward by the report suggested that, despite the interim planning guidance, a lack of clarity about *Creative Partnerships* principal purpose was evident, at least in the early stages (Sharp et al. 2006). Nevertheless, as highlighted by Fullan (2001, 76) lack of clarity is 'a perennial problem in the change process.' This would indicate that confusion over the purpose of an initiative is not a difficulty unique to *Creative Partnerships.* Fullan (2001) goes on to say that lack of clarity can sometimes lead to anxiety, frustration and lack of achievement. Therefore, the NFER report emphasises the importance

of ‘redressing any misconceptions and of keeping clarity and coherence under constant review’ (Sharp et al. 2006, 47). Further recommendations from NFER included providing more support for Creative Directors and their staff, keeping *Creative Partnerships* teams well informed about ongoing developments and addressing Creative Agents training needs (Sharp et al. 2006). Although the initiative made a good start in relation to encouraging creativity, valuable experiences regarding the process of establishing *Creative Partnerships* regarding a strong infrastructure and clarity of purpose have been gleaned. Shifting the ownership of the initiative to schools, principals and teachers could have had the capacity to internally sustain the *Creative Partnerships* initiative – a valuable lesson which will inform current directions and approaches of other future arts partnerships.

2.4.3 USA: Steam Forward

Steam Forward was a wide-ranging partnership in which a music-based interdisciplinary instruction programme provided by a professional orchestra was used to support learning in music, as well as in subjects outside of music (Abeles 2018). Integral components of the five-year pilot programme developed and centred in the education department of the *Metropolis Symphony Orchestra* (a pseudonym), included - curriculum development workshops; artist integrated grade-level curriculum guides with multiple instructional units; teaching artist/classroom planning session and teaching artist training. To prepare teachers for their engagement in the *Steam Forward* programme, music-in-education consultants organised both curriculum development and staff development workshops. Musicians, who had agreed to serve as teaching artists for *Steam Forward,* also received training to help them prepare their presentations (Abeles 2018).

Results from research undertaken by Abeles (2018) indicated that there was a change of perspectives from both the teaching artists and the classroom teachers arising from a mutual collaboration and realisation that both parties had a critical role to play in decisions making about the arts curriculum and planning. This study reiterates the importance of building relationships over time – the research goes on to state that, ‘teachers reported that *Steam Forward* had an effect on them professionally and that the programme provided them with practical, arts-based instructional tools’ (Abeles 2018, 126). Principals involved also noted the positive impact of the programme noting that they had seen a growth in teachers and that they were exploring new avenues and directions in teaching and learning (Abeles 2018). Abeles (2018) also draws our attention to the fact that distinguished *Steam Forward* from other arts education programmes was its extensive professional development component

for both teachers and teaching artists. Both groups had extensive professional development experiences during the initiation into the programme, and in each of the following years, additional professional development was provided for both teacher and teaching artist (Abeles 2018). Highlighting the importance of building trusting relationships between teacher and artist, research relating to this partnership also emphasises the importance of preparation and development, as an integral part of establishing, maintaining and sustaining successful long-term arts partnerships. Going forward, future long-term arts partnerships need to establish a strategy for providing continued funding for extended collaborations between schools and artists (e.g., national funding bodies) to further support the enhancement of arts education in schools.

2.5 Supporting arts education in schools

The *Irish Primary School Curriculum* emphasises that the class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate arts education in their classrooms (GoI 1999). In her study, Grennan (2017, 14) draws our attention to the fact that arts education within primary schools must be of a high quality, facilitating pupils' creative, artistic, imaginative and cultural development. She goes on to say that this vision of arts education in schools is attainable with 'skilled practitioners at the helm' (Grennan 2017, 14). Highlighting the importance of teachers' beliefs in teaching arts education to inform a teacher's capability to teach the arts (Garvis and Lemon 2013), it is therefore inevitable that the teacher is more likely to engage in arts education experiences if their beliefs are positive. However, although the arts have played a major part in the lives of Irish children, in practice the arts in primary schools in Ireland have been neglected over many years (Council of Europe 2010). This aligns with the findings from the SERCARC[19] (1995) and *Creativity and the Arts in Primary School* (INTO 2010) reports which emphasise that, because of classroom teachers' lack of confidence to teach the arts, there is a strong impulse to marginalise the arts in their teaching. Therefore, if the teacher is the principal facilitator of arts experiences throughout their primary education (Grennan 2017), the principal and school leadership team must negotiate ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers, which will support the development of these curricular areas. Consequently, if a school's focus is to enable teachers in their enhancement of arts education when participating in an arts partnership, the supportive role played by school leadership is vital to its success.

[19] Senate Environment, Recreation, Communicate and the Arts Conference

The evaluation of *Creative Partnerships* carried out by the National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER) reiterates the importance of this supportive role noting that, 'for partnerships to be successful, schools needed support from the principal and school management team, and enthusiastic co-ordinators with good communication and organisational skills' (Sharpe 2006, 44). Kenny and Morrissey (2016, 88) also emphasise this, highlighting that the success of in-school partnerships is due to a 'distinctive sense of mutual ownership, shared experience and co-learning' resulting in participants' professional and personal relationships becoming 'inextricably linked.' They go on to say that 'the school principal can play a key role in enabling a multiplier effect and in enabling the development of a whole school 'community of practice' (Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 88). School principals who acknowledge the value of external arts partners must also validate the participation of teachers as leaders beyond their classroom as influential at both school and community level (Burnaford, 2007). Therefore, principals and school management who are accountable for both 'creating an environment where creativity flows and responding creatively to the ideas presented to them' (Mumford et al. 2002 cited in Allen 2016, p.37), need to take responsibility for the ongoing professional learning of staff. In negotiating and overseeing the implementation of an arts partnership, which could potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish primary schools, principals must ensure that the commitment, creativity and capacity of its practitioners who bring the curriculum to life, prevails (Sugrue 2011).

2.6 Professional development in arts education

Reiterating the importance of lifelong continual professional development (CPD) for teachers, Foley (2017, 59) ascertains that the most effective model of CPD is one that, 'respects and recognises the professionalism of teachers, pays heed to the needs of individual schools, has impact and incorporates reflection and collaboration.' Unless teachers and those required to implement change understand and are in agreement with the long-term goal of professional development, change may be difficult to sustain (Johnston et al. 2007, 9). Bearing in mind that teacher-artist partnerships tend to occur in an *ad-hoc* manner in Ireland and are generally short-term and under-funded (Kenny and Morrissey 2016), it is worth noting that these elements must be present for an arts partnership to act as a successful CPD model. Therefore, to facilitate the effective, creative and imaginative delivery of arts education in schools, ongoing professional learning and support which develops generalist teachers' professional competence, confidence and relevant knowledge, must be ignited at

pre-service level. Kenny, Finneran and Mitchell (2015) put forward argument for meaningful student engagement in the arts in order to inspire innovative and imaginative approaches to teaching in schools. In their study, interviewed student teachers highlighted the benefits of the 'hands on' nature of the pre-service arts education module. The study emphasises the importance of practical, immersive arts experiences in small group teaching environments in developing confidence and a positive attitude towards arts education (Kenny, Finneran and Mitchell 2015, 165). Unfortunately, for the majority of Irish primary teachers, the completion of initial teacher education concludes their professional development in arts education (Grennan 2017). Highlighting the importance of 'equipping teachers with the capacity to respond effectively to major changes in the education system and to provide for teachers' personal and professional development needs' (GoI 1995, 135), Craft (2000) states that there is a need to nourish the creativity of the teacher if they are to nourish this in their classrooms.

Efforts to launch a more sustainable and coherent CPD teacher education policy have been thwarted by the country's financial position in recent years. The focus of CPD to date has been largely on equipping teachers to respond to curricular change rather than on the development of pedagogical approaches (Harford 2010, 357). Provided in the wake of curricular reform (1999), the *Primary Curriculum Support Programme*[20], (Coolahan 2008) was the only financed professional development (now *Professional Development Support for Teachers)* delivered to all of the nation's primary school teachers which focused on arts education. Since then, calls for enhancing the professional practice of teachers through in-career learning have been uttered consistently and repeatedly by numerous educational stakeholders for more than a decade (DES, 2005; INTO, 2010; NCCA, 2005; NESF, 2007 in Grennan 2017). Bearing this in mind, arts partnerships could have the potential to act as a professional development initiative in arts education (Kind et al. 2007; Kenny and Morrissey 2016), providing 'professional development opportunities for teachers wishing to improve their arts education and practice' (Kind et al. 2007, 840). Due to the fact that many generalist teachers find themselves with limited expertise and support in the arts (Kind et al. 2007), interacting with artists in their classrooms can create unique and very valuable professional development learning opportunities. Moreover, when these partnerships are ongoing, teachers

[20] The PCSP was established prior to the launch of the revised primary curriculum in 1999 and was the result of many years of collaborative development and planning between the state Department and the NCCA. Its purpose was essentially to mediate the 1999 primary school curriculum for teachers through structured professional development underpinned by a partnership approach (Harford 2010, 353).

benefit when they see the artists as an equal (Kenny and Morrissey 2016), ensuring the learning is 'powerful, long lasting and sustainable' (Wolf 2008, 92).

To safeguard that this learning is 'long lasting and sustainable' (Wolf 2008, 92), teachers and artists alike, must be a part of an ongoing, evolving and dynamic process which involves exciting opportunities to challenge, develop and potentially transform their pedagogic practices. As demonstrated by the initiative *Exploring Teacher-Artist Partnership as a Model of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Supporting and Enhancing Arts Education* (Kenny and Morrissey 2016), teachers and artists 'journeyed from undertaking intensive professional development….engaging in high levels of reflective practice…sharing their experiences and growing expertise through CPD facilitation' (Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 86). Overwhelming evidence put forward by this report would suggest that 'both teacher and artist skills, knowledge and understandings can complement each other very successfully….where meaningful, sustained partnerships are invested in' (Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 85). From these studies it is apparent that, for a sustainable future in classroom-based arts education and to avoid the teacher-artist partnership becoming a support measure, in-service teacher training in arts education should be continuously offered for teachers' professional development. Hence, for teacher and artist to develop strong working relationships overtime and for on-going professional development where both teacher and artist learn a 'significant amount from the other' (Kind et al. 2007, 844), it is imperative that artists respond meaningfully to teachers' insights and expertise and in return, teachers respond to the possibilities the arts and the artists have to offer (Kind et al. 2007).

2.7 Conclusion

Located within the context of the provision of arts education in Ireland, this examination of literature aimed to investigate and provide an insight into how arts partnerships can potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education. Investigating whether these collaborations can 'facilitate professional learning as a reciprocal act between… artist and teacher' (Christophersen and Kenny 2018, 13) it is apparent that the emergence of joint values and ownership is vital to the development and sustainability of an effective arts partnership. In setting up these professional exchanges among teachers and artists, reviewed literature indicated that a key aim of these long-term and sustainable projects was to build trust and understanding among the partners (Wolf 2008). By establishing a shared vision and mutual trust, professional exchanges among teachers and artists should be about creating a common understanding of mutual benefit, with each stakeholder bringing different,

complementary types of expertise to the partnership (Glatter 2003; Hargreaves 2003; Rudd et al. 2004; Docherty and Harland 2001). Sustaining partnerships over a long-term period and shifting the ownership of arts partnerships so that they are no longer an external reform (Coburn 2003), will enable schools, principals and teachers to embed, spread and deepen the pedagogical principles of the partnership themselves. If partnerships are to be an effective means of delivering arts education in schools, time must be given to build mutual trust, to allow for risk taking and developing collegial ways of working as well as ample time for joint planning and reflective practice (Kenny and Morrissey 2016). With this in mind, the impact of arts partnerships such as *The Creative Schools Initiative- Scoileanna Íldánacha,* could hold strong promise to act as a professional development initiative for teachers, potentially supporting and enabling teachers in their teaching of arts education.

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Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework

3.0 Introduction

The conceptual framework underpinning research can be defined as the map which guides navigation (Dewey 1938). Described by Maxwell (2005, p.33) as the "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that supports and informs the research", the conceptual framework provides a structure of justification whereby the theories adapted by the researcher serve as guides directing the collection, analysis and explanation of the data (Eisenhart 1991). Ravitch and Rigga (2017, p.193) reiterate this noting that, the conceptual framework "organises and informs the research, ensures a close alignment between topic, questions and method, while also providing a mechanism for integrating any new data, findings, questions and literatures as the study evolves." They go on to state that conceptual frameworks allow for focused, systematic exploration of who we are, what we study, why we choose to study it and how we choose to study it (Ravitch and Rigga 2017). However, as highlighted by Maxwell (2005), the relationship of research to theory is not unidirectional. Just as theory shapes our work, what we learn through research leads us to revisit and to reconsider established theory (Ravitch and Rigga 2017). Therefore, this study's conceptual framework aims to explore and incorporate theories of thought regarding arts education and the capacity of arts partnerships to potentially support the teaching of arts education in primary schools.

3.1 Overview of conceptual framework

The conceptual framework presented in this discussion is primarily informed and shaped by Maxine Greene's theories of aesthetic education. Key theoretical concepts included: transformational learning, 'wide-awakeness', teacher agency, 'igniting the imagination' and collaborative practice. The influence of educational philosophers Dewey and Eisner on Maxine Greene's thinking is also discussed. The paradigmatic stance of constructivism which permeates this research is presented, while supporting empirical research arising from the literature review is also debated. Headings under which the conceptual framework is explored, are directly derived from this study's research questions (Chapter 1, *Section 1.3*). These include arts education; marginalisation of the arts; professional learning for teachers in arts education and arts partnerships in schools (C/F Figure 3.1).

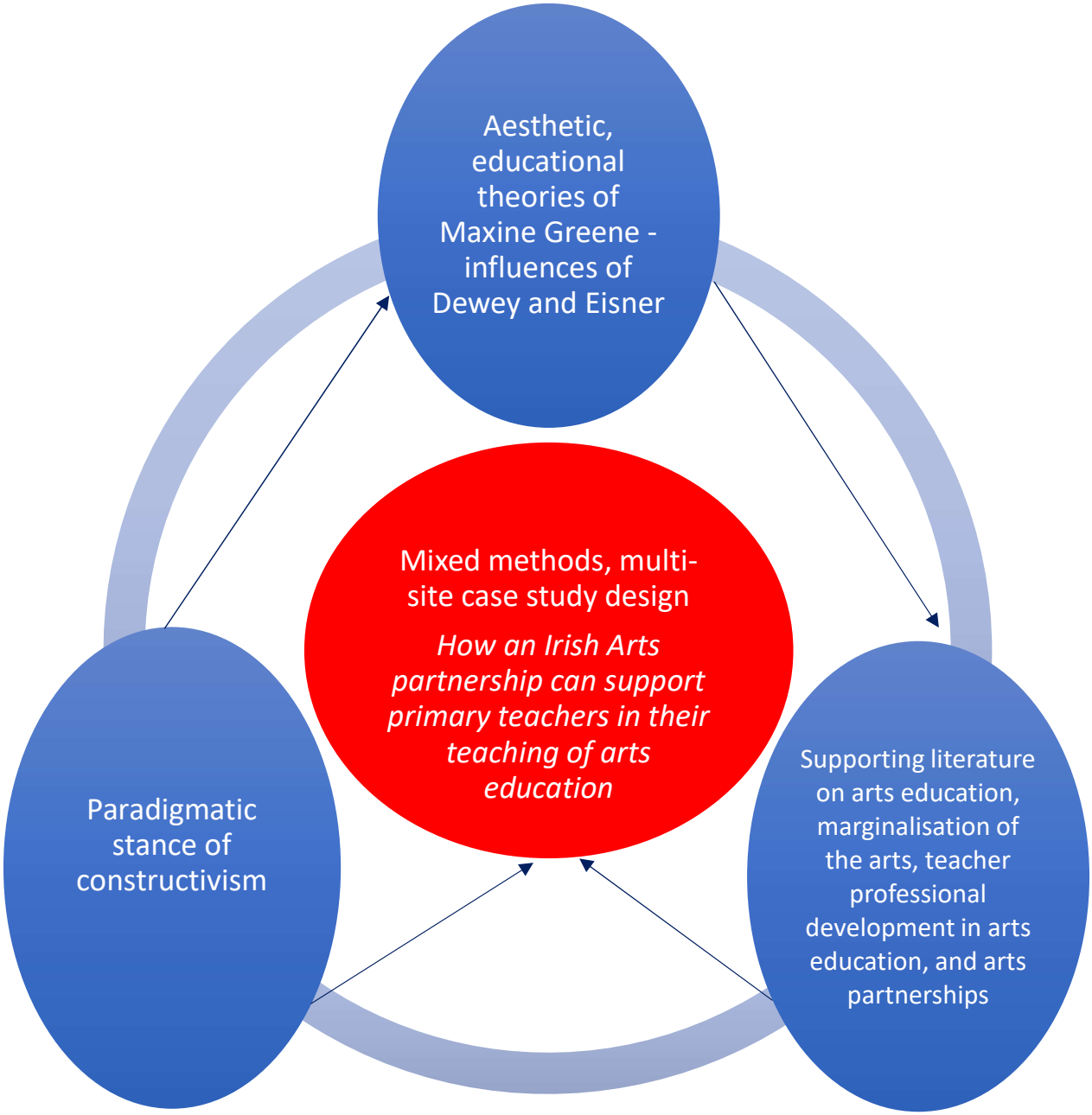

Figure 3.1 Representation of conceptual framework and influence on research design

3.2 Paradigmatic stance of this research

In clarifying the conceptual framework underpinning an investigation, Maxwell (2005) draws our attention to the fact that the researcher must make explicit the paradigm – defined as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator" (Guba and Lincoln 1998, p.195) within which the research is situated. Lenses through which we interpret the world, these paradigms are human structures, none of which can be incontrovertibly right (Guba and Lincoln 1998). Therefore, it is apparent that adopting a clear paradigmatic stance smooths the investigator's navigation through the research while informing decisions pertaining to design and methodology (Maxwell 2005; Creswell 2011). With this in mind, the following section presents this researcher's paradigmatic stance.

3.2.1 Constructivism

This research comes under the paradigm of constructivism. Applefield *et al.* (2001, p. 37) define constructivism as an "epistemological view of knowledge acquisition emphasising knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission." They go on to say that, "the role of the learner is conceived as one of building and transforming knowledge" (Applefield *et al*. 2001, p.37). This paradigm intersects with educational practice when "teachers understand that learning is a constructive human process and use their understanding of this process to inform their work" (Wiggins 2015, p.115). Emphasis is placed on the collaborative nature of teacher development where "individuals seek to understand their world and develop their own particular meanings that correspond to their experience" (Creswell 2011, p.25). Applefield *et al.* (2001, p.38) further reiterate this noting, "for the learner to construct meaning, he must actively strive to make sense of new experiences and in so doing must relate it to what is already known or believed about a topic." They state that, "constructivism posits that learners construct their own reality based upon their individual perceptions of prior experiences" (Applefield *et al.* 2001, p.38).

Due to the fact that the overarching goal of the constructivist educator is to stimulate thinking in learners that results in meaningful learning and deeper understanding (Applefield *et al.* 2001), this paradigm resonated strongly with the motivations and concerns which gave impetus to this study (Chapter 1, *Section 1.1*) namely: teachers continual professional development (CPD) in arts education and factors that potentially impact the teaching of arts education in primary schools (with a particular focus on the marginalisation of arts education and teacher confidence). This constructivist framework also lends itself to this study since it draws on educational theorists such as Dewey (1897, 1934), Eisner (1993, 2002) and Greene

(1995, 2001, 2011) in advocating for meaningful 'real-life' arts education experiences to construct knowledge (Kenny 2017). Through engagement with a variety of participating stakeholders, an in-depth investigation of the *CS* (in this case the 'real-life' intervention), allowed this researcher to construct and build knowledge regarding how the initiative potentially transformed, empowered and supported teachers in their teaching of arts education.

Similarly, Greene (1995, 2001, 2011), whose aesthetic theories inform and shape this study's conceptual framework, repeatedly writes of aesthetic education involving experiences of a 'heightened state of consciousness' in a world of 'wide-awakeness' in order for meaningful, transformational learning to occur. This in turn, can establish a sense of self-worth and agency in teachers (Williams 2017), empowering them to break through the limits of the "purposeless and airless confinement" (Greene 2011, p. 9) of their classrooms. This sense of self-worth and agency, along with learner initiative and engagement, can play an integral role in the constructivist learning process (Wiggins 2015). With this in mind, this paradigm provided an insightful lens through which to view the investigation of the *CS* partnership in participating schools.

3.3 Educational theories of Maxine Greene

Maxine Greene serves in the role of deeply influential teacher, scholar and philosopher (Thayer-Bacon 2008) whose research interests included "contemporary philosophies of education and social thought, aesthetics and the teaching of the arts, literature as art and multiculturalism" (Greene 1995, ix). She is most famous for her aesthetics theory and advocated for meaningful and adventurous encounters, with the arts at the centre of education (Gulla 2018, p.110). As a teacher of teachers, Greene created a significant movement in teacher training, influencing how many general and arts educators' practice and think about education (Stepniak 2006). She proposed that teachers should pursue "arts-centred encounters", providing individuals with unique benefits such as the possession of a new "consciousness of possibility" (Greene 2001, p.63) and an enhanced "critical awareness" (Greene 1988, p.131). The lasting impact of Greene's legacy (1984, 2001, 2011, 2013) is her persistence that imagination is a force that can be ignited by the arts, releasing a virtuous and life-affirming power.

3.3.1 John Dewey and the work of Maxine Greene

Maxine Greene's writing weaves together filaments from various art and education philosophers, frequently referencing a broad spectrum of socially conscious thinkers including John Dewey and Elliot Eisner. Considering herself Deweyan in broad outline (Luce-Kapler 2017), Dewey was the single most often cited scholar in Greene's work. Luce-Kapler (2017, p.86), a scholar deeply influenced by her work, draws our attention to the fact that Greene saw an "affinity with Dewey's ideas about the imagination as a 'gateway' to active and aesthetic engagement in learning." Dewey believed that arts education was indeed experience, and was a foundational part of the curriculum because it developed creativity, self-expression, and an appreciation of the expression in others (Dewey 1934, 1938). Resonating with Greene's belief in the transformative power of arts education, Dewey (1934) believed that individuals learn that they are capable of taking action and possess the ability to change things, heralding an improved future (Goldblatt 2006). Confident that the arts contained a unique potential to foster rich experience, Dewey (1934) was of the opinion that immersion in this expansive experience resulted in a transformation of our relationship with the world. Therefore, if teachers believe they can take action and possess the ability to change things in their schools and classrooms, transformational learning in arts education could take place by engaging with partnerships such as the *CS.*

For both Dewey and Greene, experience is always central. Emphasising that life is about rich experience, Dewey reminds us that, "everything depends upon the quality of the aesthetic experience which is had" (1938, p.27). However, it has been noted that this aesthetic experience sometimes fostered an elitism and alienation which Dewey so disliked (Shore 1986). In *Art as Experience*, Dewey (1934) regrets that this experience would sometimes not be had by every individual. Furthermore, he does not explain how the ordinary citizen could become a "connoisseur of aesthetic experience" (Shore 1986, p.78). This gap poses problems for teachers and educators who wish to teach as many children as possible through the medium of the arts but are not primarily concerned with producing experts or 'connoisseurs' (Shore 1986). A belief that permeates my own research and teaching, previous research indicates that teachers are more likely to engage in arts education practices if their beliefs are positive (Garvis and Lemon 2013) and do not necessarily need to be an 'expert' when teaching arts education. However, as previously highlighted, teachers' lack of confidence and training in the arts have acted as barriers to teaching the arts education curriculum (SERCARC 1995; INTO 2010). Therefore, this research sought to investigate the potential of

an arts partnership, as an experiential approach in the development of professional knowledge of teachers, empowering and supporting them in their teaching of arts education.

3.3.2 Elliot Eisner and the work of Maxine Greene

Elliot Eisner is renowned as a curriculum theorist concerned with aesthetic education who was unwavering in his belief in the unique influence of arts education. In his long and prestigious career in art, Eisner (2002) argues that "the arts can serve as models of what educational aspiration and practice might be at its very best" (2002, p.xii). His vision is reminiscent of Greene and Dewey's concern for quality aesthetic education – always learning and contributing to society for the greater good (Goldbatt 2006). Eisner shared the view that the arts are a mode of human experience which can "enable us to step into the shoes of others and to experience vicariously what we have not experienced directly" (2002, p.10). Resounding with the theories of both Dewey and Greene, Eisner (1993, p.5) was resolute in the belief that "experience is the bedrock upon which meaning is constructed and that experience in significant degree depends on our ability to get in touch with the ….world that we inhabit." An eager advocate for the use of arts in education, Eisner (2002) argued that they are not just supplementary experiences but act as ways of learning and knowing. He believed that by relishing and savouring the arts, we are provided with, not only permission, but also encouragement to use one's imagination as a source of content (Eisner 2002). However, Shore (1986, p.161) emphasises that, Eisner does not always dwell upon the emotional component of aesthetic experience, calling instead to a "non- literal attribute to the world that is a product of aesthetic experience." Shore (1986) therefore advocates a cautious approach in accepting this as a unique distinguishing feature of aesthetic experience due to the fact that, Eisner offers no evidence that this attitude will result from the experience.

As evidenced by these discussions, the theories of Dewey, Eisner and Greene emphasise that aesthetic education can be a mind-altering device (Eisner 1993), can motivate change (Dewey 1959) and can be transformative in nature (Greene 2011). Building on this, transformational learning as a result of engaging in the arts, can emphasise the connections between experience, culture, emotion and higher-order thinking (Freedman 2003). Through arts education, we express our experiences creatively and imaginatively. Therefore, as an educator who is committed to the transformative value of arts education and recognises the potential of *CS* to support teachers in their teaching of arts education, it is fitting that the beliefs of Maxine Greene - strongly influenced by educational philosophers Dewey and Eisner - infuses the construction of this study's conceptual framework.

3.4 Maxine Greene's theories as a framework

3.4.1 Arts education

According to Greene, arts education is a "mode of countering the anaesthetic, awakening people to ellipses they never knew existed or to plunging leaps they would never have conjured up themselves" (Greene 1995, p.5). A passionate advocate for arts education, Greene (1995) provides us with a fervent case for the reinstitution of the 'firing of the imagination' as central to the process of all learning and not quarantined to artistic subjects alone. In fact, her argument is that the arts should be given more centrality in the curriculum as a source of important learning which has more general application to other learning modalities (Greene 1995). Similar to Dewey (1938) who believed that the arts can foster moral and intellectual growth, Greene asserted that the arts can facilitate various types of 'transformations', and that exposure to the arts can awaken individuals to the "intimations of human possibility" (1980, p.22). By developing "the imagination, creativity, presence and meaning-making through embodied knowing" (Hall *et al.* 2019, p.166), engagement in the arts generate can creative energy and imagination, thereby strengthening and transforming learning (Hall *et al.* 2019).

3.4.1.1 Transformative learning

As previously highlighted, transformational learning as a result of engaging in the arts, can emphasise the connections between experience, culture, emotion and higher-order thinking (Freedman 2003). Greene (1995) reiterates this noting that the arts can release the imagination, opening up new perspectives and helping one develop "the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise" (1995, p.19). Addressing teachers, she asserts that engagement in aesthetic education enables individuals to reach beyond the familiar, "can set our imaginations free, move us into thinking what might be, what ought to be, what is not yet – move us into transformations and repair" (Greene 2001, p.172). She goes on to say that the arts can disrupt one's consciousness and make teachers aware of the "untapped possibility" (Greene 2001, p.206) of using the arts in their curriculum. By working in this way, teachers can provoke their students to break through the limits of the conventional, moving them to transform (Thayer-Bacon 2008).

3.4.1.2 'Wide-awakeness'

For this transformational learning to occur, one needs to be "conscious and wide-awake" (Thayer-Bacon 2008, p.263), enabling individuals to break through inertia, repetition and uniformity (Thayer-Bacon 2008, p.263). Acutely aware of the great responsibility on educators' shoulders, Greene (1995, 2011) wanted teachers to decide for themselves what kind of teacher they will be, developing a heightened-consciousness, becoming awake and aware of the very real choices they have to make (Thayer-Bacon 2008). She speaks about the transformative possibilities of aesthetic encounters and how individuals can be "awakened to the ways in which the arts are grasped by human consciousness (1980, p.317). This heightened consciousness is defined by Greene (1995) as living in this world in a state of 'wide-awakeness', which encourages critical awareness and deep engagement with one's world (Williams 2017).

3.4.1.3 Teacher agency

This sense of 'wide-awakeness' can be pivotal to the development of teacher agency (Williams 2017). For teachers to exist in this heightened state of consciousness, Greene (1995) draws our attention to the fact that they must be 'wide awake' themselves. When teachers "break from the ordinary ways of seeing and hearing" (Greene 2001, p. 319), classrooms come alive (Gulla 2018). By participating in thoughtful experiences and purposeful action, this in turn can establish self-worth and agency in teachers (Williams 2017). However, breaking through this passivity is not always easy. Gulla (2018) draws our attention to the fact that even when some teachers attempt to bring creativity and agency into the curriculum, students can be difficult to engage. Therefore, for teachers to venture on a transformative journey of 'awakening', they must nurture their own creativity and imagination and "be responsive to new vistas and new forms" (Greene 1980, p.317). By working in this way, teachers can be empowered to become agentic practitioners, taking a new standpoint on the world (Greene 1980).

This strongly resonates with the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 regarding the facilitation of arts education. As highlighted earlier, the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999) emphasises that the class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate arts education in their classrooms. However, as previously emphasised, influential factors such as lack of teacher confidence, the marginalisation of the arts due to teachers' poor arts experience at school, increased focus on literacy and numeracy and lack of ongoing CPD in arts education, has often impeded on teachers' agency in relation to the teaching of arts

education. Bearing this in mind, this research sought to explore whether the *CS* can act as a catalyst for 'wide-awakeness', potentially supporting and empowering agentic primary teachers in their teaching of arts education.

3.4.2 Marginalisation of the arts

Keenly aware of the transformative power of the arts, Greene (1973, p.111) lamented the fact that, "institutionalised science no longer offers the opportunities for individual growth and effectiveness Dewey and others described." She went on to state that, as a result of learning being "forced down narrower and narrower channels" (Greene 1980, p.318), the only balanced response to a technological society is an educational system that includes a study of the arts as a basic. Greene (1980, p.318) emphasised that many educators see the arts as disparate to cognitive learning and so regulate them to a lesser position in the school curriculum. Emphasising the "persistent efforts to trivialise and sentimentalize the arts within schools" (1984, p.132), the marginal status of arts education is clearly outlined by Greene. Strongly influenced by Greene's work, Luce-Kapler (2017) also laments the erosion of spontaneity and creativity due to the accountability movement. She draws our attention to the fact that researchers have consistently found that classroom teaching and assessment practices are influenced by high-stake, large-scale assessments (Luce-Kapler 2017), leading to an increasingly narrowed curriculum (Robinson 1999, 2011; Luce-Kapler 2017). Greene (2013 p.252) implores us to give up this kind of standardisation and accountability that "clean the diversity, richness, and humanness that infuses the arts as well as human beings' individual…. responses to the arts." She goes on to say, "we must be able to demonstrate to our students how the arts enable our full engagement in and of the world, allowing us to attend or be open to others and their possibilities" (Greene 2013, p.252).

Greene's observations regarding the marginalisation of the arts also resonates with reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2. While the benefits of high-quality arts education were well-documented, it was highlighted that, despite their importance to human society, the arts have occupied only a peripheral role in systems of education on both a national (Ó Breacháin and O'Toole 2013; Ó Sé *et al.* 2013; Grennan 2017) and international level (Robinson 1999, 2011; Bamford 2006). Greene (1995, p.21) warns that, if "nothing intervenes to overcome such inertia, it joins with the sense of repetitiveness and uniformity to discourage active learning." Bearing this in mind, Greene's call to ignite the imaginations of educators and students alike is more important in a world that needs creative thinking and new possibilities (Luce-Kapler 2017) than ever before.

3.4.3 Professional development for teachers

In *Releasing the Imagination,* Greene (2011) strongly advocates the important role played by the teachers in the facilitation of arts education. Similar to Eisner (2002) who posits that arts education at elementary level should be taught by the classroom teacher, Greene emphasises that, "it is the teacher who makes the difference; his/her own…. questioning encounters with the several arts, the alternative ways of living" (2011, p.7). As teachers, we must learn to listen, to open ourselves up to what the artist is telling us and further grasp the artist's work's meaning (Greene 1980), becoming "more than just passive onlookers" (Greene 2011, p.9). Greene draws our attention to the fact that an effective teacher goes beyond being a caring and thoughtful individual to someone who can identify appropriate modes of interaction with learners of "multiple intelligences" (2001, p.110). If teachers are willing to "recognise possibilities that open new horizons" (Greene 2013, p.252) for all students and imagine better prospects for schools and classrooms, a truly well-rounded education must include opportunities for engagement in arts education, facilitated by confident and knowledgeable practitioners.

For the development of confident and knowledgeable practitioners to transpire, Fuchs Holzer (2009, p.387) emphasises that "imaginative learning…requires (teacher) professional development that is focused, imaginative, supported over time and enabling reflection." In a similar way, Greene (1984) encouraged prospective teachers and classroom teachers to develop their critical skills of analysis, reflection, and evaluation so that they can understand all aspects of the art form. Noting that teachers can only flourish themselves, if they are willing to critique and become aware of themselves "as questioners, as meaning makers, as persons engaged in constructing and reconstructing realities" (Greene 1995, p.130), Greene (1995b, p.379) emphasises that, "participatory involvement with the many forms of arts does enable us… to become conscious of what daily routines… have obscured." Similar to Dewey (1938), Greene (1987, p.186) highlights that competent and confident teachers of arts education are those who can open their minds and "can attend to and absorb themselves" in the experience. This fundamental belief in empowering and igniting the imagination through aesthetic engagement continued to be a key theme throughout her work.

3.4.3.1 Igniting the imagination

As previously highlighted, increasing pressure to standardise education as a result of economic rationalism has resulted in the marginalisation of aesthetic practice in national (Ó Breacháin and O'Toole 2013; Ó Sé *et al.* 2013; Grennan 2017) and international education

systems (Holdhus and Espeland 2013; Mc Swain 2014). Bearing this in mind, Greene's call for educators to ignite imaginations through aesthetic practice is more pertinent than ever before. She contends that teachers must take this responsibility to engage in professional development and educate themselves in all facets of arts education, sparking and releasing their imaginations (Greene 1995). Placing imagination at the core of understanding, she goes on to say,

> Imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities. It allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions (Greene 1995, p. 3)

As previously highlighted, Greene (1995) contends that teachers must be 'wide-awake' themselves by nurturing their own creativity and imagination in the face of "domesticating forces" (Greene 1980, p.319). As individuals become alive in this way, their open-minded exploration is in turn, fuelled by their development of teacher agency (Williams 2017). By breaking from the ordinary ways of seeing and hearing (Greene 2001) and engaging in the pedagogy of aesthetic education, imaginations can be sparked and "individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves" (Greene 1988, p. 12). By creating opportunities to nourish the imagination, "teachers can choose to identify themselves as members of a community….. and become then, that community's explorers and pioneers" (Ayers in Greene 2001, p.viii). This in turn can lead to transformational learning, empowering and supporting teachers in their facilitation of arts education.

Although Greene's discussions regarding arts education are infused with passion and insight, Heath (2008, p.116) is critical of the fact that Greene does not take the time to define the imagination or explore the concept adequately. In her final essay in *Releasing the Imagination* (Greene 1995), Heath (2008, p.116) notes that Greene does not have the framework for a more "profound understanding of the imagination – one that crosses the boundaries from inventiveness of perspective to the capacity to imagine what it is like to be another." He goes on to say that Greene's position is restricted to, "arguing what it is like to see things differently but falls short of an argument which would allow one to experience the world as another person might" (Heath 2008, p.116). However, while not always defining the concept of the imagination (Heath 2008) and occasionally cautioning that the outcomes of arts encounters are not all predictable (Stepniak 2006), Greene's enthusiasm for the arts encounter rarely falters. Believing that arts education offers the potential to use new forms of teaching and learning to develop personal growth and transformation, her fundamental belief

in igniting the power of the imagination through aesthetic engagement to create change is key to her work.

Greene's philosophies regarding the ongoing professional development and the importance of sparking and releasing teachers' imagination distinctly resounds with literature presented in Chapter 2. Emphasising the integration of teachers' professional observations into their evolving theories of teaching and learning (Dewey 1904), Craft (2000) reminded us that there is a need to nourish the creativity of the teacher if they are to nourish this in their students. However, for rich professional teacher development in arts education to take place and for educators to become more than just passive onlookers (Greene 2011), teachers need to be provided with ongoing, meaningful arts education experiences. Bearing this in mind, this research sought to investigate whether an Irish arts partnership could have the potential to transform teachers' pedagogic practices in arts education, releasing their imaginations to "reach beyond…for what is not yet" (Greene 1984, p.66).

3.4.4 Arts partnerships and schools

In *Art and Imagination: Reclaiming the Sense of Possibility* Greene (1995b p.379) almost anticipates the popular emergence of arts partnerships and their presence in schools, noting, "it is my conviction that informed engagements with the several arts would be the most likely way to release the imaginative capacity and give it play." As previously highlighted, collaborative arts partnerships can be hugely advantageous to schools, teachers, children, young people and broader communities (Christophersen and Kenny 2018), providing stakeholders with the opportunity to interact meaningfully with professional artists and creative organisations (Jeanneret 2011).

3.4.4.1 Collaborative practice

Keenly aware of the benefits and contributions made by collaborating with professional artists (Thayer-Bacon 2008, p.265), Greene wanted to "communicate the idea that there is always more to be found, more horizons to be breached" (2001, p.206). She encouraged teachers to move towards "spaces where arts education and aesthetic learning" can take place in their classrooms (Greene 2001, p.75). These 'spaces for arts education' (Greene 2001, p.75) could enable teachers who want to take their own initiative and move beyond what they are taught, "to open perspectives and….worlds" (Greene 1978, p.83).

This strongly resonates with the "communities of practice" framework (Wenger 1998; Wenger *et al*. 2002; Kenny 2016) which have been foregrounded by many researchers. These

'communities of practice' see members within communities learning through a social process of collaborative participation. Providing opportunities to create something bigger than ourselves (Bresler 2018), Greene (1995, 2001) emphasises that knowledge can be constructed through experience in collaborative partnerships. Recognising that the sharing and engagement in a variety of art forms can help some people become more conscious and 'wide-awake' (Thayer-Bacon 2008), Greene (1995, p.379) goes on to say that the arts open up all sorts of possibilities for teachers, connecting them to each other and their surrounding environment. This sense of 'wide-awakeness' can act as a catalyst for the creation of communities of practice. Encouraging educators to imagine what alternatives are possible (Greene cited in Heath 2008), Greene (1995) also links fostering the imagination to the creation of collaborative communities. Therefore, by tapping into stakeholders' knowledge, skills and expertise, arts partnership such as the *CS,* could have the capacity to be that 'space', that 'community' for agentic teachers to take ownership of arts education policies and practice that concern the schools they are in.

3.4.4.2 The Lincoln Centre Institute (LCI) and the Creative Schools Initiative (CS)

Greene's commitment to the fine arts and the performing arts in teacher education led to the establishment of the *Lincoln Centre Institute (LCI)* in New York City in 1976 (Crawford 1987, p.96). Making the case for opening educators experience and their curricula to "existential possibilities of multiple kinds" (Greene 1995, p.161), teachers worked alongside professional actors, musicians and dancers "in the search for innovative solutions" (Fuchs Holzer 2009, p. 378). The *LCI* also designed professional development for teachers which introduces them to capacities for imaginative learning and teaches them to guide their students' noticing across the curriculum (Fuchs Holzer 2009). Believing that a passion for noticing acted as a 'doorway for imagination' (Greene 1995), Greene's objective for teachers was supporting them to teach the art form and works to their own students.

Many similarities and comparisons can be drawn between the *LCI* and the *CS.* Aiming to promote the arts and creativity in schools, the *CS* seeks to establish a range of collaborative arts education opportunities for schools and will develop and strengthen the relationships between schools and the broader cultural and community infrastructure within which they operate (*The Arts Council* website 2022). A central component of the *CS* arts partnership is

the role played by the Creative Associate[21]. Aligning closely with the goals of the *LCI,* "to help teachers introduce the arts in their classrooms in a way that provided students with the knowledge they needed to make informed decisions in relation to the arts" (Crawford 1987, p.97), the Creative Associate (CA) identifies potential areas for improvement, matching the needs of schools to artists and creative opportunities in their locality. Opening the doorway to the imagination (Greene 1995), these CAs or arts brokers (Wenger 1998; Eckert 2000) endeavour to 'bridge the gap' and work alongside principals, teachers, and artists to inspire, energise and drive schools forward in addressing these areas for improvement (*The Arts Council* website 2022). Bringing a different perspective and a legitimacy to be listened to (Wenger 1998), these arts brokers can act as channels or conduits for innovative practice (Wenger 1998; Eckert 2000). Potentially acting as a catalyst for ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers (Sinclair *et al.* 2015), the CA or arts broker could also curate a shared purpose that is crucial to building relationships between all stakeholders. By working in this way, arts brokers (in this case the CA) could ensure that partnerships have a lasting, sustained impact on the delivery of arts education in schools.

Resonating with Fuchs Holzer's (2009) beliefs that professional development for teachers in arts education should be focused, imaginative, supported over time and enable reflection, Greene's contributions on teacher and artist collaboration supports previously reviewed literature on arts partnerships and their potential impact on teacher development in arts education. Provoking each other to wonder, "to seek out more and more" (Greene 2011, p.8), stakeholders could potentially be provided exciting, collaborative opportunities to develop and potentially transform their pedagogical practices (Kenny and Morrissey 2016; Kenny 2020; Morrissey and Kenny 2021). As previously stated, the review of the literature indicated that a gap in how these partnerships enhance primary teachers' professional development regarding arts education still exists. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the potential of an Irish arts partnership to awaken teachers to the endless possibilities of the arts (Greene 2013), empowering and supporting them in their teaching of arts education.

[21] Coming from a range of creative professions, such as artists, designers and craftspeople, Creative Associates are artists, creative practitioners and/or educators with an understanding of the arts and creativity (*The Arts Council* website, 2022).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore the construction of this study's conceptual framework. Pivotal to the formation of the framework were Maxine Greene's theories of aesthetic education. Key concepts included: transformational learning, 'wide awakeness', teacher agency, 'igniting the imagination' and collaborative practice. The influence of educational philosophers Dewey and Eisner on these theories was also explored. Resonating with the motivations and concerns which gave impetus to this study, the study's paradigmatic stance of constructivism was also presented. Aligning with this study's research questions (Chapter 1, *Section 1.3*), Greene's theories and supporting empirical research emerging from reviewed literature were discussed under the headings of: arts education; marginalisation of the arts; professional learning for teachers in arts education and arts partnerships in schools.

These discussions have highlighted potential points of synthesis and alignment between the philosophies of Maxine Greene, reviewed empirical literature and this current investigative study. Drawing on these theories, this study's conceptual framework provided a way to organise and structure the semi-structured interview and survey results and findings, as well as informing the analysis, interpretation and synthesis of this data. A complete exposition of the methodology, detailing the data collection and analysis procedures is presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4
Methodology

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate how an Irish arts partnership - *The Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)* - can support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. Within the domain of primary arts education, this researcher sought to engage with stakeholders (principals, teachers, *CS* school co-ordinators and Creative Associates) who had participated in the *CS*, regarding how it impacted on the teaching of arts education in schools. This chapter outlines the methodology used to explore the research questions and includes a discussion on the following sections: research design of the study; qualitative and quantitative research methods used; data collection and analysis and ethical considerations. This chapter concludes with a brief summary. Presented in the form of an article-based thesis, three peer-reviewed journal articles form the core of this thesis. The particular research questions and methodological tools addressed in each of these articles, are outlined in the table below (C/F Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Overview of articles, research questions and methodological tools

Chapter/ Article	**Research questions**	**Methodological tools**
Chapter 2 (Article 1): *The potential of arts partnerships to support teachers: Learning from the field*	• To review existing national and international arts partnerships and assess their effectiveness in potentially supporting teachers in their enhancement of arts education. • To identify research gaps in the literature.	Review of multiple information sources including books, internet sources, dissertations, peer reviewed journals and professional journals.
Chapter 5 (Article 2): *'Bridging the gap': The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers*	• How can the Creative Associate (CA) 'bridge the gap' to support teachers in their enhancement of arts education? • What were the successes and challenges which potentially arose as a result of schools' working alongside the CA as an integral part of their involvement with the *CS?* • How can these pilot schools further inform and develop the support offered by the CA to teachers in arts education?	20 semi-structured, qualitative interviews with Creative Associates, school principals and *CS* school co-ordinators from eight participating *CS* schools.
Chapter 6 (Article 3): *Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?'*	• What are teachers' perspectives regarding the current facilitation of arts education and what are the factors that influence this? • What impact did the *CS* have on supporting teachers in their delivery of arts education? • How can teacher perspectives further inform and develop the support offered by the *CS* to teachers in arts education?	Online-surveys which were quantitative and qualitative in nature, with 50 teachers (n=50) in eight participating schools.

4.1 Research Design

A multi-site case study design that utilises a mixed-method approach was selected for this research project. Merriam (2009, p.xiii) defines a case study as an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a programme, an institution, a person, a process or a social unit." Involving the collection of information using a variety of methods over a period of time (Merriam 1988; Yin 1989), Yin (1989) suggests case studies

can be used to describe a real-life intervention. In this case, the real-life intervention was the *Creative Schools Initiative (CS).* Emphasising that researchers must review the relevant literature and include theoretical perspectives regarding the case under study before starting to conduct any data collection which distinguishes it from other methodologies (Yin 2002), Yin (2002) also highlights that case studies appropriate for 'how' and 'why' research questions. To this end, the research questions were exploratory in nature to seek a greater understanding of how an Irish arts partnership can potentially support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. In relation to the five proposed research questions (Chapter 1, Section 1.3), four of these questions aim specifically to get a better understanding of the collaborative nature of the partnership between the *CS* and the schools in question. The fifth also approaches the phenomenon, but from the perspective of the teachers, asking how this pilot initiative can further inform and develop the support offered to teachers in arts education. Therefore, these arguments support the choice of a case study design for this thesis.

4.1.1 Multi-site case study

This study is designed to include multiple sites in order to strengthen the data collection and findings (Bryman 2004; Yin 2014). Multi-site case studies can increase the variance of the findings and can help make the study easier to generalise (Merriam 2009). Multi-site case studies can also reinforce research findings in the same way that multiple experiments reinforce experimental research findings (Yin 1994). Aligning with the constructivist paradigm which permeates this research, using a multi-site case study approach may also reveal how participants describe and construct their world regarding the impact of the *CS* on the teaching of arts education in schools. Therefore, the sample for this investigative study was conducted in a purposive sample of eight primary schools which served a diversity of communities across different geographical regions of Ireland (C/F Table 4.2 and Appendix A).

4.1.2 Mixed methods approach

Case studies aim to gather large amounts of data using a variety of methods in order to obtain a deeper understanding about each case (Creswell 2011). Bearing this in mind, a mixed methods approach was deemed the most appropriate fit to the study in question. Converging in a triangulated fashion, Yin (2014) was of the opinion that case study data should rest upon multiple sources of evidence. Hence, a mixed method approach provided this researcher with

the opportunity to triangulate and check the findings from one method against the findings of a different method. Specifically, in this study, qualitative data was collected in the form of individual semi-structured interviews and both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered in the form of a teacher survey. Highlighting that the case study encourages the use of multiple methods in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny, Denscombe (2007 p.45) emphasises that this facilitates the validation of data through triangulation. In this way, data from both interviews and questionnaires provided the basis for a thick description of how an Irish arts partnership potentially supported primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. The remaining sections of this chapter will detail the research methods used, participant selection, types of data collected and data analysis procedures.

4.1.3 Research sites

Eight potential research sites (who had participated in the *CS* programme) were identified and selected to reflect a broad diversity of communities and socio–demographic backgrounds, across different regions of Ireland (C/F Table 4.2 and Appendix A). When sourcing these research sites, target schools also identified their needs in relation to arts education (C/F Table 4.2 and Appendices B, C, and D). All selected primary schools were vertical in nature (from infant classes to 6th class). All research participants (principals, teachers, *CS* school co-ordinators and Creative Associates) were employed in these eight schools.

Table 4.2 Description of Research Sites

Primary School	Description	Number of teachers in school	Province in Ireland	Arts Education Identified Need
School A	Suburban, co-educational school	14	Leinster	Drama and Music
School B	Suburban, Catholic girls' school	14	Leinster	Drama and Visual Arts
School C	Rural, co-educational, Catholic school	3	Connacht	Visual Arts
School D	Suburban, co-educational, multi-denominational school	14	Connacht	Visual Arts and Music
School E	Suburban, co-educational Catholic school	10	Leinster	Music and Visual Arts
School F	Suburban, co-educational Catholic school	7	Leinster	Drama, Music and Visual Arts
School G	Suburban, co-educational, multi-denominational school	25	Leinster	Drama
School H	Rural, co-educational Catholic school	3	Leinster	Drama and Visual Arts

4.2 Phase 1 - Qualitative Research

Qualitative research begins with questions - its ultimate purpose is learning (Rossman and Rallis 2003). Rossman and Rallis go on to say that "qualitative researchers seek answers to their questions in the real world. They gather what they see, hear and read from people and places and from events and activities" (2003, p.4). Similarly, Creswell (2007, p.37) draws our attention to the fact that, "qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem." Highlighting the fact that qualitative data takes the form of words (spoken or written) and visual images (observed or creatively produced) (Denscombe 2007), Rossman and Rallis (2003, p.150) encapsulate the process of qualitative data analysis perfectly, noting that, "it is a messy, ambiguous time-consuming, creative and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion: it is not

neat." Denscombe (2007) goes on to outline many advantages of using qualitative analysis, noting one of the particular strengths associated with qualitative research is that descriptions and theories generated by such research are grounded in reality. Advocating that there is a richness and detail to qualitative data (Denscombe 2007), it was fitting that this researcher selected this research method as it increased the depth and breadth of data gathered from multiple stakeholders, enabling the rigorous investigation regarding whether the *CS* potentially supported teachers in their teaching of arts education.

4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

One method of data collection employed in this study consisted of semi-structured interviews. Kale (1996 cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007) remarks that a qualitative interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest where the focus is on the dynamics of interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.349) reiterate this, noting that the "interview enables participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view." They go on to say that "qualitative research is not just concerned with collecting data about life but is also a part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable" (Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.267). While Denscombe (2007, p.203) draws our attention to the fact that analysis and transcription of data can be difficult and time consuming, the interview method allows the researcher "to gain valuable insights based on the depth of the information gathered and the wisdom of key informants" (Denscombe 2007, p.202). Consequently, there was much greater interest in the interviewee's point of view due to the fact that the interviewers could depart significantly from the schedule and guide that was being used. They could ask new questions that follow up interviewee's replies and could vary the order and even the wording of the questions (Bryman 2004). Therefore, a qualitative approach to interviewing was very appropriate to the aims of this investigative study as it allowed the interviewer to respond to the direction in which the interviewees took the interview (Bryman 2004). The interviewees themselves raised additional and complementary issues and these in turn formed an integral part of this study's findings.

4.2.2 Interview schedule

The qualitative aspect of this study consisted of semi-structured interviews. This conversation with a purpose (Denscombe 2007) was deemed to be suitable for the study so as to gain an in-depth insight into stakeholders' perspectives regarding the potential of an Irish arts partnership to support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. The semi-structured interview approach chosen for this study proved most suited to the qualitative paradigm by providing an opportunity for the participant to develop their ideas and attitudes and speak widely on issues raised by the researcher (Denscombe 2007). The planning of the interview initially underwent three distinct stages - thematising, designing and interviewing. Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) note that the structure of this qualitative interview was supposed to replicate, as closely as possible, an everyday conversation. As a result, the interview schedule endeavoured to focus on certain themes and included suggested questions. As the primary focus for the project was to investigate how the *CS* can potentially support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish primary schools, these themes included: arts education and the curriculum, the role of arts partnerships in supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education and professional development for teachers in arts education (C/F Appendices B, C, and D).

In an effort to ensure that each qualitative interview covered knowledge at both a factual and meaning level, this researcher believed it was necessary to listen to the descriptions and meanings expressed as well as paying close attention to that which was said 'between the lines' (Cohen *et al.* 2000). Therefore, throughout the interview the participant was encouraged to provide detailed and descriptive responses. Probes and prompts were used by the researcher to encourage the interviewees to elaborate and clarify any aspect of misunderstanding if it arose. As highlighted by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), it was important to keep the interview moving forward and this needed to be anticipated by the interviewer. This was achieved by asking questions that elicited the kinds of data sought and giving appropriate verbal and non-verbal feedback to the respondent during the interview (Cohen *et al.* 2000).

4.2.3 Selection criteria for interviewees

In an attempt to establish a good correspondence between this study's research questions and sampling (Bryman 2004), this researcher conducted purposive sampling, choosing participants based on their relevance to the research question. An established relationship with a CA allowed for the navigation of an initial telephone meeting with the *CS* Education

Advisors. Acting as gatekeepers, these "individuals provided access to the sites and allowed or permitted the research to be done" (Creswell and Creswell 2018, p.185). A brief proposal which outlined the scope, benefits, participation, methods and possible risks of the project was developed and submitted for review to the advisors (C/F Appendix E). On completion of the project, a summary of the main findings would also be provided to the *CS* Education Advisors. Four Creative Associates (CAs) and two of the schools they worked in, were then contacted (eight schools in total) via email and telephone to ascertain whether they were willing to be interviewed as part of this investigative study. Subsequently, the principal and the *CS* school co-ordinator in each of these eight schools, were contacted thereafter. These individuals and the institutions that they worked in, were deliberately chosen due the positions they held (principals, *CS* school co-ordinators and Creative Associates) and the fact that they had a unique insight into the initiative under investigation. A participants' information letter and informed consent form outlining the scope of the project and their required involvement in the study (C/F Appendices E and F) was then forwarded to them for their perusal. These were then signed, scanned and returned via email to this researcher. A total of twenty participants[22] were recruited for interview purposes.

4.2.4 Participant profiles

The following tables provide the profile of the twenty interviewees (five were male and fifteen were female). Table 4.3 provides an overview of Creative Associate profiles while Table 4.4 provides an overview of principals and school co-ordinators of the *CS.*

[22] Due to the gendered nature of primary school teachers, it was unavoidable that the sample was female dominated (five were male and fifteen were female). However, this researcher endeavoured to engage a proportionate number of male teachers in semi-structured interviews and surveys. This researcher continued to reflect on any gendered dimensions which may have emerged throughout the duration of the project.

Table 4.3 Participant profiles of Creative Associates

Creative Associate/ Gender	**Associated School(s)**	**Background Information**
Creative Associate 1 (Male)	School A School B	- Working in schools on the east coast of Ireland. - A primary school teacher, specialising in Special Education. - Had performed, written and produced theatre for children. - An actor, director, writer and producer working in theatre, screen and television.
Creative Associate 2 (Female)	School C School D	- Working in schools on the west coast of Ireland. - A visual artist, researcher and art educator. - Currently pursuing a PhD in philosophy and the aesthetic experience of drawing.
Creative Associate 3 (Female)	School E School F	- Working in schools in the midlands of Ireland. - An art educator and craft facilitator and had worked on many inter-generational and multidisciplinary community arts projects.
Creative Associate 4 (Female)	School G School H	- Working in schools on the east coast of Ireland. A theatre artist and educator and had worked in the fields of arts and disability, community drama facilitation & socially engaged theatre practice.

Table 4.4 Participant profiles of principals and school co-ordinators of the *CS*

School/ Description	**Position / Gender**	**Background Information**
School A (School located in an urban school in Leinster)	Principal A (Female)	- An advocate of placing strong emphasis on arts education in this school. - Working in this school since she qualified as a teacher.
	Co-ordinator A (Male)	- Teaching in this school since 2018. - Completed an undergraduate degree in Music before going on to retrain as a primary teacher.
School B (Middle class, Catholic School girls' school, located in suburban Leinster)	Principal B (Female)	- Strong interest in the creative arts, particularly music and directs the school choir.
	Co-ordinator B (Female)	- Strong interest in the arts. - Schools' involvement in *CS* would shift focus back onto the arts in the school.
School C (Rural, co-educational Catholic, primary school in the west of Ireland).	Principal C & Co-ordinator C (Female)	- Strong love and interest in the arts. - Always tried to provide arts experiences from the surrounding locality for school children.

School D (Large co-educational, multi-denominational school, located in a large west of Ireland town).	Principal D (Male)	- Had varied, positive musical experiences throughout his career. - Embraced creative inputs from teachers and surrounding artists alike.
	Co-ordinator D (Female)	- Individual had a keen interest in the creative arts.
School E (Large co-educational, Catholic primary school in north Leinster).	Principal E (Male)	- School strong in sport. - Very supportive of the *CS* in the school.
	Co-ordinator E (Female)	- Teaching in the school for seven years. - Strong interest in the integrated arts.
School F (A co-educational, Catholic primary school in the midlands).	Principal F (Male)	- School had a strong history in sport. - Wanting to develop arts education further in the school.
	Co-ordinator F (Female)	- Strong background in the performing arts. - Had worked as a drama facilitator with the Department of Education.
School G (A large co-educational, multi-denominational school located in the east coast of Ireland).	Principal G (Female)	- Acknowledged that visual arts was very strong in the school but felt further supports were needed in relation to music and drama.
	School Co-ordinator G (Female)	- A qualified speech and drama teacher - Aware of the benefits of arts education in the classroom.
School H (A rural, Catholic school situated in the northeast of Ireland).	Principal H & Co-ordinator H (Female)	- Demonstrated a deep love for the creative arts. - Aware of the arts importance in a child's holistic education.

Initially, this researcher had planned to spend time these participating pilot schools engaging in semi-structured interviews and observations. However, due to the COVID[23] pandemic and ensuing restrictions, this could not happen. Instead, stakeholder semi-structured interviews took place via telephone or *Zoom*[24] (C/F Appendix G for interview timetable). The average duration of the interviews was forty-five minutes. All interviews were recorded using a small dictaphone. These were then carefully transcribed and kept in secure storage pending analysis.

[23] To reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, teachers and practitioners from all sectors had to significantly reconfigure their teaching practices at very short notice (Davis and Phillips 2021), with educators moving swiftly to teaching through remote, distance and online modes (Rapanta et al., 2020).
[24] A video communication platform

4.3 Phase 2 – Mixed methods approach

The term 'mixed methods' applies to research that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single research project (Denscombe 2007). As previously highlighted, qualitative data can take the form of words and visual images (Denscombe 2007) whereas quantitative data is primarily associated with "strategies of research such as surveys and experiments and with research methods such as questionnaires and observation" (Denscombe 2007, p. 254). Bearing this in mind, online surveys, which were both quantitative and qualitative in nature, were used to carry out the second data collection phase of this study. Using a variety of closed and open questions, the online survey was designed with the purpose of collecting a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence to provide a fuller and more complete picture of the aspect being studied (Denscombe 2007). By providing a 'fuller picture', this approach focuses on producing data that "enhances the completeness of the findings" (Denscombe 2007, p.138). In this way, data gathered from the online survey aimed to provide a triangulated, thick description of perspectives regarding the potential of an Irish arts partnership to support teachers in their teaching of arts education.

4.3.1 Online Surveys

The use of online surveys for collecting data in academic fields such as the social sciences, medicine and education is becoming increasingly common (Lefever *et al.* 2007; Shih and Fan 2008). Wiersma and Jurs (2009) also note that online surveys are a practical alternative to mailed surveys. The five primary advantages of using this method include: (1) reduced costs, (2) reduced time, (3) more flexibility in the survey design, (4) wide distribution, and its (5) unobtrusive nature (Marshall and Rossman 2006; Couper *et al.* 2007; Patten 2011; Creswell and Creswell 2018). Given the large number of targeted respondents (approximately 90 teachers in 8 participating *CS* schools) in different locations in Ireland, this method of data collection was deemed suitable for this study. However, it was notable that online surveys are not without their problems. Response rate for an online is typically lower than a paper-based survey, as is the completion of the whole survey (Reips 2002). Witmer *et al.* (1999, p.147) report that for a paper-based survey, the response could be as high as 50 per cent and as low as 20 per cent; for an online survey, it could be as low as 10 per cent or even lower. However, Solomon (2001) suggests that response rates can be improved through the use of personalised email, follow-up reminders, the use of simple formats and pre-notification of the intent to survey. Considering the focused population of this study, a higher response rate of at least

50% was anticipated. Of the 90 teachers accessed, 50 completed the survey (55% response rate).

4.3.2 Survey construction

Using *Google Forms*, the online survey (which was both quantitative and qualitative in nature - C/F Appendix H) comprised of three distinct sections – Section A, B and C. Independent variables for this study included gender, age, teaching experience, class level taught, time allocated to teaching art education. In Section A, teachers were asked to provide demographic information related to themselves and their educational background. This is in keeping with Reips (2002) 'high hurdle technique' which advocates asking for personal information which may assist in keeping participants engaged in the survey. A structured response format was followed, and teacher age and experience were elicited through multiple choice questions where the independent variable of age and years teaching experience were banded into five discrete categories. Class level taught was also requested of the respondent through the use of a multiple-choice format. Teachers were also requested to indicate the amount of time they allocated to arts education in their respective classrooms.

Section B comprised of a structured response and open-ended question format. Corresponding to questions asked during semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to respond to a number of statements in relation to arts education and the curriculum, the role of arts partnerships in supporting arts education in schools and professional development for teachers in arts education. Encompassing a 'closed' question scale which allowed for, "answers which fitted into categories established in advance by the researcher" (Denscombe, 2007, p.166), a 5 step Likert scale was utilised for the quantitative aspect of the survey. Responses were indicated by ticking boxes or rating a numbering system; *1= strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3= no opinion, 4= somewhat agree, 5= strongly agree*. The qualitative aspect of the survey included an additional comments section on four Likert items (questions 7 to 10) and a series of open-ended questions (questions 25 to 28) in Section C (required fields). Allowing space to express themselves in their own words, these questions aimed to reflect the "richness and complexity of the views held by the respondent" (Denscombe 2007, p.166), regarding how the *CS* potentially supported teachers in their teaching of arts education.

4.3.3 Pilot study

Nine primary teachers were selected to participate in a pilot study of the online survey prior to data collection. Crucial to the element of a good study design (Van Teijin and Hundley 2002), the pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicality of the survey (Cohen *et al.* 2007). The pilot volunteers were asked to evaluate the clarity of instructions, questions and layout and to indicate if they objected to answering any questions. The volunteers were also asked to indicate how long it took to complete the survey. An examination of the nine fully completed pilot surveys revealed that the instrument was the appropriate length (time taken to complete the survey was between 5-6 minutes), the wording was clear, accessible and easy to follow. Piloted teachers particularly liked the balance of Likert scale, required and open-ended additional comments questions, due to the fact that they could explain their selection.

Further analysis of the pilot instrument responses helped to reassess the relevance of the 28 questions. Aspects of the survey were reworded, reordered and reframed accordingly based on following pilot participants' recommendations. Highlighting the fact that the wording of the introductory section needed to be truncated to reflect the various sections within the questionnaire, one piloted teacher also emphasised the importance of mentioning *MICREC* ethics approval in this introductory section. Another recommendation was to extend 'years' experience' beyond 20 years and implement 31 to 40 'years' experience' instead (C/F Appendix H, Question 2). This teacher also pointed out that it was better to define arts education i.e., Drama, Visual Arts and Music once in the opening section and again in the first question, as it interfered with the overall flow of the survey (C/F Appendix H, Question 7a). To avoid any confusion, another piloted teacher recommended that the word 'competence' (i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes) be used in question 14 instead of the word 'upskilled' (C/F Appendix H, Question 14). Others drew attention to the fact that they would like the opportunity to provide additional comments on the question about whether or not a class teacher is the best person to deliver the arts education curriculum (C/F Appendix H, Questions 7a and 7b) and whether arts education subjects were best taught by an expert (C/F Appendix H, Questions 8a and 8b). These amendments were duly made to ensure the reliability and validity of the final survey was increased.

4.3.4 Recruitment for surveys

Principals of the eight schools participating in this study were contacted on 22nd February 2021, re-introducing this researcher and outlining the purpose and implications of this study (C/F Appendix I). These principals were also sent a link to access the online survey. Complete anonymity and confidentiality was also assured. Three principals requested that the survey was circulated after 19th April 2021. Reminder emails were sent to all schools regarding the deadline for return of completed surveys (C/F Appendix J). As previously highlighted, out of the 90 teachers accessed, 50 teachers completed the survey (55% response rate).

4.4 Data analysis

Data analysis in this mixed methods research included the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data separately, using quantitative and qualitative methods respectively (Creswell 2011). The 'mix' of both data types provides a thick description and tells a story where the "data from all sources are seamlessly woven to provide an integrated and holistic presentation" (Bloomberg and Volpe 2008, p.97). Due to the fact that this thesis is presented in the form of an article-based thesis, different methods of analysis were implemented for each article. Table 4.5 below presents the phases and methods of analysis used.

Table 4.5 Overview of phases and methods of analysis

Phase of analysis	**Chapter/Article**	**Participants involved**	**Method of analysis**
Phase 1	Chapter 5 (Article 2): *'Bridging the gap': the role of an arts brokers in supporting partnerships with teachers.*	4 Creative Associates (CAs) 8 Principals 8 School co-ordinators of the *CS*	Using pre-determined codes (Creswell and Creswell 2018), qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews using *nVivo.*
Phase 2	Chapter 6 (Article 3) *Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?'*	50 Classroom teachers	Online surveys analysed using *SPSS* (quantitative analysis) and *nVivo* (qualitative analysis).
Phase 3	Chapter 7 *Discussion of findings*	4 Creative Associates (CAs) 8 Principals 8 School co-ordinators of the *CS* 50 Classroom teachers	Underpinned by this study's conceptual framework, a thematic analysis of the three papers in this study, presented a synthesis of overall findings.

4.4.1 Phase 1 – Analysis of semi-structured interviews (Chapter 5/Article 2)

Analysis of the twenty semi-structured interviews involved making sense of the data (Cohen *et al.* 2007), by drawing on predetermined codes (Creswell and Creswell 2018) based on a framework put forward by Sinclair *et al.* (2015). Fulfilling a critical role in the facilitation of the teacher's engagement in arts education, Sinclair *et al.* (2015) identified a number of specific, supportive roles adopted by the arts broker. These included:

- Mentor - establishing dialogue in action and on action
- Model – artistic practice in action; reflective practice in action
- Facilitator – scaffolding pedagogical learning
- Translator – from artist to teacher, from teacher to artist
- Validator – endorsing the teacher and school's commitment to the arts

(Sinclair *et al.* 2015)

Due to the fact that sources of data from multiple stakeholders (CA's, principals and *CS* school co-ordinators) was used, a triangulation of perspectives was provided (Denscombe 2007). Using these predetermined codes (Creswell and Creswell 2018), transcribed interviews were coded and analysed using *nVivo* to ascertain whether an arts broker (in this case, the Creative Associate) can 'bridge the gap' between teachers, schools and artists, supporting the teaching of arts education in schools (C/F Appendices K, L and M). The establishment and development of stakeholder relationships was explored while emerging challenges and tensions were also debated and discussed throughout. The results of this aspect of the research are presented in Chapter 5 (Article 2)– '*Bridging the gap': The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers.*

4.4.2 Phase 2 – Analysis of surveys (Chapter 6/Article 3)

Endeavouring to capture teachers' perspectives on how an arts initiative can support the enhancement of arts education in primary schools, data was collected from the online survey web-based tool *Google Forms.* As previously highlighted, this survey was designed with the purpose of collecting a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence to provide a fuller and more complete picture of the aspect being studied (Denscombe 2007). *Section 4.4.2* has previously outlined the construction of this online survey. The statistical package *SPSS*[25] was used to examine the quantitative aspect of the survey. A companion codebook was prepared (C/F Appendix N) to provide a written description of the data, describing each variable and how it was assessed. These tools facilitated the comparison of data to identify and interpret the various responses from teachers (C/F Appendix O). The qualitative aspect of the survey included four additional comments and four open-ended questions. These were studied, reviewed for themes using *nVivo*[26] and coded by key words and ideas, which in turn were categorized into themes (C/F Appendix P). Both sets of data were merged, reviewed and categorized into themes. Validity of the data was checked to ensure that the data was recorded accurately and precisely and was appropriate for the purposes of the investigation (Denscombe 2007). The results from this aspect of the research are presented in Chapter 6 (Article 3) - *Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?'*

[25] *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)* is a professional analysis programme available from IBM (Creswell and Creswell 2018).
[26] *NVivo* is a software program used for qualitative and mixed-methods research. Specifically, it is used for the analysis of unstructured text, audio, video, and image data, including interviews, focus groups, surveys, social media, and journal articles.

4.4.3 Phase 3 - Analysis of overall findings

Chapter 7 presents a synthesis of the overall research findings. Underpinned by the study's conceptual framework (Chapter 3), a thematic analysis of a series of three papers presented in this thesis was undertaken. Synopsized as "noting patterns and themes which may stem from repeated themes and causes or explanations or constructs" (Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.368), this method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.79) was implemented using *nVivo* software. Guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of thematic analysis (C/F Appendix Q), three interrelated, macro-themes emerged from the analysed data. Firstly, collated data, the study's three articles and conceptual framework were re-read and annotated (C/F Appendices K and L). Initial codes were generated from the analysis of these documents. The third and fourth stage involved searching for and reviewing themes within the data, followed by step five which involved the defining and naming of three, inter-related macro themes (C/F Appendices R and S). The final step in the thematic analysis process involved producing a report of the analysis (C/F Appendices T and U). This is presented and discussed in Chapter 7 – *Discussion of Findings*.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Before embarking on the proposed research and data collection process, this researcher took the ethical implications of this research, and the effect this project may have had on participants, into account. Ethics can be defined as "a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others and that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better" (Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.58). Therefore, it was important that the participants' dignity as human beings was preserved. Prior to recruitment of interview and survey participants, ethical approval for the study was granted by *Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee* (MIREC), Limerick, Ireland (C/F Appendix V). Initially the participants involved were approached in a sensitive way by this researcher to ensure that they were willing to become involved in this project. Participants were assured from the outset that participation in the project was entirely voluntary and that the research would be carried out in a sensitive and non-stressful manner. Participants were also made aware that they had the right to cease participation at any time and without the need to provide a reason up until the commencement of data analysis.

As previously highlighted, an established relationship with a *CA*[27] allowed for the navigation of an initial telephone meeting with the *CS* Education Advisors which outlined the scope, benefits, participation, methods and possible risks of the project. On completion of the project, a summary of the main findings would also be provided to the *CS* Education Advisors. Creative Associates, corresponding principals and *CS* school co-ordinators were then approached via email and telephone to ascertain whether they were willing to be interviewed as part of this investigative study. The scope of, and reason for the project and their required involvement in the study, was also outlined (C/F Appendix W). Anonymity and confidentiality was assured at all times and pseudonyms were used throughout. This researcher offered to answer questions at any time and encouraged participants to ask questions also.

Similarly, anonymity and confidentiality was assured for all survey participants. Participants were informed that the survey would take approximately 5-6 minutes to complete and were assured that they could withdraw from partaking in the research at any time. All participants were informed that this thesis would be available for public perusal in journal articles and in Mary Immaculate College Library, Limerick. There were no known risks to participants in this study. Every effort was made to preserve the identity of the institutions involved in the research. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews were anonymised and the audio-recording was deleted following transcription. Every effort was made to ensure that participants were not identified or identifiable in the final thesis or in any conference paper or publications arising from the research. Throughout the duration of this project, raw data gathered from semi-structured interviews was secured in a locked drawer, while soft data of same was encrypted and password protected on a password protected computer. Following the completion of this study, it will be kept in line with Mary Immaculate College, Limerick policy requirements.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a summary of this study's research methodology. Opening with a review of the research questions, a rationale was offered for the implementation of a multi-site case study which utilises a mixed-method approach. Providing a thick description, this investigative study was based on the triangulation of data from twenty semi-structured

[27] Creative Associates are a mix of artists with a background in education or teachers with a background in the arts, whose role is to implement the Creative Schools framework across the school and support and guide their efforts.

interviews and fifty online surveys. A description was given of the participant samples and interview and survey participants were identified and profiled. Construction and dissemination of semi-structured interviews was discussed in detail and online survey instrumentation and design was presented and explored. The chapter also included some the of the literature supporting the rationale behind the choice of research design and methodological tools. Due to the fact that this thesis is presented in the form of an article-based thesis, the manner in which the data sets for each article was managed, analysed and synthesised was also explained. The chapter concluded with an overview of this study's ethical considerations. Due to the nature and structure of this article-based thesis, the implications of this study's findings will be examined and discussed in each of the subsequent chapters (Chapter 5 and 6). Chapter 7 will provide a synthesis of the overall findings. Conclusions and implications of these findings will also be drawn in the final chapter (Chapter 8). Research limitations and recommendations for further research will also be identified.

Chapter 5

'Bridging the gap': The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers

Preamble

The following article examines the role of the Creative Associate – an arts broker within the *CS.* Using a framework put forward by Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret (2015), the support provided by the CA was critically analysed. The establishment and development of stakeholder relationships was explored while emerging challenges were debated and discussed. Findings from this article could contribute to the development of the role of the CA, leading to increased impact and sustainability of arts partnerships such as the *CS* programme. This is an accepted manuscript of an article which has been peer reviewed and published in *Arts Education and Policy Review*[28] (February 18, 2022). The following is the citation for this article:

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Statement of authorship:
I hereby declare that I, Edel Fahy am the principal author of this article. The following statements outline my contributions to the work:
• Substantial contributions to the conception and design of the work; the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of data for the work; AND
• Drafting the work and revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
• Final approval of the version to be published; AND
• Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved (ICMJE 2014).

[28] This journal uses American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition (2020) for citing and formatting reference entries.

‘Bridging the gap’: The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers

Abstract

Arts partnerships involving teachers, artists and arts organisations continue to be popular as a means of delivering arts education. Acting as an intermediary between schools and artists, arts brokers can be crucial to the successful implementation of these partnerships. Characterized as individuals who can act as channels for innovative practice, arts brokers can potentially support teachers to take risks, build capacity for reflection and develop agency as arts practitioners. This article examines the role of the Creative Associate – an arts broker within an Irish arts partnership *(Creative Schools-Scoileanna Íldánacha)*. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews in a purposive sample of eight Irish primary schools. Using a framework put forward by Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret (2015), the support provided by the arts broker is critically analyzed. The establishment and development of stakeholder relationships is explored while emerging challenges are debated and discussed. Findings from this study indicated that the success of the arts broker is underpinned by their ability to build and nurture relationships. By ‘bridging the gap’ between teachers, schools and artists, this article argues that arts brokers can ensure partnerships have a sustained, meaningful impact on the enhancement of arts education in schools.

Keywords: arts education; arts partnerships; support; teachers; arts broker.

5.0 Introduction

Arts partnerships involving teachers, artists and arts organisations continue to be popular as a means of delivering arts education. Within the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI, 1999), arts education comprises the visual arts, music and drama curricula, enabling children “to develop their creative and imaginative capacities through artistic expression and response” (GoI, 1999, p.35). Emphasising the fact that arts education is increasingly evolving towards a more collaborative practice, policy discourses such as ‘collaboration’, ‘partnership’, and the ‘teaching artist’ (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018) have gained momentum in national and international educational settings. The arts broker can be crucial to the successful implementation of these partnerships. Yielding enough distance to bring a different perspective, but also enough legitimacy to be listened to (Wenger, 1998), arts brokers can be characterized as individuals who can act as channels or conduits for innovative practice

(Eckert, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Acting as an intermediary between teachers, artists and schools, arts brokers can also provide schools with scaffolds for new learning, supporting teachers to take risks and develop agency as arts practitioners (Sinclair et al., 2015). Therefore, this article will examine the supportive role of the Creative Associate (CA), an arts broker within an Irish arts partnership *Creative Schools-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)*, investigating whether they can 'bridge the gap' between schools, teachers and artists, so that spaces and opportunities are created for new learning to occur (Sinclair et al., 2015).

Due to the fact that *CS* is a relatively new programme (2018), very little research has been undertaken on this initiative or on the role of the CA to date. It is also worth noting that not all arts partnerships employ arts brokers to facilitate these initiatives. Indeed, very little research has been done on the role of an arts broker in arts partnerships internationally. Therefore, it is vital that this investigation happens alongside the development of the *CS* programme. Using a framework put forward by Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret (2015), the support provided by the arts broker was critically analyzed in this Irish study. The establishment and development of stakeholder relationships was explored while emerging challenges and tensions were also debated and discussed. Findings from this study could contribute to the development of the role of the arts broker in further supporting teachers, ensuring that partnerships such as the *CS,* have a lasting and sustained impact on the delivery of arts education in schools.

5.1 Arts partnerships in schools

In recent years, arts partnerships have gained momentum in national and international educational settings. In the main, this has meant artists and companies offering pre-determined workshops to schools. These types of involvement have been found to be useful and interesting but can have limited impact on teaching and learning (Docherty and Harland, 2001; Harland et al., 2005; Rowe et al., 2004; Seidel et al., 2002). However, other approaches also exist. Providing opportunities "to create something bigger than ourselves, through the creative-collaborative process" (Bresler, 2018, p.ix), arts partnerships can be hugely advantageous to schools, teachers, children, young people and broader communities (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018). These collaborative, respectful and equity-based partnerships (Bresler, 2018; Holdus, 2018) can also provide students with the opportunity to interact meaningfully with professional artists, which can have a significant, positive impact on student engagement (Jeanneret, 2011).

However, the term 'partnership' can also be highly problematic (Partington, 2018). Hanley (2003) argues that in the long term, partnerships can be detrimental to the quality of arts education. Given the fact that they often claim to have negative assumptions about their abilities in the arts which can contribute to their apprehension about engaging in future arts practices (Leonard & Adeyanjuo, 2016), many generalist teachers find themselves with limited expertise and support in the arts (Kind et al., 2007). Teachers can sometimes become deskilled when surrounded by artists who are characterised by creativity, risk-taking and divergent thinking (Hanley, 2003). Hanley (2003) goes on to say that for high quality arts education to be effective, it needs to be continuous, sequential and focussed on skill development and process. In this way, teachers benefit when they see the artists as an equal and when sessions are ongoing (Snook & Buck, 2014), ensuring the learning is "powerful, long lasting and sustainable" (Wolf, 2008, p.92). With this in mind, arts partnerships have frequently acted as "professional development opportunities for teachers wishing to improve their arts education and practice" (Kind et al., 2007, p. 840). Creating unique learning opportunities for teachers in arts education (Kenny & Morrissey, 2016), the arts broker could be pivotal to the success of arts partnerships in schools. By brokering and developing strong connections between stakeholders such as local artists, institutions and organisations (Hall & Thomson, 2021), the arts broker has the potential to curate a shared purpose that is crucial in supporting teacher and schools in arts education.

5.2 The role of the arts broker

5.2.1 Developing relationships

Common to nearly all collaborative arts partnerships are the time and effort necessary to debate and negotiate goals and objectives. Throughout the process of distilling one common purpose, it takes political know-how and negotiating skills to make sure all groups stay 'on board' (Froehlich, 2018). Consequently, this often gives rise to tensions around responsibilities within arts education and arts-in-education initiatives (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018). Developing relationships of trust and collaboration between teachers and artists who are "working together for the mutual benefit of all partners" (Hanley, 2003, p.11), the arts broker can be key to managing these challenges and tensions.

However, a difference in perspective can be initially challenging for all stakeholders involved. While arts brokers can prioritise the challenge of the unknown and the unpredictability of learning, teachers may also have differing conceptions of creativity

(Maddock et al., 2007). Bearing this in mind, Hanley (2003, p.11) draws our attention to the fact that the combination of "sound pedagogical knowledge" required to mentor or broker successfully, is more likely to be found among teachers who are artists, or who have significant expertise in arts education. Sometimes allocated the role of helpers, guards or mediators (Christophersen, 2013), the classroom teacher's expertise tends to be under-utilised in schools (Hanley, 2003). Additionally, as highlighted by Morrissey and Kenny (2021, p.5), these teachers with a "foot in both camps" are well placed to mediate the tensions which may arise between teacher and artist perspectives. Moreover, as emphasized by Snook and Buck (2014, p.22) teachers prefer "when a colleague with similar classroom experience" is involved in the provision of continual professional development.

The success of partnerships can also depend on the readiness of school leadership and staff to 'buy-in' to the programme in question (Maddock et al., 2007). A "distinctive sense of mutual ownership, shared experience and co-learning" (Kenny & Morrissey, 2016, p.88) can also be key to the success of in-school partnerships. In negotiating and maintaining strong associations, while overseeing the implementation of an arts partnership, arts brokers can potentially overcome underlying issues such as these (Malin & Brown, 2019), building foundational relationships upon which later pedagogical work can be founded (Sinclair et al., 2015).

5.2.2 Brokering experiences

In their research, Sinclair et al., (2015) discuss the translator aspect of the arts broker role. With the potential to be highly generative (Hall & Thomson, 2021), the translator aspect of this role can also manifest itself in the form of a 'knowledge broker'. Therefore, for the purposes of clarity, the translator aspect of the role will be critically analysed from a brokerage perspective in this article.

As pivotal as the artists, but sometimes less visible (Sinclair et al., 2015), arts brokers have the capacity to broker arts experiences through models of professional learning that are tailored to best serve the schools they work in (Sinclair et al., 2015). Demonstrating "a high degree of strategic judgement" (Sefton-Greene, 2011, p. 41), arts brokers can facilitate opportunities for teachers to engage with artists, artist-mediated materials and outside creative organisations, expanding teachers' repertoire of creative pedagogical practices (Cremin, 2015). They also have the capacity to address issues of continuity and progression regarding the arts education curriculum (Hanley, 2003; Morrissey & Kenny, 2021; Snook &

Buck, 2014), allowing teachers to experience the pedagogy of open-ended, critical aesthetic inquiry (Hall & Thomson, 2021).

5.2.3 Supporting teachers

Research would indicate that, through a school's engagement with an arts partnership, a focus should be on developing creative teaching techniques while increasing teachers' knowledge and understanding of arts processes and aesthetic qualities (Kenny & Morrissey, 2020; Morrissey & Kenny, 2021; Oreck, 2006). Rather than transforming classroom teachers into artists, the most successful collaborations occur where stakeholders journey together "in their learning respecting each other's varied inputs, shared experiences, valued differing strengths and invested in relationship-building" (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018, p.13). Moreover, a two-way flow of ideas and knowledge exchange between stakeholders has emerged in previous studies as a significant enabler of partnerships (Kenny & Morrissey, 2016; Partington, 2018; Wolf, 2008).

With this in mind, the arts broker has the potential to act a catalyst for ongoing professional learning opportunities and experiences in arts education for teachers (Sinclair et al., 2015). Having 'someone from the outside' enter the classroom has the potential to "alter" the space in a myriad of ways (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018; Kenny, 2020). These "disturbances" can be advantageous for schools, teachers, children as well was the artists themselves in offering key learning and development opportunities (Morrissey & Kenny, 2020). Strong relationships between arts brokers and schools, coupled with the acquisition of new skills and the development of greater teacher confidence in leading creative activities (Griffiths & Woolf, 2009) could provide "professional development opportunities for teachers wishing to improve their arts education and practice" (Kind et al., 2007, p.840). This in turn could contribute to developing school policies and sustainable strategies for ongoing creative learning, even when arts partnerships have ceased in schools.

Several of these aspects of this brokerage role can be identified in the Creative Agent - an arts broker in the *Creative Partnerships (CP)* programme. *CP* aimed to be different from previous artist-in-schools projects by offering opportunities for longer-term, sustainable partnerships between schools and the broader community in England and Wales (*Creative Partnerships* website, 2004). Building partnerships between schools and the cultural sector (Hall & Thomson, 2021), Creative Agents worked with school staff to "examine and identify continuing professional development opportunities for staff who wish to extend and explore their creative skills" (Clennon, 2009, p.301). By developing positive collaborative working

relationships between teachers and artists, Creative Agents also enabled teachers to gain confidence as creative professionals who were more prepared to take risks (Galton, 2010). They also worked as translators or interpreters, translating the formal demands of programme structure and compliance with its work on the ground (Sefton-Greene, 2011).

5.3 An Irish Arts Partnership - *Creative Schools-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)*

Many parallels can be drawn between *Creative Partnerships (CP)* and *Creative Schools-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS).* Established in 2018, the *CS* is a flagship initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme and is led by the Arts Council in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which aims to promote the arts and creativity, in initially, 150 schools[29]. Aiming to promote the arts and creativity in schools through a range of collaborative opportunities, the *CS* long-term aim is for "every school to be supported to fully embrace the arts and creativity, ensuring a positive experience and strong outcomes for children and young people" (*The Arts Council* website, 2022).

Similar to the Creative Agent in *CP,* each participating pilot school has the services of a Creative Associate (CA) for nine days across the year and a small grant to help them implement their plans. Coming from a range of creative professionals and educators with an understanding of the arts and creativity, the CA aims to match and address the needs of schools to arts and creative opportunities in their locality (*The Arts Council* website, 2022). Their broad and multi-faceted role involves establishing a rapport with schools to support effective working relationships and using creative approaches and techniques to help schools understand their current engagement with the arts and creativity (*The Arts Council* website, 2022)[30]. Therefore, throughout this article we investigate the role of the CA as an arts broker and how they can support teachers and schools in their enhancement and delivery of arts education.

[29] Since its inception, 462 schools including primary, post primary schools, DEIS (Delivering Equality of opportunity in Schools) and special schools (schools catering for children with special needs) have joined the initiative.

[30] These needs may include (but not limited to): working with artists and/or creative practitioners; exploring creative ways to teach and learn; engaging with local arts and creative organisations; creative professional development for teachers in the arts and providing workshop, exhibition or performance opportunities for children (*CS* Guidelines, 2022).

5.4 Synopsis of literature and research questions

Reviewed literature indicated that a key aim of long-term and sustainable arts partnerships was to build trust and understanding among the partners (Wolf, 2008). By brokering and developing strong connections between stakeholders such as local artists, institutions and organisations (Hall & Thomson, 2021), the arts broker could have the potential to curate a shared purpose that is crucial in supporting teachers and schools in arts education. The arts broker could also be key to managing challenges and tensions which may arise in an arts partnership (Hanley, 2003), as well as potentially acting a catalyst for ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers (Sinclair et al., 2015). Findings from this study could contribute to the development of the role of the arts broker, leading to increased impact and sustainability of arts partnerships such as the *CS* program. With this in mind, this study sought to explore the following research questions:

1. How can the CA 'bridge the gap' to support teachers in their enhancement of arts education?
2. What were the success and challenges which potentially arose as a result of pilot schools' working alongside the CA as an integral part of their involvement with the *CS?*
3. How can these pilot schools further inform and develop the support offered by the CA to teachers in arts education?

5.5 Methodology

A multi-site case study, this research was conducted in a purposive sample of eight primary schools. This qualitative investigation engaged twenty stakeholders in semi-structured interviews. These stakeholders included four CAs, eight principals and eight school co-ordinators of the *CS.* Due to the fact that this multi-site case study approach used sources of data from multiple stakeholders, a triangulation of perspectives was provided (Denscombe, 2007). As the primary focus for this study was to investigate the role of the CA in supporting Irish primary teachers and schools in arts education, the interview schedule focussed on certain themes and questions including: arts education and the curriculum; the role of arts partnerships in supporting arts education in schools; development of stakeholder relationships in arts partnerships and professional development for teachers in arts education.

This study draws on a framework put forward by Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret (2015) which identifies a number of specific, supportive roles adopted by an arts broker. Under the

following headings, transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed using *nVivo* [31]software (C/F Appendices I, J and K):

- Mentor - establishing dialogue in action and on action
- Model – artistic practice in action; reflective practice in action
- Facilitator – scaffolding pedagogical learning
- Translator – from artist to teacher, from teacher to artist
- Validator – endorsing the teacher and school's commitment to the arts

(Sinclair et al., 2015)

Pseudonyms were used throughout the study to protect the anonymity of the participants. The following tables provide the profile of the twenty interviewees – five were male and fifteen were female. Table 5.6 provides an overview of CA profiles while table 5.7 provides an overview of principals and school co-ordinators of the *CS.*

Table 5.6 Participant profiles of CAs

Creative Associate/ Gender	**Associated School(s)**	**Background Information**
Creative Associate 1 (Male)	School A School B	- Working in schools on the east coast of Ireland. - A primary school teacher, specialising in Special Education. - Had performed, written and produced theatre for children. - An actor, director, writer and producer working in theatre, screen and television.
Creative Associate 2 (Female)	School C School D	- Working in schools on the west coast of Ireland. - A visual artist, researcher and art educator. - Currently pursuing a PhD in philosophy and the aesthetic experience of drawing.
Creative Associate 3 (Female)	School E School F	- Working in schools in the midlands of Ireland. - An art educator and craft facilitator and had worked on many inter-generational and multidisciplinary community arts projects.

[31] NVivo is a software program used for qualitative and mixed-methods research. Specifically, it is used for the analysis of unstructured text, audio, video, and image data, including (but not limited to) interviews, focus groups, surveys, social media, and journal articles.

Creative Associate 4 (Female)	School G School H	- Working in schools on the east coast of Ireland. - A theatre artist and educator and had worked in the fields of arts and disability, community drama facilitation & socially engaged theatre practice.

Table 5.7 Participant profiles of principals and school co-ordinators of the *CS*

School/ Description	**Position / Gender**	**Background Information**
School A (Large, co-educational school located in urban Leinster)	Principal A (Female)	- An advocate of placing strong emphasis on arts education in this school. - working in this school since she qualified as a teacher.
	Co-ordinator A (Male)	- Teaching in this school since 2018. - Completed an undergraduate degree in Music before going on to retrain as a primary teacher.
School B (Catholic girls' school, located in suburban Leinster)	Principal B (Female)	- Strong interest in the creative arts, particularly music and directs the school choir.
	Co-ordinator B (Female)	- Strong interest in the arts. - Schools' involvement in *CS* would shift focus back onto the arts in the school.
School C (Rural, co-educational Catholic, primary school in the west of Ireland).	Principal C & Co-ordinator C (Female)	- Had a strong love of the arts. - Always tried to provide arts experiences from the surrounding locality for school children.
School D (Large co-educational, multi-denominational school, located in a large west of Ireland town).	Principal D (Male)	- Had a varied, positive musical experiences throughout his career. - Embraced creative inputs from teachers and surrounding artists alike.
	Co-ordinator D (Female)	- Individual had a keen interest in the - creative arts
School E (Large co-educational, Catholic primary school in north Leinster).	Principal E (Male)	- School strong in sport. - Very supportive of the *CS* in the school.
	Co-ordinator E (Female)	- Teaching in the school for seven years. - Strong interest in the integrated arts.

School F (A co-educational, Catholic primary school in the midlands).	Principal F (Male)	- School had a strong history in sport. Wanting to develop arts education further in the school.
	Co-ordinator F (Female)	- Strong background in the performing arts. - Had worked as a drama facilitator with the Department of Education.
School G (A large co-educational, multi-denominational school located in the east coast of Ireland).	Principal G (Female)	- Acknowledged that visual arts was very strong in the school but felt further supports were needed in relation to music and drama.
	School Co-ordinator G (Female)	- A qualified speech and drama teacher. - Aware of the benefits of arts education in the classroom.
School H (A rural, Catholic school, situated in the northeast of Ireland).	Principal H & Co-ordinator H (Female)	- Demonstrated a deep love for the creative arts. - Aware of the arts importance in a child's holistic education.

5.6 Findings

Using the framework put forward by Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret (2015), the support provided by the CA was critically analyzed to ascertain whether they can 'bridge the gap' between teachers, schools and artists, within an arts partnership. The establishment and development of stakeholder relationships was explored while emerging challenges and tensions were also debated and discussed throughout.

5.6.1 Creative Associate as mentor

Working in a supportive, mentoring capacity, school co-ordinators spoke about the CAs ability to lead and guide them through the *CS* process. Co-ordinator A noted that, "from the beginning….our CA was a great support all the way through, he had a step-by-step approach… to show me what the process was about." Co-ordinator E also highlighted that their CA listened, "to the needs of the school and the needs of the teachers.... they're just been really good at getting to the bottom of what we need." Similarly, principals were complimentary of their CAs ability to work in a mentoring capacity to elicit schools' needs, "teasing out what our emphasis should be, or what the areas that we should be working on were" (Principal E) and tailor resources accordingly.

5.6.1.1 A catalyst for learning

Acting as a catalyst for ongoing professional learning opportunities and experiences for teachers (Sinclair et al., 2015), the CA can play an integral role regarding the development of teacher confidence. Viewing her role as one of a consultant, CA 2 endeavoured to "make things happen", encouraging schools "to challenge their thinking around things" (CA 2). She went on to explain that,

> It's about developing critical thinking, giving them confidence in being able to access an artist, or how to develop projects, or how to develop workshops. I think it's about arming the teachers with some confidence, some real practical knowledge….so they understand the value of what they're doing and why they're doing it, but also bringing in experts who can elevate and upskill the teachers and give them confidence (CA 2).

CA 3 was also of a similar viewpoint, defining CAs as "people who are always looking for solutions" (CA 3). Emphasizing that "it's not beyond the skills of anybody" (CA 1), CAs were aware of the potential of working in mentoring capacity, demonstrating to teachers that "you can learn in different ways…. and this gives them confidence " (CA 2). In this way, CAs prioritised the "challenge of the unknown and the unpredictability of learning" orienting teachers away from the "predictable and the familiar" (Maddock et al., 2007, p.51).

5.6.1.2 On-going mentoring support - embedding and sustaining the initiative

CAs were very clear in their views regarding embedding the initiative. CA 4 believed that the way forward in any outside arts engagement, "involves incorporating an element of continual professional development (CPD), upskilling and confidence building in teachers." CA 2 was also realistic in her views regarding whether the initiative had been embedded in schools, noting that arts education in schools had "been enhanced and could be built upon." However, she warned "that this spark could die quickly if not nurtured" (CA 2). Principal E reiterated this noting,

> There's no point in putting all the energy and effort into something like the *CS.* And then once the CA goes, the initiative goes. That it can't be just by the experts, any kind of sustainable change has to come from the ground up. Change in any environment takes time to embed….I think if it could be more sustained approach over a longer period of time, in terms of it becoming part and parcel of the culture of the school" (Principal E).

Regarding ongoing support, principals and school co-ordinators believed that CAs should continue in a mentoring, supportive capacity, even after the *CS* had ceased in schools. In this way, Principal H believed that the structure employed by the programme, "would lead to

even further success because you have that goal in mind." Realistic that the initiative will have to be "school led at the end of the day", Principal E was in agreement noting, "it's that having the access to that expertise, even when the programme ends…. it just builds the capacity of the school to be able to deliver on the arts." Believing that having ongoing support was vital to the embedding and sustainment of the initiative, Co-ordinator D reiterated this noting that,

> I think we need still support from these people (their CA); even just to have access to the arts outside of school. I hate to say that word but it's kind of like we are tucked away in the world of school…. Our CA has been able to show us a way and help us to explore that wider realm….once somebody opens one door and you start wandering around, you just get curious...

5.6.2 Creative Associate as model

Bringing their expertise and experience to their role, CAs were aware of the impact that their artistic and reflective practice had on schools, ensuring "even the most steadfast, non-interested-in-arts teacher would be persuaded to understand what this process is about" (CA 1). Aware that there was "this fear or…. an element of uncertainty or potential disruption surrounding the arts" (CA 1), CA 1 did "some drama warm-ups with the staff just to kind of 'get to know you' activities. And everybody really enjoyed it" (Co-ordinator B). In this way, CA 1 was able to build a rapport with staff which was paramount to ensuring the initiative in this school was a success. Observing the positive impact on building relationships through staff engagement in these immersive modelling experiences, principal B noted, "when CA 1 came in and he did the whole thing with staff...that was very good and done very nicely. ...People didn't feel under attack. It was just pitched correctly...".

5.6.2.1 Voice and perspective of an 'outsider'

All CAs had worked in many different educational settings in relation to arts education and were unreservedly strong in their beliefs in the affirming and positive benefits of arts education. Interestingly, CA 1 was the only associate interviewed who had trained as primary teacher. Bringing his background and knowledge of teaching to the role, CA 1 acknowledged that, "primary school teachers are much more used to a more democratic fluid relationship. So, I always have that as my core value when I go in." He explained that,

> When I'm working in classrooms, I'm always trying to be creative and use the arts wherever I can….I explain to them (the teachers), 'I'm coming in here to work with you…let's work

> together on this and you'll pick up stuff from me that might then be useful across your curriculum'. It would be difficult to get artists to do that unless they have some experience of education themselves (CA 1).

Schools who collaborated and worked alongside this CA viewed his primary teaching experience as a great asset. Principal B went on to explain,

> I think they just understand the workings, number one, of the primary teachers and how we think, and number two, they understand the little ones. Now, that's not a criticism, I'm sure there's fantastic other people who are not primary teachers who are the arts and liaison persons, but I do think there's an added benefit for us that he was a primary teacher.

This aligns with findings by Snook and Buck (2014), who noted that teachers prefer when a colleague with similar classroom experience is involved in the provision of continual professional development.

The impact and influence of having an outsider coming in to model new ideas, approaches and fresh perspectives was also very appealing to staff. Teachers really liked the idea of "someone else coming in" (CA 1) with a different viewpoint and perspective. Co-ordinator A reiterated this noting, "to have someone like that to come in, and the way they engage with the staff getting staff interested, I feel that has been the best part." This resonates with research regarding the impact of 'someone from the outside' who can potentially make things happen and add elements of "surprise, tension and/or interest" (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018, p.3). Co-ordinator D also drew attention to the creative energy that the CAs exuded and how they used this in a positive manner to engage and present new ideas to schools and their staff. She explained, "even when they step across the threshold of a room, they have a certain aura, or energy….It starts there from them" (Co-ordinator D). Although modelling their artistic practice in action was only a "a very small part of the initiative" (CA 4), co-ordinators spoke about how teachers looked forward to, and placed value on, when their CA came in and worked with their classes. This gave teachers an opportunity to observe them in action, providing valuable professional development in the arts. Highlighting the positive impact of collaborative working relationships between teachers and arts brokers (Galton, 2010), teachers were provided with opportunities to "pick up some skills and confidence through that process" (CA 1). In this way, the CA could enable teachers to become risk-takers and more confident as creative professionals, allowing new directional learning to take place (Galton, 2010).

However, tensions and challenges sometimes emerged in schools due to fact that the CA and the partnership school were not always the 'right fit'. Although principal G and co-ordinator G acknowledged that their CA was "great, very involved and very enthusiastic" the fact that she wasn't a primary school teacher and didn't fully understand what they needed as school, came to the fore on more than one occasion. A difference in mindset regarding differing perceptions of creativity (Maddock et al., 2007) was also apparent. A disparity between how teachers and CAs facilitated the creative process emerged, with co-ordinator G emphasizing that, "primary school teachers are goal driven - I suppose she was more creative about things". Co-ordinator G went on to explain,

> I think she was just a little bit too loosely creative for the rigors of a primary school. And we have schedules to stick to. I think if she'd had primary school experience or any sort of teaching experience, she'd know what we need as a school and as a teacher…we have a certain level of expectation at the end of it.

This is in stark contrast with responses discussed earlier, from principals and co-ordinators who had collaborated alongside a CA who had trained as a primary teacher. It was also apparent that this school in question, needed a CA who had experience as a primary teacher. Both principal G and co-ordinator G alluded to an outside drama facilitator who, coming from a teaching background, "understood teachers….she knew how to enthuse us and get us onboard. She gave people the confidence to try things out…and a few things to start their drama toolkit" (Principal G). This resonates with Hanley's work (2003, p.11) which revealed that "sound pedagogical knowledge" required to mentor successfully is more likely to be found among teachers who are artists, or who have significant expertise in arts education. Co-ordinator G also raised a very important question regarding the legacy and sustainability of the initiative noting that, "it might be better if time was spent training the person who's already in the school, so that the training is valuable and stays within the school and it's not lost."

5.6.3 Creative Associate as facilitator

Viewing themselves as a "critical friend, a project manager, and a consultant of sorts to the school" (CA 4), the CA can potentially facilitate and scaffold pedagogical learning, "guiding schools on their journey" (CA 2). Acutely aware of the fact that it takes political know-how and negotiating skills to make all groups stay "on board" (Froehlich, 2018), CA 4 compared an ordinary artist engagement "where there's no facilitator of that understanding or that

relationship" to the *CS.* Here she emphasized the value of the CA role noting, "that's the benefit of the CA, of saying, 'Now, what if... could we get the teachers to join in this workshop, would that be okay'." There to "guide the school through the process in a meaningful way" (CA 4), this CA was in a pivotal position to facilitate an enhanced mutual understanding between stakeholders. She believed that there had to be a "whole school approach with the CA facilitating artist engagement, but with a view to thinking, how does this fit into the jigsaw of the wider school, and how can we make it the most meaningful engagement possible?" (CA 4). Aligning with findings discussed by Hall and Thomson (2021) regarding the development of strong relationships between stakeholders leading to the curation of a shared purpose, CA 4 further highlighted that,

> You're curating the artist's involvement in this project management role, so they're not just coming in fly-by-night, landing from a spaceship, or like Mary Poppins down on the umbrella, and then sprinkling their magic and heading back off again, they are having to sit and meet with you, and plan their engagement really robustly (CA 4).

Emphasizing that "teachers need to be empowered by their own practice….which can be supported artists to an extent", CA 4 explained how one of her schools "made CPD in drama a cornerstone of their engagement in the initiative" (CA 4). Supported by this CA, this school then went on to create a teacher professional community with other schools in the area, so that "the learning was ongoing, sustained and embedded" (CA 4). This is turn, had an impact on teachers view of "the arts, of creativity, on their importance and value" (CA 4).

5.6.3.1 Facilitating and developing relationships.

Drawing our attention to the fact that, it's "all built on relationships and on trust …you have to make sure that they can work together again" (CA 3), successful initiatives can often depend on the ability of stakeholders to work alongside each other (Kind et al., 2007). "Like the tour guide with the umbrella", principal E highlighted that,

> I think that relationship we've built with the CA is very valuable. And the fact that they can look at the school and the needs of that specific school and then work to a plan for that individual, specific school. I think that's a real benefit (Principal E).

CA 4 went to emphasise that, "the relationship building piece with your school is massive, because you are the foot soldier on the ground for the initiative, and it is really important that they like you, and that they get on with you" (CA 4). CA 2 further reiterated this noting, "CAs…have to be really experienced with dealing with people because this is a job about

people, more than it is a job about art, as a CA" (CA 2). Having this skill set enabled CAs "to build upon relationships with local arts infrastructure, and local practitioners" (CA 4), maintaining and sustaining successful collaborations. This corroborates with findings by Sefton-Greene (2011) who highlighted the importance of developing trust between key school personnel, building foundational relationships upon which later pedagogical work can be founded (Sinclair et al., 2015).

5.6.3.2 Facilitating the completion of paper-work

Another key aspect of the CA's role is the development and facilitation of the *Creative School Planning Framework*[32]. Tapping into their skills of organization, persuasion and administrative management (Sefton-Greene, 2011), the CA must once again, ensure "all the different stakeholders" (CA 3) are 'on board' with the framework. Starting with an assessment of the school "to find out where they are at" (CA 3), CA 3 explained that,

> We engage all stakeholders in different types of consultations, in an effort to do it as creatively as possible, to create the school plan. Then we support schools in their implementation of it, then we celebrate it.

CA 4 stressed the importance of this facilitation process noting that the creation of the plan "be with a view to embedding sustaining the initiative within the school" (CA 4). Principals and co-ordinators alike, were also appreciative of the collaborative facilitation process put in place to complete the school plan. Interestingly, the completion of this paperwork also seemed to be a source of tension throughout the journey, no matter how effective or collaborative the facilitation process was. Principal G observed that there seemed to be "a lot of meetings" regarding paperwork. However, she conceded that, "her (CA's) hands were tied, as in, she had to submit these in order for us to get to the next phase. So, there was a process involved, restricting probably what she might have done naturally."

[32] The Creative Associates also work closely with the school community to develop a Creative School Planning Framework for each school. This framework responds to the ideas, needs and opportunities of each school with the aim of building the arts and creativity across as many aspects as possible of the day-to-day school life of pupils. The structure of this framework is as follows: *Understand:* This stage supports schools to reflect honestly about its starting point. *Develop:* This stage then responds to the school's needs and priorities, identifying challenges that will help schools develop from their current starting point. *Celebrate:* Finally, schools 'celebrate' their engagement their achievements and acknowledge the outcomes and impacts of the initiative on pupil learning and development and on teacher/staff learning and development (*The Arts Council* website, 2022).

5.6.3.3 Facilitating 'buy in'

Highlighting the importance of school leadership 'buying-into' an arts partnership (Kenny & Morrissey, 2016), most principals were strong advocates of the initiative and the work carried out by their CA, noting that they were "pivotal to the success of the initiative in our school" (Principal A). However, tensions and challenges sometimes arose due to lack of 'buy-in' from other principals and staff alike. Acknowledging the "complex, layered" nature of working with schools, CA 4 went on to explain that,

> In the larger schools, buy-in from the wider school community is a little bit more challenging, because you're trying to figure out how to reach them, or get them to feel that this initiative is for them. I would find that the accessibility of leadership in management to you, as the creative associate, can sometimes be a good barometer for how bought-in the school is, or are. So, leadership and management buy-in is really important.

She also emphasised that, "a lot of schools applied for the initiative thinking that it was something else", highlighting that,

> They thought were going to get an artist in residence for nine days. A lot of them didn't expect that it was going to be this journey, this framework. So sometimes, there wasn't that buy-in from management, and there was that feeling of that they hadn't signed up for this (CA 4).

Because of this, CA 4 sometimes found it difficult to meet with principals, schedule a meeting or even provide updates regarding the progress of the initiative at staff meetings due to "lack of time." CA 3 also felt the impact of lack of 'buy-in' from school staff and management. She described having conversations with principals "not knowing which way it's going to go... that this principal is going to put an obstacle in front of everything." She also spoke about the politics which may exist in some schools, noting that, "you have to be really careful how to negotiate" due to the fact that there could be a lot of personal tensions between people in schools. In navigating these challenges, CA's political know-how and negotiation skills (Froelich, 2018) came to the fore once again. CA 3 went on to explain that, "even with the artists and teachers, you really have to ease them into it, and really to see whether a partnership would work or not" (CA 3).

5.6.4 Creative Associate as translator

There to 'bridge the gap' between teachers and artists, CA 4 defined this aspect of her role as, "bringing her knowledge of the creative arts landscape, and cultural infrastructure, for the benefit of the school." She explained that she tried to "cement relationships built up with

local arts infrastructure, and local practitioners, supporting and developing an understanding between teachers and artists" (CA 4). This CA also asked probing and reflective questions regarding how schools can "make it the most meaningful engagement possible" (CA 4). In this way, she was able to evaluate and re-access the effectiveness of strategies implemented to "make things happen" (Sinclair et al., 2015). She explained that "you're helping them truly understand, develop, and celebrate process, by providing that critical outside eye, that little bit of creative arts expertise, and the logistical support, to make things happen, ensuring the initiative is explored meaningfully" (CA 4). CA 1, acting as a translator between artist and teacher, reiterated this noting, "it's not really about just transferring skills, it's more about teamwork, creative thinking, peer feedback, all those elements of it."

Principals and co-ordinators alike were also excited at the prospect of engaging with outside artists and creative, diverse organisations, allowing them to "access to the arts outside of school" (Co-ordinator D). Co-ordinator A explained that "it was fantastic to get someone who is an actor because obviously, he had a few connections outside of schools for what we might need to do." Principal H, a teaching principal, was delighted that their CA had "great contacts" and "was able to go and get the prices" for outside artists, performers and arts organisations who could potentially work in their school. Nevertheless, Principal E was acutely aware of the fact that "at the end of the day, it'll have to be school led and led by leaders and teachers within the school." However, by brokering relationships between, and having access to outside expertise, he was confident that "this will build on the schools' capacity to be able to deliver on the arts", even after the initiative finished.

5.6.5 Creative Associate as validator

Playing an important part in endorsing the teacher and school's commitment to the arts, school co-ordinators found the validator aspect of the CA role to be one of the "the most important and advantageous thing of being part of *CS*" (Co-ordinator A). This co-ordinator went on to explain that the initiative had surpassed their expectations, putting this down to the validation and support received from their CA. However, CA 4 was acutely aware of the tight rope that she walked regarding the support provided by her to schools. She emphasised that, while it was all about celebrating good practice that's happening within the school, "you have to be careful that you cannot come in on your broomstick and tell them all what they're doing wrong, or them feeling that they are under evaluation" (CA 4). This CA went on to provide an example of how one of her schools,

> Decided to have a celebratory creative day, or a drama day, that would highlight and platform drama and creativity as a result of their engagement in the programme. So, I tried to secure commitments from management to continue these things. And then we set up teacher professional learning communities….committing to meet three times a year, things like that can really help to embed the initiative.

In this way, she explained, "you are encouraging your school to maintain their creative team that they've formed, cementing and embedding any new initiatives" (CA 4).

5.6.5.1 Empathic support

CAs spoke about being empathic and having the ability to listen to people. Providing principals and teachers with "an opportunity to offload" (CA 4), CA 4 believed that this was one of the true successes of the initiative. CA 1 also saw the empathetic, validator aspect as an integral part of his role, believing that that the CAs are, "just enhancing it (arts education) slightly and kind of maybe giving it a bit more of a blessing." An experienced associate, CA 2 was also aware that she was validating schools' commitment to the arts. She explained,

> The first school I walked into I said, "I'm just not going to come in and tell you what to do or to think. That's what we're going to do together." And I could see one of the teachers as we were walking out, she was really anxious. And I said to her, I said, "Don't worry, I can hold you all, so don't worry. We'll figure it out as we go…I'm quite comfortable in this area...we'll work on it together (CA 2).

Here, the importance of relationships, and having the ability to build and sustain these relationships comes to the fore once again. Resonating with aforementioned studies (Kenny, 2020; Kenny & Morrissey, 2016; Morrissey & Kenny, 2021; Wolf, 2008) regarding stakeholders valuing and validating strengths and shared experiences, the essence of the supportive aspect of this role is encapsulated by this CA's reassuring words - "I'll get back to you as soon as I can, and I'll do whatever it takes. And I'm here for you" (CA 2).

Principals and co-ordinators alike spoke highly of the way their CAs validated what was happening in their school, "enabling and building on what we have" (Principal B). Acting as "a touchstone or engine of the activity" (Sefton-Greene, 2011), co-ordinator D stated that the CAs involvement was like "a kickstart and a support for a classroom." CA 4 highlighted that sometimes there could be "an element of shutdown", resulting in teachers taking "a back seat when artists worked in their classrooms." Therefore, CA 4 emphasized that it was essential that,

> You build into the planning of the artist engagement, an awareness that we need teachers to participate, to bring teachers and artists on this journey and there comes your skills in leadership and management again.

Needless to say, principals wondered if they will be able to maintain the same drive and energy needed to keep teachers and other stakeholders involved and onboard, once the supportive role of the CA was taken away. Although realistic and aware that the programme will have to be school led by leaders and teachers within the school, Principal E worried about not having "access to that expertise" and "could see something like the CS just dwindling again." He emphasised that,

> It's important that the structures are put in place to build the capacity of those teachers to be able to deliver on the arts as well…. to ensure that children still get to experience a broad curriculum and well-rounded arts education (Principal E).

5.7 Discussion

This study of four CAs, eight primary school principals and eight *CS* school co-ordinators provides an interesting and diverse snapshot of the role of the arts broker in supporting teachers and schools in arts education. Viewed analytically through the lens of Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret's (2015) framework, this study highlights how the arts broker can be crucial to the successful implementation of arts partnerships, 'bridging the gap' between schools, teachers and artists.

A multi-faceted role, the arts brokers studied embraced the aspects of mentor, model, facilitator, translator and validator (Sinclair et al., 2015). As a *mentor*, CAs demonstrated an ability to lead and guide schools through the *CS* process. Challenging schools' thinking by prioritizing "the challenge of the unknown and the predictability of learning" (Maddock et al., 2007), the CA had the capacity to help teachers "truly understand, develop, and celebrate the process" (CA 4). As a *model* of artistic and reflective practice in action, CAs had a powerful and positive impact on school staff. Through CA's engagement with schools, relationships were built and a rapport was developed. However, tensions and challenges sometimes emerged due to the fact that CA's and partnership schools may not always be the 'right fit'. Consequently, tapping into and dedicating more time and resources to upskilling and training teachers in a CA capacity, could ensure the retention of valuable knowledge and expertise. In this way, the "outsourcing of arts education" (Christophersen, 2013, p.14) could be avoided and classroom teachers are provided with opportunities to grow and evolve as

creative professionals. This - coupled with ongoing, mentoring support from the CA - could be key to embedding a sustained, comprehensive approach to arts education in schools.

As a *facilitator,* CAs provided schools with scaffolds for new learning, guiding schools through the process in a meaningful way. Providing an enhanced mutual understanding between stakeholders, CAs were committed to providing teachers schools with a consistent, systematic level of support. Nevertheless, tensions and challenges arose along the way. Differences in stakeholders' perspectives proved to be initially challenging. Due to the fact that some schools applied for the initiative "thinking it was something else" (CA 4), principals and teachers did not always have the 'buy in' that the programme needed. Practical issues like time and curriculum overload also impeded their participation in the process. Using their negotiation skills, CAs could have the potential to overcome these underlying issues (Malin & Browne, 2019), reiterating the high degree of strategic judgement demanded for this role (Sefton-Greene, 2011).

As a *translator* from teacher to artist and artist to teacher (Sinclair et al., 2015), the CA brokered artist engagement in a robust and thorough way. Working hard to build strong foundational relationships upon which later pedagogical work could be founded (Sinclair et al., 2015), CAs strove to embed the initiative to "make it the most meaningful engagement possible" (CA 4) so that schools would be able to access and receive support from outside artists and creative agencies. As a *validator,* supporting and endorsing teachers and schools' commitment to the arts (Sinclair et al., 2015), CAs played an important role in developing and sustaining strong relationships between all stakeholders. By providing consistent scaffolds for new learning, while "endorsing and building on what they had" (Principal B), CAs could enable teachers to confidently lead creative activities (Griffith & Wolf, 2009), further embedding the legacy of the programme, even when it had ceased in schools.

5.8 Policy Recommendations

Based on this research, the following recommendations can be made to inform and guide arts partnership policy development:

- Continual professional development of teachers regarding the delivery of arts education in schools must become an integral part of future arts partnerships. Impacting schools, principals, teachers and children, this will ensure that partnerships will have long lasting and sustainable impact on the delivery of arts education in primary schools.

- Ongoing support needs to be provided by an arts broker, even when an initiative has ceased in schools. This could include follow-up visits with school management and school co-ordinators, reviewing what has/is happening schools, while also eliciting future targets going forward. This follow-up model could ensure that the legacy of programmes is progressive and continually evolving.
- Guided by an arts broker, schools could be encouraged to form communities of practice with neighbouring schools who are also involved in partnerships. Such communities could have an impact on empowering teachers in their own artistic and educational practice, further embedding arts education in schools.
- CPD courses could provide training for teachers who wish to become arts brokers. Providing participants with ample knowledge and skills, teachers could then maximise these programmes potential, tailoring them to their respective schools' needs in arts education. This could ensure that the impact of partnerships are long lasting and transformative.
- Further opportunities to integrate arts partnership programmes in a cross curricular capacity needs to be explored and could be driven by an arts broker. Potentially alleviating the pressure of curriculum overload, this could also lead to increased 'buy in' in participating schools, ensuring partnerships have a sustained impact on the delivery of arts education.

5.9 Conclusion

Endeavouring to keep the spark that ignites the possible alive (Luce-Kappler, 2017), the success of the arts broker in supporting teachers in arts education is underpinned by their ability to build and nurture relationships. Although inevitable tensions and challenges will arise, the real need for the arts broker is to develop the curation of a shared purpose, guiding teachers and schools through the process in a meaningful way while facilitating a mutual understanding between all stakeholders. 'Bridging the gap' between teachers, schools and artists, the role of an arts broker in arts partnerships emerges as a pivotal one, potentially supporting the enhancement and delivery of arts education in schools.

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Chapter 6

Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?'

Preamble

The following article explores primary teachers' perspectives, regarding whether an Irish arts initiative impacted their teaching of arts education. Presenting an analysis and discussion of both quantitative and qualitative data sourced from online surveys, findings from this article could contribute to further provision and development of professional development for teachers within an arts initiative. This in turn, could lead to increased sustainability of arts initiatives such as the *CS* programme. This is an accepted manuscript of an article which has been peer reviewed and published in the open access journal *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*[33] (December 28, 2022). The following is the citation for this article:

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Statement of authorship:
I hereby declare that I, Edel Fahy am the sole author of this article. The following statements outline my contributions to the work:
• Substantial contributions to the conception and design of the work; the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of data for the work; AND
• Drafting the work and revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
• Final approval of the version to be published; AND
• Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved (ICMJE 2014).

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Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?'

Abstract

Arts organisations partnering with schools have gained increased popularity as a means of delivering arts education. In the main, this has meant artists and companies offering pre-determined workshops. Although these involvements have been found to be useful, a gap in how these initiatives can enhance the teaching of arts education still exists. Therefore, this paper explores primary teachers' perspectives, regarding whether an Irish arts initiative - *The Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)* - impacted their teaching of arts education. A multi-site case study, this research was conducted in a purposive sample of eight Irish primary schools who had participated in the initiative. Using online surveys, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected from 50 primary teachers. Key findings indicated that, although teachers engaged positively with the initiative, it only had a limited impact on teachers' confidence regarding teaching arts education. Consequently, strong reiterations for professional development were emphasised throughout. Bearing this in mind, this study could contribute to further development of arts initiatives such as the *CS,* ensuring they have a lasting, sustainable impact on the teaching of arts education in primary schools.

Key words: arts education, arts initiatives, primary teachers, professional development.

6.0 Introduction

In recent years, arts organisations partnering with schools have gained increased popularity as a means of delivering arts education in schools (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018). In the main, this has meant artists and companies offering pre-determined workshops to schools – these types of involvement have been found to be useful and interesting but can have limited impact on teaching and learning (Rowe et al., 2004). Many studies on both an Irish and international level (Christophersen, 2013, 2015; Fahy & Kenny, 2021, 2022; Kenny & Morrissey, 2016, 2020; Wolf, 2008) have identified the benefits and challenges involved as a result of arts organisations partnering with schools. However, a gap in how these initiatives support primary teachers in teaching arts education, still exists. Therefore, this paper explores the perspectives of primary teachers regarding whether an Irish arts initiative – *The Creative*

Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS) – can potentially support their teaching of arts education.

Due to the fact that *CS* is a relatively new programme (2018), very little research has been undertaken on this initiative to date. Therefore, it was vital that this research happened alongside the development of the programme. Using online surveys, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected from 50 teachers (n=50) in eight primary schools, who had participated in the *CS* programme. Investigating whether a 'pail has been filled or a fire has been lit', key findings from this study attest to the fact that, teachers had a predominately positive perspective on the impact of the *CS* on arts education in their respective schools. Emerging influential factors regarding teachers' facilitation of arts education included teacher confidence, time constraints and increased emphasis on numeracy and literacy. The benefits of a balanced approach between teachers and artists delivering the arts education curriculum also arose. Although teachers indicated that they had a more positive attitude toward arts education as a result of their schools' engagement in the partnership, findings indicated that the *CS* had only a limited impact on teachers' confidence in relation to teaching arts education. Consequently, strong reiterations for the need and provision for continual professional development (CPD) in arts education was emphasised throughout.

6.1 Arts initiatives in schools

Through the creative-collaborative process, arts initiatives partnering with schools can be hugely advantageous teachers, children, young people and broader communities (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018). These programmes can enrich schools and the curriculum, providing opportunities for students to interact with professional artists which can have a significant, positive impact on student engagement (Jeanneret, 2011). Frequently acting as "professional development opportunities for teachers wishing to improve their arts education and practice" (Kind et al., 2007, p. 840), these collaborations can also create unique learning opportunities for teachers in arts education, when they are meaningful, sustained and invested in (Kenny & Morrissey, 2016).

However, it has been found that these collaborative initiatives can be almost detrimental to the quality of arts education (Hanley, 2003; Partington, 2018). All too often, teachers can become deskilled when surrounded by artists and creative organisations who are characterised by creativity, risk-taking and divergent thinking (Christophersen, 2013; Hanley, 2003). As a result, Hanley (2003) worries about generalist primary school teachers loosing confidence in teaching the arts, with teachers sometimes accepting that the artist is the sole

decision regarding aesthetic matters (Holdus & Espleand, 2013). Therefore, to ensure that learning is "long-lasting and sustainable" (Wolf, 2008, p.92), teachers, artists and creative organisations alike, must be a part of an evolving process, which involves opportunities to develop and potentially transform their pedagogic practices.

This emergence of joint values and ownership (Kenny & Morrissey, 2016) is vital to the creation, development and sustainability of a collaborative arts initiative. Moreover, Hanley (2003) points out that exposure to the arts does not in itself promote meaningful learning. This aligns with findings from one Irish study which found that, even within programmes involving highly motivated teachers with 'artistic attitudes', greater sustained support is required beyond the partnership itself to ensure high quality arts education in schools (Morrissey & Kenny, 2021). Hence, by positioning artist and teacher as equal partners in the classroom, where teacher and artist skills can complement each other very successfully, collaboration could ideally facilitate professional learning as a reciprocal act between artist and teacher (Kenny & Morrissey, 2016), ensuring the learning is meaningful, sustained and invested in.

6.1.1 The Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)

The publication of *The Arts-in-Education Charter* in 2013 (DES & DAHG[34]) reaffirmed the importance of arts education and arts-in-education in Ireland. Committed to promoting "arts education and the arts-in-education among children and young people through the alignment of a joined up, integrated and collaborative approach" (DES & DAHG, 2013, p.5), one of the charter's primary aims was to introduce a national *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)*. Established in 2018, the *CS* is a flagship initiative of the *Creative Ireland Programme* and is led by the Arts Council in partnership with DES & DHAG (*The Arts Council* website, 2022). Since its inception, 462 schools including primary, post primary schools, DEIS[35] and special schools[36] have joined the initiative. Aiming to promote the arts and creativity in schools through a range of collaborative opportunities, the *CS* long-term aim is for "every school to be supported to fully embrace the arts and creativity, ensuring a positive experience and strong outcomes for children and young people" (*The Arts Council* website, 2022).

[34] Department of Education and Skills & Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
[35] DEIS schools – Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools
[36] Special school - A school catering for children with special needs

Each participating pilot school has the services of a Creative Associate (CA) for nine days across the school year and a grant to help them implement their plans over a two-year programme. Coming from a range of creative professionals and educators with an understanding of the arts and creativity (*The Arts Council* website, 2022), the CA aims to match and address the needs of schools to arts and creative opportunities in their locality (*Creative Schools* guidelines*,* 2022). These needs may include (but not limited to): working with artists and/or creative practitioners; exploring creative ways to teach and learn; engaging with local arts and creative organisations; creative professional development for teachers in the arts and providing workshop, exhibition or performance opportunities for children (*Creative Schools* guidelines, 2022). Recent research has indicated that the multi-faceted role of the CA is pivotal to the successful implementation of the *CS* (Fahy & Kenny, 2022). By 'bridging the gap' and developing partnerships between schools, the arts and cultural sectors (*Creative Schools* guidelines*,* 2022), the CA can aid the establishment of a shared vision and professional exchanges among teachers and artists (Fahy & Kenny, 2022; Sinclair et al., 2015), potentially supporting the teaching of arts education in schools.

6.1.2 Learning from international arts initiatives

Many studies on international programmes such as *The Cultural Rucksack* (Christophersen, 2013, 2015) and *Creative Partnerships* (Clennon, 2009; Hall & Thomson, 2021) share similar characteristics with those of the *CS.* A government funded arts initiative in Norway, *The Cultural Rucksack* aimed to provide pupils with access to "high-quality, professional artistic and cultural productions" (Christophersen, 2015, p.365). Potentially informing the development of future initiatives, Christophersen's (2013) research highlights that teachers did not always experience the same degree of ownership as the artist or creative organisation involved. It is therefore important to emphasise that "the connection between the children and the arts" (Christophersen, 2013, p.13) should be kept open even when there are no artists or creative organisations present. In this way, teachers could be empowered to maintain continuity with the arts, supporting further growth (Christophersen, 2013).

In a similar way, *Creative Partnerships (CP)* was a UK government funded programme which offered opportunities for sustainable partnerships between schools and the broader community (*Creative Partnerships* website, 2004). Similar to Creative Associates in the *CS,* Creative Agents worked with *CP* schools, building partnerships with the arts and cultural sectors (Hall & Thomson, 2021). Creative Agents also developed positive collaborative relationships between teachers, artists and outside organisations (Clennon,

2009), enabling teachers to gain confidence as creative professionals (Galton, 2010). With this in mind, a NFER[37] evaluation of the initiative indicated that, by shifting the ownership of the initiative to schools, principals and teachers, *CP* could have had the capacity to internally sustain the programme (Sharp et al., 2006) – a valuable lesson which will inform current directions and approaches of future programmes.

6.2 Factors influencing the teaching of arts education

In Ireland, the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (Government of Ireland, 1999) emphasises that the class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate arts education in their classrooms. However, although Irish primary teachers occupy a crucially important position on the continuum of arts education (Fahy & Kenny, 2021, 2022; Kenny & Morrissey, 2016), the *Creativity and the Arts in Primary School* report (INTO, 2010) found that, due to Irish teachers' own poor arts experience at school, coupled with lack of confidence to teach the arts, there was a strong impulse to marginalise the arts in their teaching. This is compounded by the fact that the completion of initial teacher education in Ireland concludes the professional development for the majority of primary teachers in arts education (Grennan, 2017). In recent years, the only financed professional development delivered to primary school teachers which focused on arts education has been the *Primary Curriculum Support Programme*[38] (Coolahan, 2008). This aligns with national and international research which found that pre-service and in-service teacher education does not provide adequate support for teachers to meet the ongoing expectations of arts education (Grennan, 2017; Russell-Bowie, 2009, 2010). Consequently, calls for enhancing the professional practice in arts education of Irish teachers through in-career learning have been articulated consistently by numerous educational stakeholders for more than a decade (DES, 2005; INTO 2010, 2014; NCCA, 2005).

Growing pressure from the Irish *Department of Education and Skills* (DES) to raise standards in literacy and numeracy has led to an increase in allocated time to reading and mathematics at the expense of other curricular areas, most notably the arts. This marginalisation of the arts comes at a time when, paradoxically, considerable research reveals the benefits of arts education in its own right for children (Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995). The

[37] National Foundation of Educational Research
[38] The PCSP (now *Professional Development Support for Teachers - PDST)* was an in-career support agency, with specialist expertise to help teachers implement the curriculum.

consequence of such educational reforms on teachers' confidence in teaching the arts could lead to minimised instructional time, to master both subject and pedagogical content (Morris et al., 2017). Bearing this in mind, the impact of an arts partnership such as the *CS,* could hold strong promise to potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education.

6.3 Redevelopment of the Irish Primary School Curriculum

Against this backdrop, the *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment* (NCCA) in Ireland are in the process of reviewing and redeveloping the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI, 1999). Published twenty years ago, this was a cutting-edge curriculum informed by extensive research of its time, providing strong foundations for teaching and learning (NCCA, 2020). However, challenges of the 1999 curriculum, including curriculum overload and increased time pressures on teachers who had "too much to do and too little time to do it all" (NCCA, 2020, p.1), have been well documented. With this in mind, ongoing developments of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* supports an integrated, inter-related approach to teaching and learning in arts education (music, drama, visual arts and dance) for junior infants to second class[39]. From 3rd to 6th class[40], arts education curriculum areas (music, drama, visual arts and dance) will be differentiated into subject areas (NCCA, 2020). Acknowledging that "each discipline within arts education have a common creative process and share transferable skills" (NCCA, 2020, p. 13), the framework goes on to state that each arts education area has its own "knowledge, concepts, skills and intrinsic value" (NCCA, 2020, p. 13). Consequently, it has been highlighted that this integrated, inter-related approach (NCCA, 2020) needs explicit knowledge and specific skills (Irwin et al., 2006). Therefore, arts initiatives such as the *CS,* could have the potential to support teachers in their teaching of arts education, in an integrated capacity.

6.4 Synopsis of literature and research questions

Reviewed literature indicated that arts organisations partnering with schools can be hugely advantageous to teachers, children, young people and broader communities (Christophersen & Kenny, 2018). These initiatives can enrich the curriculum and can have a positive impact on student engagement (Jeanneret, 2011). However, due to the fact that teachers sometimes can become deskilled when surrounded by divergent thinking artists and creative

[39] Junior infants to 2nd class = 5 year olds to 8 year olds.
[40] 3rd class to 6th class = 9 year olds to 12 year olds.

organisations (Christophersen, 2013; Hanley, 2003), arts initiatives can be viewed as problematic (Hanley, 2003; Partington, 2018). Therefore, to ensure that learning is long-lasting and sustainable (Wolf, 2008), teachers, artists and creative organisations alike, must be a part of a process which involves opportunities to potentially transform their pedagogic practices. With this in mind, this article endeavours to capture primary teachers' perspectives regarding an Irish arts initiative's potential to support their teaching of arts education in schools. Findings from this study could contribute to further provision and development of professional development for teachers, leading to increased impact and sustainability of arts initiatives such as the *CS* programme. Consequently, this study sought to explore the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perspectives regarding teaching arts education and what are the factors that influence these?
2. What impact did the *CS* have on supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education?
3. What additional supports could be put in place by the *CS*, to further enhance the teaching of arts education?

6.5 Methodology

A multi-site case study, this research was conducted in a purposive sample of eight primary schools. When sourcing these research sites, target schools identified their needs in relation to arts education (C/F Table 1). Serving a diversity of communities across different regions of Ireland (C/F Table 1), this investigation involved 50 (n=50) teachers. The instrument chosen by this researcher was an online survey. Using a variety of closed and open questions, the survey was designed with the aim of collecting a mixture of quantitative and qualitative evidence to provide a fuller and more complete picture of the aspect being studied (Denscombe, 2007). Out of a possible 90 teachers, 50 (n=50) completed this survey (55% response rate).

Table 6.8 Description of Research Sites

Primary School	Description	Number of teachers in school	Province in Ireland	Arts Education Identified Need
School A	Suburban, co-educational school	14	Leinster	Drama and Music
School B	Suburban, Catholic girls' School	14	Leinster	Drama and Visual Arts
School C	Rural, co-educational, Catholic school	3	Connacht	Visual Arts
School D	Suburban, co-educational, multi-denominational school	14	Connacht	Visual Arts and Music
School E	Suburban, co-educational Catholic school	10	Leinster	Music and Visual Arts
School F	Suburban, co-educational Catholic school	7	Leinster	Drama, Music and Visual Arts
School G	Suburban, co-educational, multi-denominational school	25	Leinster	Drama
School H	Rural, co-educational Catholic school	3	Leinster	Drama and Visual Arts

6.5.1 Ethical considerations

Defined as "a matter principled sensitivity to the rights of others" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.58), the ethical implications of this research were taken into account by this researcher. Prior to recruitment of survey participants, this study received institutional ethical clearance. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from partaking in the research at any time and absolute anonymity and confidentiality was assured. There were no known risks to participants in this study and every effort was made to preserve the identity of the institutions involved in the research.

6.5.2 Data collection and analysis

Data was collected using the web-based tool *Google Forms*. Independent variables for this study included gender, age, teaching experience, class level taught and time allocated to

teaching arts education. The quantitative aspect of the survey encompassed 'closed', Likert scale format questions which allowed for, "answers which fitted into categories established in advance by the researcher" (Denscombe, 2007, p.166). These included questions relating to arts education and the curriculum, the role of arts partnerships in supporting the teaching of arts education in schools and professional development supports for teachers in arts education. The responses were indicated by ticking boxes or rating a numbering system (*1= strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3= no opinion, 4= somewhat agree, 5= strongly agree)*. The statistical package *SPSS*[41] was used to examine this aspect of the survey.

The qualitative aspect of the survey consisted of additional comments section on four items and four open-ended questions (which were required fields). Allowing space to express themselves in their own words, these questions aimed to reflect the "richness and complexity of the views held by the respondent" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 166). These were studied, reviewed for themes using *nVivo*[42] and coded by key words and ideas, which in turn were categorized into themes. Both sets of data were merged, reviewed and categorized into macro themes. Validity of the data was checked to ensure that it was recorded accurately and precisely so that it contained no errors arising from mistakes with data entry (Denscombe, 2007).

6.6 Results

Endeavouring to capture teachers' perspectives on how an Irish arts initiative can potentially support the teaching of arts education, the following section discusses themes which emerged from analysed survey data. These included: factors influencing the teaching of arts education; impact of the *CS* in supporting teachers in teaching arts education; development of future arts partnership supports for teachers.

6.6.1 Factors influencing the teaching of arts education

6.6.1.1 Teacher confidence

Teacher confidence, subject knowledge and teachers' beliefs regarding their capability to teach the arts came to the fore on more than one occasion. Participant 11 drew our attention to the fact that it "depends on your own personal experience of the subjects." Some teachers

[41] Statistical Package for Social Sciences (*SPSS*) is a professional analysis programme available from IBM (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
[42] *NVivo* is a software program used for qualitative and mixed-methods research. Specifically, it is used for the analysis of unstructured text, audio, video and image data.

allocated less time to arts subjects due to lack of confidence (28%). However, others could "certainly see the benefits associated with an expert delivering the lessons", citing a "balance between both teacher and specialist" (P[43]26). Only 34% of teachers surveyed found arts education subjects more challenging than other curricular areas to teach with 38% of participants neither agreeing nor disagreeing with this statement. Additional comments further revealed that, once again, a majority of participants (41%) cited lack of teacher confidence and subject knowledge as a factor which strongly influenced this outcome. Participant 11 noted that, "the teaching of the arts is very dependent on the teacher's own level of interest or confidence and that it can be more challenging because my interests lie in different areas." Resonating with previously reviewed literature (Bamford, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2009, 2010) one teacher noted,

> I feel it can depend on the individual strengths of the class teacher. If a teacher has a personal interest in these areas that makes them the best person because they have confidence in teaching the subject and also know their class. However, if the class teacher is not confident themselves, they can often avoid it (P13).

6.6.1.2 Impact of outside facilitators and artists

26% of teachers referenced the positive impact of outside facilitators and artists working alongside classroom teachers with participant 26 noting that, "a teacher trained in drama or music would develop skills probably to a higher standard and engage the class at a higher level." Some teachers cited a collaborative approach between teacher and artist (17%) as a possibility for effectively facilitating arts education. This was reiterated by participant 15 who highlighted that,

> Even though I was quite confident teaching music, I still learned a lot from an external music teacher coming in. I think there should be a balance of both the teacher and an external teacher who specialise in specific areas (P15).

Interestingly, teachers were somewhat divided in relation to their perspectives regarding whether or not arts education subjects are best taught by an expert or a specialist. 30% of participants disagreed with this statement whereas 34% of participants agreed. Contradicting previous findings regarding teacher confidence to some extent, 42% of surveyed teachers felt that the class teacher was the most suitable person to facilitate arts education. This is reiterated by analysed additional comments with almost a third of participants (29%)

[43] P=participant

referencing the importance of teachers' relationship with their class. Citing the benefits of teachers facilitating these subjects "as they know their class best" (P11) and "can have fun and build on their rapport with the class in a less formal situation" (P26), participants noted that, if the expert or specialist didn't know the class, they can "often find it difficult to gauge the level/interests of the class they are with" (P17). Highlighting that, although there was a role for experts in helping teachers to engage in CPD, participant 25 went on to say that "the class teacher is more aware of the individuals needs of the class and can integrate the arts with the broader curriculum more effectively."

6.6.1.3 Time devoted to teaching arts education

An overwhelming majority of teacher indicated that increasing emphasis on numeracy and literacy had impacted on the time allocated to teaching arts education in classrooms with 68% of participants agreeing with this statement. Participant 18 noted that,

> It is virtually impossible to offer discreet teaching time to arts education, particularly drama. I try to incorporate it into other subjects. It certainly does not get the time or attention that it needs or deserves (P18).

This is further supported by additional comments with 47% of teachers referencing an overloaded curriculum, "not just extra numeracy and literacy, which makes it hard to fit everything in" (P6). Participant 23 emphasised that, it was "challenging to make time for these areas as literacy and numeracy and of more priority." However, 43% of participants alluded to integration and the effective incorporation of arts education with other curricular areas, particularly literacy. One teacher noted that, "it takes more time to prepare resources and integrated lessons and resources but it is more enjoyable to teach and the children are generally more enthusiastic about the learning" (P19). As indicated by the pie chart below (figure 6.2), teachers devoted the most time to teaching visual arts education (40%).

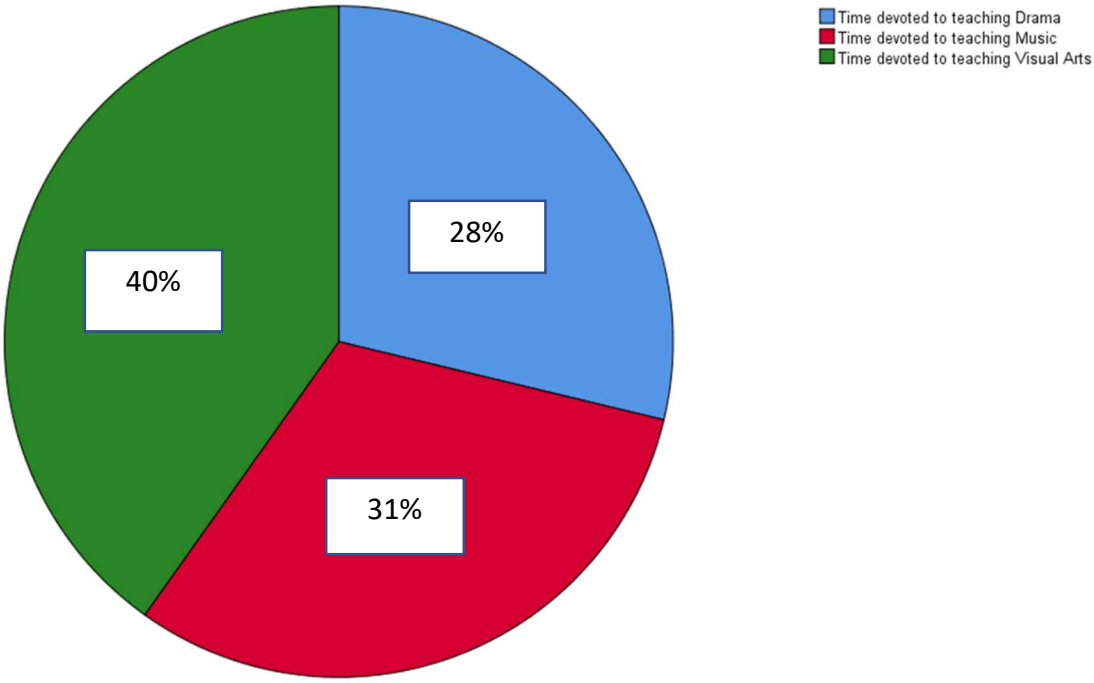

Figure 6.2 Time devoted to teaching arts education

The following bar charts (figures 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5) were generated from survey data, representing the amount time dedicated to the various arts education subjects. Figure 6.3 indicates that 42% of participants surveyed, allocated 15-30 minutes to teaching drama with 18% teaching it for 31-45minutes[44]. Only 8% taught it for 46minutes -1hour[45]. Figure 6.4 indicates that teachers allocated more time to teaching music than drama, with 32% of participants teaching it for 31- 45 minutes and 18% teaching it for 46 minutes – 1 hour. This contrasts with only 8% of teachers allocating 46 minutes -1 hour to teaching drama. This would suggest that, due to the fact that they allocated more time to teaching music, teachers were slightly more confident in relation to teaching music than drama. Figure 6.5 reveals that teachers surveyed allocated the most time to teaching visual arts with 66% of participants indicating that they taught visual arts for 46 minutes -1hour, which is the recommended curriculum time for senior classes (GoI, 1999). This is significant and would signify that, in comparison to teaching music and drama, participants were most confident in teaching visual arts lessons.

[44] Recommended curricular time in junior classes.
[45] Recommended curricular time in senior classes.

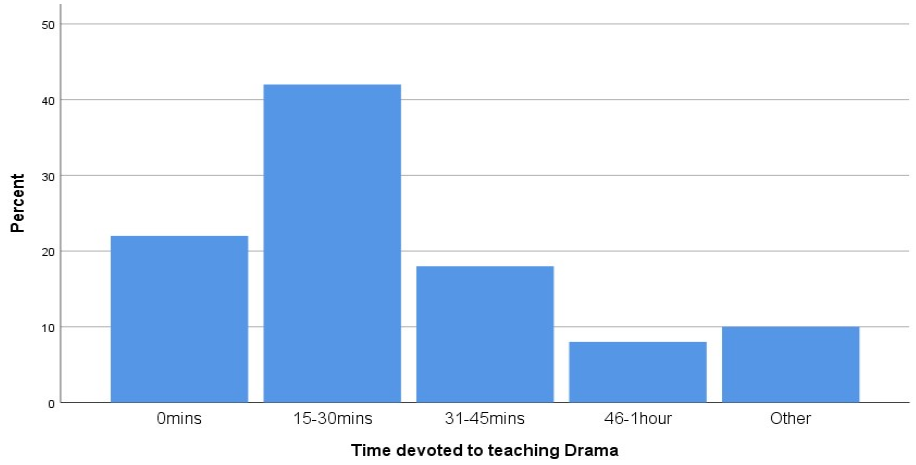

Figure 6.3 Time devoted to teaching Drama

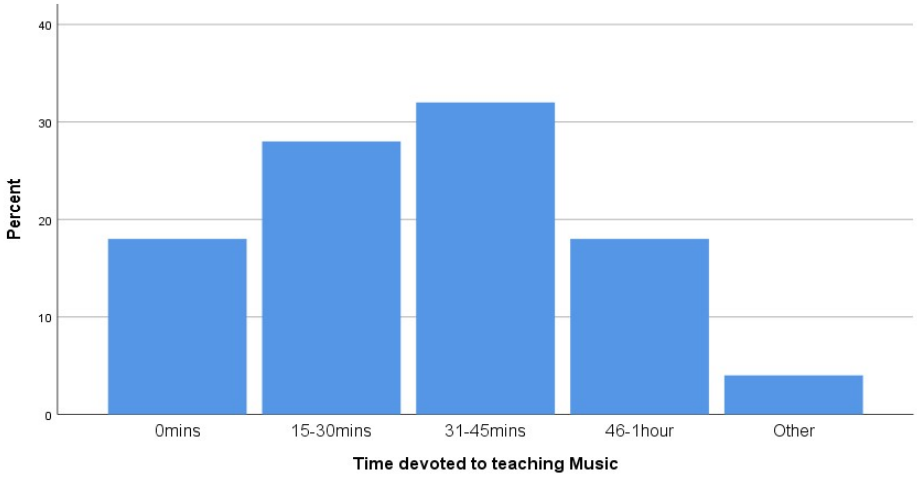

Figure 6.4 Time devoted to teaching Music

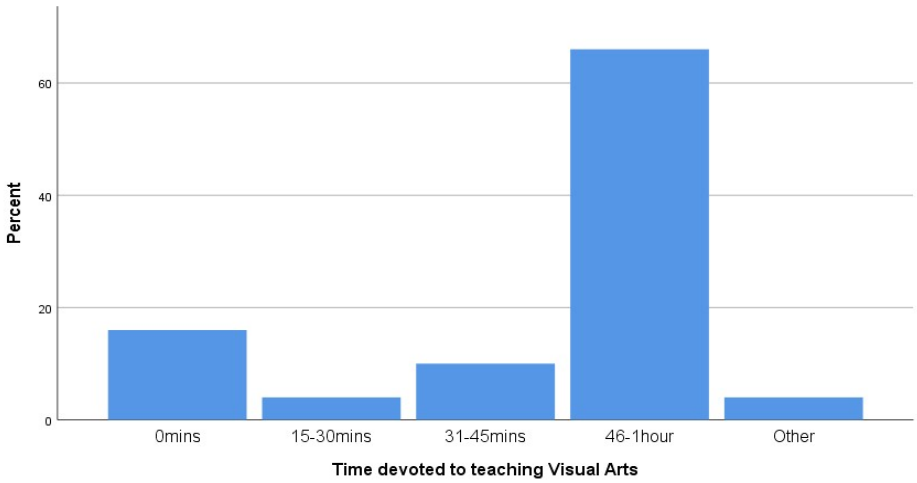

Figure 6.5 Time devoted to teaching Visual Arts

6.6.2 Impact of the Creative Schools Initiative (CS)

6.6.2.1 Positive impact

The majority of teachers surveyed felt that their competence (i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes) in relation to arts education had improved as a result of their engagement in the *CS* with 58% agreeing with this statement. This would suggest that, in general, the *CS* had been effective in supporting teachers in arts education. 64% of surveyed teachers indicated they had a more positive attitude towards teaching arts education as a result of their schools' engagement in the *CS.* The success of the *CS* was reiterated further with 66% of teachers either somewhat or strongly agreeing that their arts education practice was enhanced as a result of their schools' involvement in the programme. Teachers felt that both teachers' and artists skills and knowledge were shared throughout the *CS* process. A strong majority of teachers (68%) believed this to be true with one participant noting that their "knowledge and understanding of arts education was greatly enriched" (P7). As evidenced by the strong response (62%) teachers also felt that their CA played an important role in the implementation of the *CS* in their school. Additional comments from teachers also emphasised this with participant 32 noting that, "our CA was a fantastic support throughout the year." Over half of teachers surveyed (52%) felt that sufficient time had been allocated to the implementation of the *CS* in their schools.

6.6.2.2 Teacher confidence

Figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8 represent the impact of the *CS* on teacher confidence in relation to teaching arts education. These graphs are a result of comparing statements regarding teacher confidence levels in teaching arts education prior to the introduction of the *CS* in schools with statements regarding teacher confidence levels as a result of their schools' involvement in the *CS.* Figure 6.6 indicates that 16 surveyed teachers (32%) felt that their confidence levels in relation to teaching drama had not changed due to their school's involvement with *CS.* However, the incline to the right of figure 6.6 indicates that 21 teachers (42%) were more confident teaching drama as a result of their engagement with the *CS.* These findings would suggest that the *CS* had some impact on teachers' confidence in relation to teaching drama in their classrooms. In relation to teaching music (figure 6.7) only 14 teachers (28%) felt that their confidence levels had not changed due to their school's involvement with *CS.* However, the high incline to the right of figure 6.7 indicates that 25 surveyed teachers (50%) were more confident teaching music as a result of their engagement with the *CS.* These findings would

suggest that the *CS* had a notable impact on teachers' confidence in relation to teaching music in their classrooms.

In a similar way, figure 6.8 shows the impact of the *CS* on teacher confidence in relation to teaching visual arts education. Interestingly, 21 surveyed teachers (42%) indicated that they had already high confidence levels in relation to in teaching visual arts prior to the implementation of the *CS.* Only 15 participants (30%) indicated that their confidence levels in teaching visual arts increased as a result of their engagement with the *CS.* This would indicate that the initiative had only a slight impact on teacher confidence regarding the teaching of visual arts. Resonating with previous findings (figure 6.4), this reiterates that participants were generally more confident in relation to teaching visual arts.

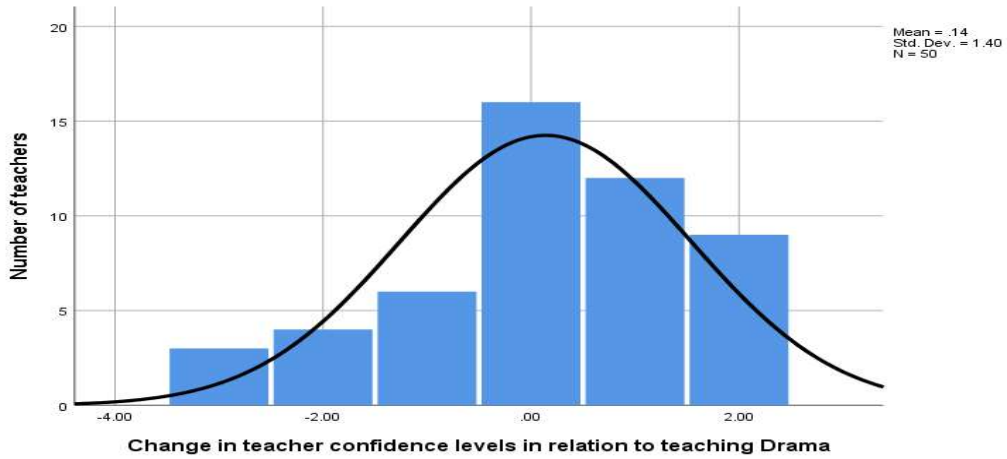

Figure 6.6 Impact of *CS* on teacher confidence in relation to teaching Drama

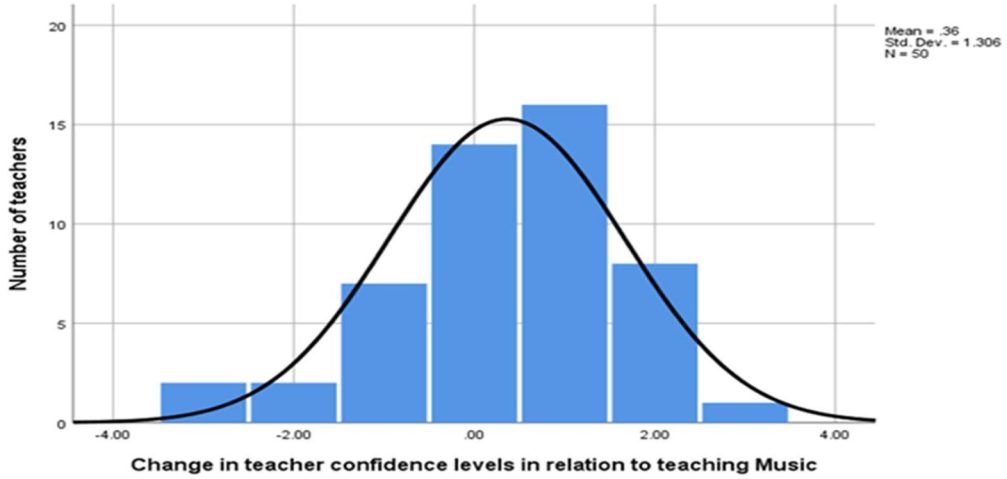

Figure 6.7 Impact of *CS* on teacher confidence in relation to teaching Music

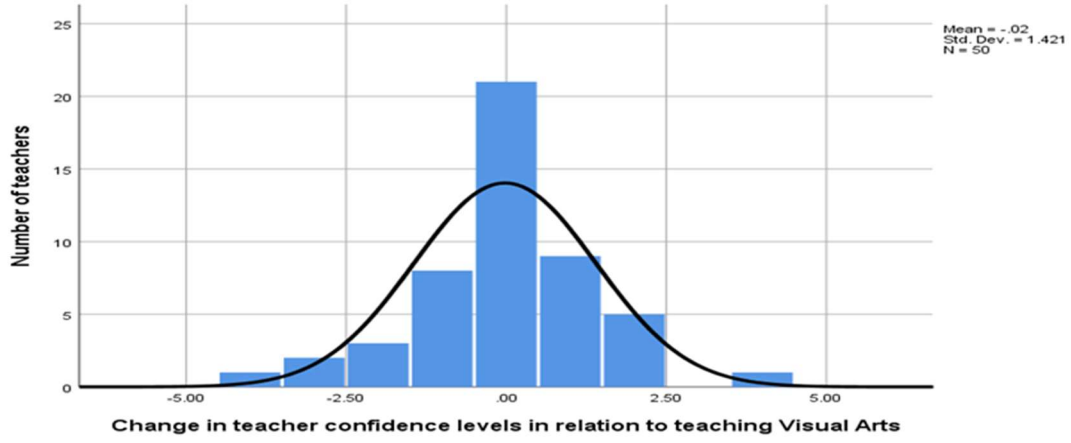

Figure 6.8 Impact of *CS* on teacher confidence in relation to teaching Visual Arts

6.6.3 Development of future arts initiative supports in arts education

Regarding further supports which could be put in place by the *CS* for teachers in arts education, an overwhelming 78% of surveyed teachers cited further training and CPD for teachers. This would include "CPD events in school whole staff and in class follow up in support" (P28) and "more in school support from experts/specialists" (P33). 36% of participants also cited the beneficial impact of hands-on, practical demonstrations with teachers emphasising the need for more days in schools with facilitators/specialists working in classrooms with children. Teachers also alluded to online support and follow-up visits from their CA. Participant 4 suggested having more visits from experts in each area of arts education with teachers observing lessons being taught, while participant 19 recommended a follow-up in three months to see if they were still engaging with the arts in the way they were during the programme. Emphasising this further, participant 3 remarked that it would be beneficial to have,

> CPD with the CA over a series of weeks/ observation of a specialist over a series of weeks to increase confidence and not just ideas. This would in turn hopefully enable the staff to update and fully implement the whole school Arts Education plan (P3).

When asked whether they changed the way they facilitated arts education as a result of their schools' engagement with the *CS,* 43% of participants indicated that the *CS* had a positive impact on their practice. Teachers alluded to the fact that they used resources provided by the *CS* and introduced "more creative responses for other subjects" (P21) including "more integration across subjects, more thematic and project work" (P26). Other teachers referenced how the *CS* "cemented the importance of giving enough time to arts subjects" (P2) and allowed the children to lead and discover a lot more themselves. 26% of participants remarked on how they changed the way they facilitated drama and music as a result of their schools' involvement in the *CS.* Participant 7 was "more confident teaching drama now" while participant 21 described how a set of ukuleles were bought for the children and "was amazed at how quickly they picked it up and how keen they were."

6.7 Discussion

This study of 50 teachers in eight primary schools provides an interesting snapshot of primary teachers' perspectives on how an Irish arts initiative can potentially support their teaching of arts education. Findings indicated that teachers had a predominately positive perspective on the impact of the *CS* on arts education in their respective schools. Teachers acknowledged that artists and performers can support and enrich a school arts education curriculum by

"developing skills to a higher standard and engage the class at a higher level" (P26). However, although some participants felt they had individual strengths in these areas and they "knew their class best" (P11), factors such as time, teacher confidence and increased emphasis on numeracy and literacy impacted on their teaching of arts education as generalist class teachers.

Visual arts was the most widely taught arts subject, with teachers allocating more time to this subject than to teaching music or drama. This resonates with research undertaken by Finneran (2016) who observed that, although drama has been a curricular subject since the introduction of the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI,1999), it still receives the least attention of all curricular areas. As a possible solution to this, teachers cited "more integration across subjects, more thematic and project work" (P26) as an effective means of delivering arts education across the curriculum, "making the curriculum more enjoyable to teach" (P5). This strongly aligns with ongoing developments of the draft *Primary Curriculum Framework* (NCCA, 2020) which supports an integrated, inter-related approach to teaching and learning in arts education, potentially alleviating the well-documented challenges of curriculum overload and increased time pressures on teachers (NCCA, 2020). Participants also referenced further supports such as "CPD and intermittent workshops" (P11), "prioritised time allocation for arts subjects" (P14) and additional resources to be put in place to further support teachers. This resonates with calls which have been expressed consistently by many stakeholders for more than a decade (DES, 2005; INTO, 2014; NCCA, 2005) regarding CPD for teachers in arts education.

Signifying that teachers had a positive outlook on the impact of the *CS* in their school, the majority of participants (64%) indicated that their competence (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes) in relation to arts education had improved as a result of their engagement in the *CS.* The success of the *CS* was reiterated further with 66% of teachers agreeing that their arts education practice was enhanced as a result of their schools' involvement in the programme. Teachers mentioned that they used resources provided by the *CS* and introduced "more creative responses for other subjects, including more integration across subjects, more thematic and project work (P26). Teachers felt that both teachers' and artists skills and knowledge were shared throughout the *CS* process (68%) and felt that their CA played an important role in the implementation of the *CS* in their school (62%). Aligning with research undertaken by Clennon (2009) on the Creative Agents in *CP,* these findings also resonate with a recent study undertaken by Fahy and Kenny (2022). Pivotal to the successful implementation of the *CS,* this research found the CA had the capacity to 'bridge the gap'

between between schools, teachers and artists (Fahy & Kenny 2022), so that spaces and opportunities are created for new learning in the arts to occur (Sinclair et al., 2015).

Although the majority of participants indicated (64%) indicated that they had a more positive attitude towards arts education as a result of their school's engagement in the *CS,* analysed data revealed that the *CS* had limited impact on teachers' confidence in relation to teaching drama and music and little or no impact on teacher confidence regarding their facilitation of visual arts (figures 6.6, 6.7, 6.8). Although these teachers engaged positively with the initiative and viewed it as success, this reiterates findings from Hanley's (2003) study that exposure to the arts does not in itself promote meaningful learning. These teachers saw the value of such programmes but were unable to utilise its full potential in educational follow-up or preparation (as also seen in the work of Holdhus and Espeland, 2013). As highlighted by Morrissey and Kenny (2021), greater sustained support is required beyond the initiative itself to ensure high quality arts education in schools, even when highly motivated teachers with 'artistic attitudes' are involved. The creation and development of supportive spaces or communities grounded in ongoing dialogue and reflection, could also enable more meaningful teaching and learning to occur in arts education (Morrissey & Kenny, 2021).

As a possibility for effectively facilitating arts education, surveyed teachers cited a combined, collaborative approach between teacher and outside facilitator or artist. Due to the fact that specialists can "often find it difficult to gauge the level/interests of the class they are in" (P17), teachers were somewhat divided in their perspectives regarding whether or not arts education subjects are best taught by an expert or a specialist. While acknowledging that the class teacher "is more aware of the individuals needs of the class and can integrate the arts with the broader curriculum more effectively" (P25), teachers also referenced the positive impact of outside facilitators working alongside classroom teachers due to the fact "a teacher trained in drama or music would develop skills probably to a higher standard and engage the class at a higher level" (P26). Teachers were also of the opinion that "there should be a balance of both the teacher and an external teacher who specialise in specific areas" (P15). These findings resonate with research undertaken by Wolf (2008, p.92) who emphasised that, "for learning in arts education to be long lasting and sustainable", teachers and artists alike, must be a part of an ongoing process which involves exciting opportunities to challenge and potentially transform their pedagogic practices. These findings also align with Christophersen's (2013, p.13) research on *The Cultural Rucksack,* who noted that by keeping "the connection between the children and the arts open" even when there are no artists or

creative organisations present, teachers could be empowered to maintain continuity with the arts (Christophersen, 2013), further embedding and sustaining the programme's legacy.

In general, teachers surveyed did not feel that they were provided with sufficient, ongoing professional development in arts education and strongly reiterated the need for continual professional development in arts education throughout. An overwhelming 78% of surveyed teachers referenced training and CPD in relation to further support which could be put in place by the *CS* for teachers in arts education. Participants cited more training, in-class demonstrations, online support and follow-up visits from their CA. Key to the provision of professional development within arts initiatives could also include tapping into, and dedicating more time and resources to upskilling and training of 'mentor' teachers to ensure the retention of valuable knowledge and avoiding the "outsourcing of arts education" (Christophersen, 2013, p.14) in schools. Allowing individuals to grow and evolve as creative professionals, in-service training focused specifically on arts education for 'mentor' teachers, may lead to shared beliefs and practices, significantly influencing fellow colleagues' learning in arts education (Hall et al., 2008). This - coupled with ongoing, mentoring support from the CA - could be key to embedding a sustained, comprehensive approach to teaching arts education in schools (Fahy & Kenny, 2022).

6.8 Limitations

The data collection for this research took place during the COVID pandemic. Due to the fact that the *CS* adapted the way they engaged with schools during lockdowns, some teachers gained confidence, and were "excited about whole school approaches to using online platforms and creative outdoor learning spaces" (P11). However, some surveyed teachers felt that that the pandemic had detrimental impact on the implementation of the *CS* in schools, causing it to be "very fragmented" (P6). Although the majority of schools partaking in this research had completed the *CS* programme, the pandemic did potentially impact on the number of schools willing to participate in this study. This in turn, impacted on the sample size. Further research could include a larger sample, comprising of a larger cross section of schools and stakeholders. This research could focus on the impact of the current roll-out of the *CS*. Reflecting a broader selection of participants, a broader range of data collection methods could also be used in future studies. These could include semi-structured interviews, observation methods, reflection diaries and focus groups.

6.9 Implications and conclusion

In light of this study, the following implications for future policy developments are offered:

1. Continual teacher professional development needs to become an integral part of future arts initiatives. Teachers could then maximise these programmes potential, tailoring them to their respective schools' needs in arts education.
2. Similarly, schools could be encouraged to form communities of practice with neighbouring schools who are also involved in these programmes. Such communities could have an impact on empowering teachers in their own artistic and educational practice, further embedding arts education in schools.
3. On-going support could be provided by the CA, even when the initiative has ceased in schools. This could include follow-up visits with school management and school co-ordinators, reviewing what has/is happening schools, while also eliciting future targets going forward.
4. Additional opportunities to integrate arts initiative programmes in a cross curricular capacity needs to be explored. Aligning with ongoing developments of the draft *Primary Curriculum Framework* (NCCA, 2020), this could also ensure the impact of the *CS* is long lasting and transformative.
5. A combined, collaborative approach between teacher and outside facilitator or artist could be further embedded into arts education policy documents. This approach could also be integrated into pre-service training of teachers as a cohesive means of delivering arts education programmes in schools. By working in this way to build curricula, stakeholders could positively impact on teaching and learning, creating and sustaining a communicative space in which an innovative arts education curriculum could evolve.

Within arts education, Maxine Greene (1995) argues for relational pedagogic spaces for transformation to occur. Within such spaces, collaborative arts initiatives can serve as an effective means of reciprocal professional development (Kenny & Morrissey, 2020) and, as indicated by this study, a potential means of supporting the teaching of arts education in schools. Not just the 'filling of a pail', the *CS* endeavoured 'to light a fire', supporting schools and teachers to fully embrace and celebrate arts education. As a result, surveyed teachers had a predominately positive perspective on the impact of the *CS* in their schools, and could see the benefits of both teachers and artists delivering the arts education curriculum. However, strong reiterations for the need and provision for continual professional

development was emphasised throughout. By placing a stronger emphasis on teacher professional development within an arts initiative approach to arts education, this study could inform future development of such programmes, ensuring they have a lasting and transformative impact on the teaching of arts education.

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Chapter 7

Discussion

7.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate and provide insights into how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative (CS),* could potentially support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. A mixed-methods, multi-site case study in design, research was carried out in eight schools using semi-structured interviews and surveys. Underpinned by the study's conceptual framework (Chapter 3), Chapter 7 presents a synthesis of the research findings and offers an opportunity to gain a deeper interpretation of the overall results. Using *nVivo* software, a thematic analysis of a series of three papers presented in this thesis[46] resulted in three interrelated, macro-themes emerging (C/F Appendix R). These included: transformational learning, teacher agency and collaborative practice (C/F Figure 7.9). The following section will discuss these interrelated, macro-themes in more detail.

[46] Article 1 - *The potential of arts partnerships to support teachers: Learning from the field* (Chapter 2). Article 2 - *'Bridging the gap': The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers* (Chapter 5); Article 3 - *Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?'* (Chapter 6).

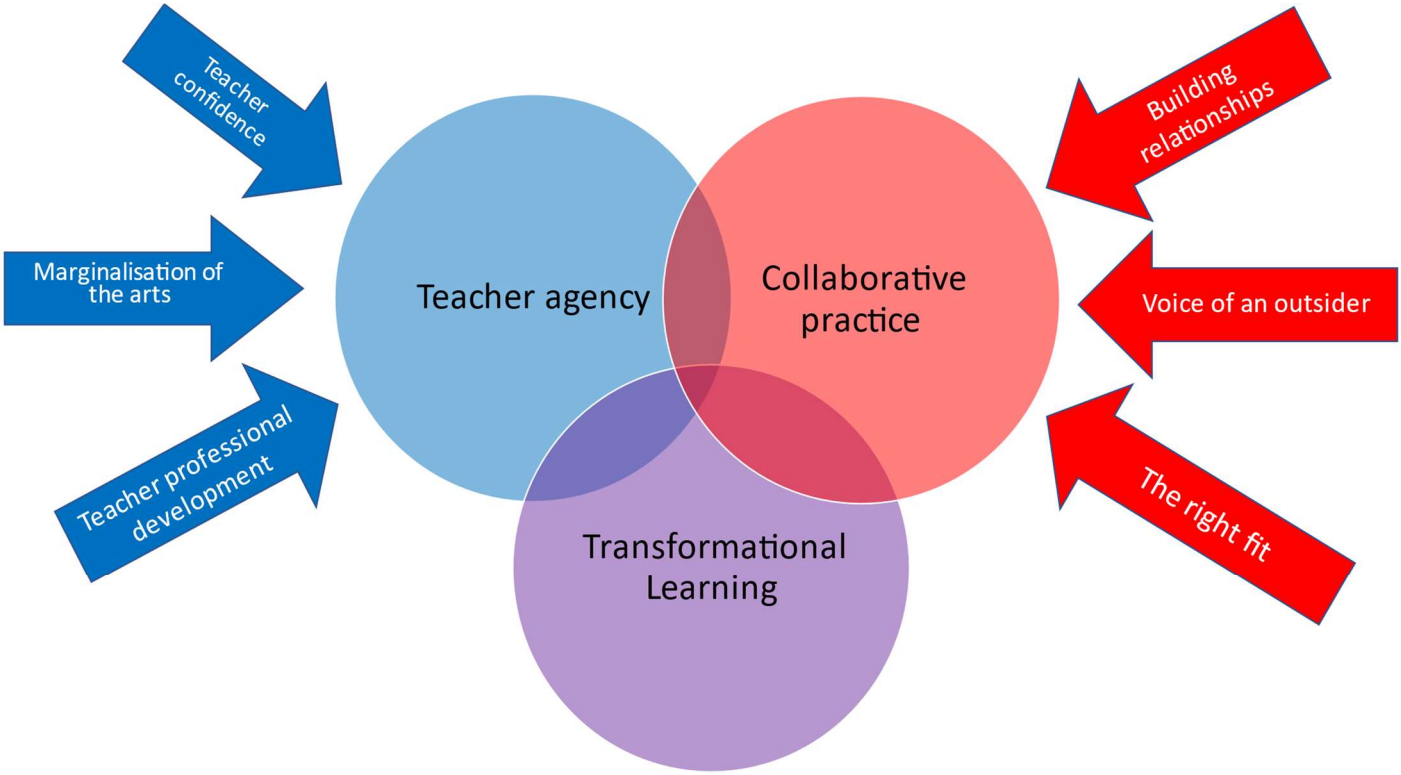

Figure 7.9 Conceptual mapping of macro-themes

7.1 Transformational learning

Transformational learning in the arts can emphasise the connections between experience, culture, emotion and higher order thinking (Freedman 2003). Advocating the transformative nature of the arts, Greene (1995, p.379) reiterates this noting, "the arts open up all sorts of possibilities for teachers, connecting them to each other by reminding them of their shared goals and experiences." Dewey (1934) goes on to say that immersion in these 'shared experiences' can transform our relationship with the world, which in turn, can motivate change. Therefore, by inspiring individuals to become more conscious and wide-awake (Thayer-Bacon 2008), engagement in creative arts encounters can facilitate transformation by "allowing us to attend or to be open to others and their possibilities" (Greene 2013, p.252). By working in this way, teachers can motivate their students to break though the limits of the conventional, moving them to transform (Thayer-Bacon 2008). Bearing this in mind, key findings from this study indicated that arts partnerships such as the *CS,* can act as a potential agent for transformational learning, enabling and supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education. This will now be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Awakening them to "an awareness of what is not yet" (Greene 2011, p.7), the majority of teachers (66%) agreed that their arts education practice was enhanced as a result of their schools' involvement in the programme. Developing the "ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise" (Greene 1995, p.19), 64% of teachers indicated they had a more positive attitude towards teaching arts education (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.2.1*), while other teachers referenced how the *CS* "cemented the importance of giving enough time to arts subjects" (P2). A strong majority of teachers (68%) felt that both teachers' and artists skills and knowledge were shared throughout the *CS* process with one participant noting that their "knowledge and understanding of arts education was greatly enriched" (P7). Teachers introduced "more creative responses for other subjects" (P21), with almost a third of participants remarking on how they changed the way they facilitated drama and music, as a result of their involvement in the *CS* (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.3).* Reiterating Dewey's belief that, "everything depends upon the quality of aesthetic experience" (1938, p.27), these findings indicate that the *CS* had a positive, transformational impact on how teachers engaged with and facilitated arts education in their respective classrooms.

Creating spaces for collaborative practice, the Creative Associate (CA) also provided opportunities for transformational learning to occur. Communicating the idea that there is "always more to be found, more horizons to be reached" (Greene 2001, p.206), the multi-faceted role of the CA embraced the aspects of mentor, model, facilitator, translator and validator (Sinclair *et al.* 2015 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6*). As a mentor, CAs demonstrated an ability to lead and guide schools through the CS process, helping teachers "truly understand, develop, and celebrate the process" (CA 4 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1*). Emphasizing that "it's not beyond the skills of anybody" (CA 1 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1*), CAs were keenly aware of the potential of working in a mentoring capacity, demonstrating to teachers that "you can learn in different ways" (CA 2 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.1*). Embracing the unpredictability of learning (Maddock et *al.* 2007), CAs encouraged teachers to "challenge their thinking about things" (CA 2 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.1),* to take risks (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2*) and to collaborate and work alongside local arts infrastructure and practitioners (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*). By working in this way, teachers were oriented away from the "predictable and the familiar" (Maddock et *al.* 2007, p.51), which in turn led to transformational learning.

As a model of artistic and reflective practice in action, CAs developed relationships which had a powerful and positive impact on school staff (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2*). Acting as a potential catalyst for ongoing professional development for teachers (Sinclair *et al.* 2015), the CA curated a shared purpose that was crucial to building relationships between

stakeholders. Principals and teachers really liked the idea of someone else coming in (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*) with Co-ordinator A stating, "I feel this has been the best part." Therefore, by providing that "critical outside eye, that little bit of creative arts expertise" (CA 4 in Chapter 5), CAs had the capacity to facilitate the creation of relational pedagogic spaces (Greene 1995, 2001), "to make things happen" (CA 2 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.1*) in relation to accessing artists or developing projects. By working in this way, teachers were "armed with some confidence, some real practical knowledge" (CA 2 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.1*), enabling them to lead creative activities in their respective classrooms.

As a facilitator, CAs provided schools with scaffolds for new learning, guiding schools through the process in a meaningful way (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.3).* Reiterating the fact that successful initiatives can often depend on the ability of stakeholders to work alongside each other (Kind *et al.* 2007), CA 3 highlighted that "it's all built on relationships and trust." As a translator from teacher to artist and artist to teacher (Sinclair *et al*. 2015), CAs continued to build on these foundational relationships, brokering artist engagement with local arts infrastructure and practitioners, in a robust and thorough way (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*). As a validator, CAs played an important role in developing and sustaining strong relationships between all stakeholders (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.5*). School co-ordinators also really appreciated the validation of shared strengths and experiences, noting that it was the "most important and advantageous thing of being part of the CS" (Co-ordinator A in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.5.1).* Therefore, by providing consistent support for new learning while "endorsing and building on what they had" (Principal B in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.5.1*), CAs aimed to celebrate schools' good practice with the view to "cementing and embedding any new initiatives" (CA 4 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.5*). In this way, CAs endeavoured to facilitate transformational learning between stakeholders by curating a shared sense of purpose, ensuring collaborations were ongoing and sustained.

Consistent with Dewey's (1934) and Greene's (1995) theories which advocate that arts education offers the potential to support personal growth and transformation, these findings indicate that transformative learning can take place by engaging with an arts partnership. Supporting stakeholders to "fully embrace the arts and creativity" (*The Arts Council* website, 2022), the *CS* offered diverse, creative and engaging opportunities for schools and teachers. Guiding schools throughout the *CS* journey, the CA endeavoured to establish, embed and sustain collaborations between teachers, artists and outside creative organisations. Encouraging teachers to think "what might be, what ought to be, what is not yet" (Greene 2001, p. 172), CA's aspired to facilitate transformational learning between all

stakeholders. However, for true transformational learning to take place, teachers need to be encouraged to 'release their imaginations' (Greene 2011) and further supported to teach arts education in a confident and creative way. Therefore, initiatives such as the *CS* could have the potential to support teachers' pedagogical practices (Kenny 2020) in arts education, by providing them with exciting opportunities to challenge, develop and transform. With this in mind, the potential of an arts partnership to promote transformational learning will now be further explored through the themes of teacher agency and collaborative practice.

7.2 Teacher agency

Key findings from this study indicated that teacher agency was key to the transformational impact of arts partnerships in schools. As a teacher of teachers, Greene emphasised that teachers are "key to revitalisation of the arts in education" (Fuchs Holzer 2009, p. 387). Nevertheless, Greene (1995) asserts that it is the obligation of teachers to heighten the consciousness of their students, by 'awakening' them to make their own interpretations of what they see. Consequently, for teachers to be intent on awakening, they must be 'wide-awake' themselves (Greene 1995). Leading to the development of self, this sense of 'wide-awakeness' can, in turn, establish self-worth and agency in teachers (Williams 2017). By working in this way and responding to new vistas and forms (Greene 1980), classrooms have the potential to become alive and 'awake' (Gulla 2018). However, as previously reviewed literature found, if teachers perceive that they do not have the confidence, competence or resources to implement an effective arts programme, they will avoid teaching the arts altogether (Bamford 2006; Russell-Bowie 2009, 2010). These negative assumptions about their abilities in the arts can contribute to teachers' apprehension about engaging in arts practices (Leonard and Adeyanjuo 2016) and in turn, can impact on teacher agency in relation to teaching arts education.

Consistent with this literature, findings from this study indicated that, although the majority of teachers surveyed (64%) indicated they had a more positive attitude towards teaching arts education as a result of their schools' engagement in the *CS,* 41% of participants cited lack of teacher confidence as a factor which strongly influenced their teaching of arts education (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.1*). Interestingly, teachers were somewhat divided in relation to their perspectives regarding whether or not arts education subjects are best taught by an expert or a specialist. Contradicting previous findings regarding teacher confidence to some extent, 42% of surveyed teachers felt that the class teacher was the most suitable person to facilitate arts education (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.2*). Teachers referred to the fact that "they

know their class best" (P11) and acknowledged that, although there was a role for experts in helping teachers to engage in CPD, "the class teacher is more aware of the individual needs of the class and can integrate the arts with the broader curriculum more effectively" (P25 in Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.2*). These results would indicate that teachers in participating *CS* schools have an interest in and want to teach the arts but there is a need for them to be empowered by their own practice.

Bearing this in mind, findings indicated that the CA played a pivotal role in empowering teachers and supporting teacher agency (C/F Chapter 5). Acting as a catalyst for transformational learning, school co-ordinators and principals alike referenced the ability of the CA to "build the capacity of the school to be able to deliver on the arts" (Principal E in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*). Emphasizing that "teachers need to be empowered by their own practice….which can be supported artists to an extent" (CA 4 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.3*), CAs were also aware of the impact that their artistic and reflective practice had on schools, ensuring "even the most steadfast, non-interested-in-arts teacher would be persuaded to understand what this process is about" (CA 1 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2*). This signifies that, as an integral part of the *CS* process, the CA had the capacity to "guide schools on their journey" (CA 2), enabling and facilitating transformational learning.

Acting as a 'broker'[47] between teachers and artists, CAs also worked hard to "cement relationships built up with local arts infrastructure, and local practitioners, developing an understanding between teachers and artists…. ensuring the initiative is explored meaningfully" (CA 4 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*). By brokering relationships between outside artists and creative organisations, one school went on to create a teacher professional community with other schools in the area, ensuring "the learning was ongoing, sustained and embedded" (CA 4). Supported by this CA and local performance artists, this had a positive impact on teachers view of "the arts, of creativity, on their importance and value" (CA 4 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.3*). This suggests that future long-term arts partnerships could establish a strategy for the creation of communities of practice[48]. Encouraging teachers to imagine what alternatives are possible (Greene cited in Heath 2008), these communities of practice could enable teachers to collaborate and build upon their knowledge, potentially transforming their pedagogical practice in arts education. In this way, teachers could be empowered to

[47] Bringing a different perspective and a legitimacy to be listened to (Wenger 1998), brokers can act as channels or conduits for innovative practice (Wenger 1998; Eckert 2000).
[48] Foregrounded by many researchers (Wenger 1998; Wenger *et al.* 2002; Kenny 2016;), this 'communities of practice' framework (Wenger 1998; Wenger *et al.* 2002) sees members within communities learning through a social process of peripheral participation.

become “active agents of their own learning” (GoI 1999a, p.14) through engagement with positive arts education experiences (Dewey 1934, 1938; Greene 1980, 1984, 1995). Therefore, these findings would indicate that by tapping into the agency of teachers, schools would be more likely to take ownership of the process, ensuring the impact of the partnership is long lasting and far reaching.

7.2.1 Factors impacting teacher agency

Although findings from this study indicated that teacher agency was key to the transformational impact of arts partnerships in schools, factors such as teacher confidence, professional development for teachers and marginalisation of the arts acted as potential barriers to unlocking teacher agency (C/F Figure 7.10). These will now be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

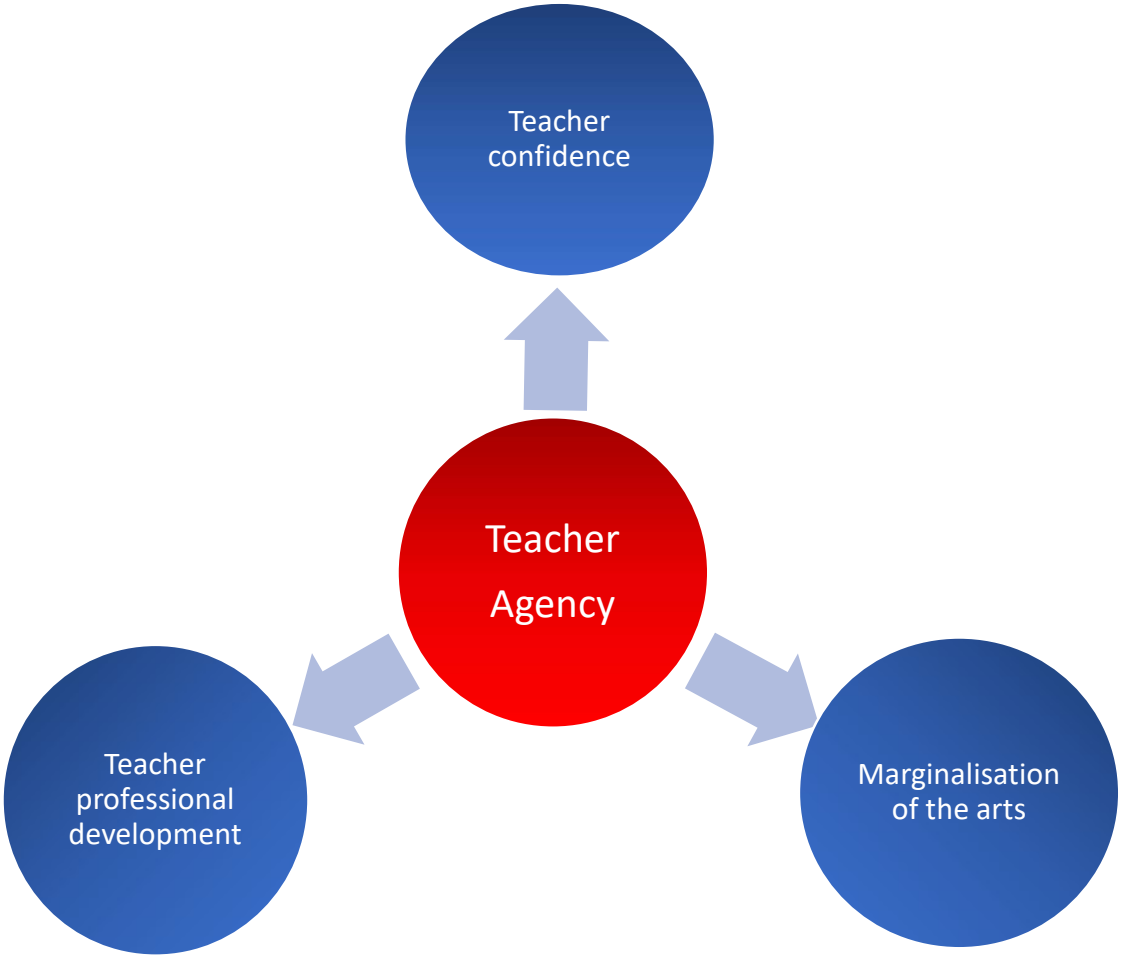

Figure 7.10 Factors impacting teacher agency

7.2.1.1 Teacher confidence

As previously highlighted, teachers play a pivotal role in the revitalisation of the arts in education (Fuchs Holzer 2009). Greene (2011, p.7) reiterates this noting, "it is the teacher who makes the difference…questioning encounters with the several arts, the alternative ways of living." However, for this to transpire, it is important that teachers are confident facilitators of these subjects. Unsurprisingly, teacher confidence, subject knowledge and teachers' beliefs regarding their capability to teach the arts came to the fore on more than one occasion throughout this study. Findings indicated that once again, the CA was key to supporting the development of teacher confidence (C/F Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.2.1. and 5.6.3.*), which in turn, impacted on teacher agency. As previously highlighted, school co-ordinators found the validator aspect of the CA role to be "one of the most important things of being part of CS", explaining that the initiative had surpassed their expectations due to the support received from their CA (Co-ordinator A in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*). However, some CAs emphasised that, while it was all about celebrating good practice which is happening within schools, "you have to be careful that you cannot come in on your broomstick and tell them all what they're doing wrong, or them feeling that they are under evaluation" (CA 4 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.5).*

Almost half of surveyed teachers (41%) cited lack of teacher confidence and subject knowledge as factors which strongly influenced their teaching of arts education. Teachers allocated less time to arts subjects due to lack of confidence whereas others could "certainly see the benefits associated with an expert delivering the lessons", citing a "balance between both teacher and specialist" (P26). Some participants noted that the teaching of the arts is very dependent on the teacher's own level of interest or confidence (P11) and can depend on the individual strengths of the class teacher (P13 in Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.1).* Although the majority of participants (64%) indicated that they had a more positive attitude towards arts education as a result of their school's engagement in the *CS,* analysed data revealed that the *CS* had only some impact on teachers' confidence in relation to the teaching of arts education overall (Chapter 6, *Figures 6.5, 6.6* and *6.7*). Although these teachers engaged positively with the partnership and viewed it as a success, these findings resounded with Hanley's (2003) study which found that teachers sometimes become deskilled when surrounded by creative, divergent thinking artists (Hanley 2003). Therefore, findings from this study suggest that a school's engagement with an arts partnership should endeavour to focus on developing creative teaching techniques while also increasing teachers' knowledge, confidence and understanding of arts processes and aesthetic qualities (Oreck 2006; Kenny and Morrissey

2020; Morrissey and Kenny 2021). In this way, teachers could be enabled and supported to confidently teach arts education in their respective classrooms, even when the initiative has ceased in their schools.

7.2.1.2 Marginalisation of the arts

Echoing Greene's lament regarding the "persistent efforts to trivialise and sentimentalize the arts within schools" (1984, p.132), an overwhelming majority of teachers (68%) indicated that increasing emphasis on numeracy and literacy had impacted on the time allocated to teaching arts education in classrooms, which turn impacted on teacher agency (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.3*). This is further supported by additional comments with 47% of teachers referencing an overloaded curriculum, which made it "challenging to make time for arts education subjects as literacy and numeracy were more of a priority" (P23 in Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.3*). These findings resonate with national and international research regarding the impact of increased emphasis on numeracy and literacy, which appear to be taking its toll on quality learning in arts education (Holdhus and Espeland 2013; Ó Breacháin and O'Toole 2013; Mc Swain 2014). While the benefits of high-quality arts education have been well-documented with considerable research revealing the benefits of arts education in its own right for children (Eisner 2002; Bamford 2006), these results reiterate the fact that arts education still occupy only a peripheral role in systems of education worldwide (Bamford 2006; Robinson 2011). In a society that needs artistic and creative thinking more than ever, teachers and students alike need space and place within the community (Greene 1978) for arts education and aesthetic learning to take place in their classrooms. Resisting high stakes, fast-paced education models (Hall *et al.* 2019), findings from this study suggest that arts partnerships could have the capacity to be that 'space', that 'community' for teachers to take ownership of arts education policies and practice that specifically concern the schools they are in. In this way, teachers can be "provoked to reach beyond themselves" (Greene 1998, p.12), moving past what they have been taught to become this community's explorers and pioneers (Ayers in Greene 2001).

As a potential solution to including arts education subjects in the curriculum, surveyed teachers alluded to integration and the effective incorporation of arts education with other curricular areas, including "more integration across subjects, more thematic and project work" (P26 in Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.3*). These findings resonate with many theories advocated by Greene (1995) who argued that the arts should be given more centrality in the curriculum as a source of important learning. Demonstrating how the arts enable our full

engagement in and of the world (Greene 2013), CAs also looked to provide opportunities for teachers to integrate arts education throughout the curriculum. As a trained primary school teacher, CA 1 explained that when he was working in classrooms, he was always "trying to be creative." Aware of the fact that, "primary school teachers are much more used to a more democratic fluid relationship", he acknowledged that it might be "difficult to get artists to do that unless they have some experience of education themselves" (CA 1 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). However, teachers acknowledged that artists and performers can support and enrich a school arts education curriculum (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.2.1*) and were enthusiastic at the prospect of engaging with outside artists and creative organisations which allowed them to "access to the arts outside of school" (Co-ordinator D). Therefore, with the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* supporting an integrated, inter-related approach to arts education (NCCA 2020), these findings indicate that arts partnerships such as the *CS,* could provide schools with diverse, integrated opportunities "to use the arts across the curriculum" (CA 1), by collaborating with, and working alongside artists and creative organisations.

7.2.1.3 Teacher professional development

In his writings on Maxine Greene, Fuchs Holzer (2009 p.387) emphasises that, "the rightful place of imaginative learning….requires professional development that is focused, imaginative, supported over time and enabling reflection." For this development of teacher knowledge and skills to transpire, surveyed teachers referenced further supports such as "CPD and intermittent workshops" (P11), "prioritised time allocation for arts subjects" (P14) and additional time and resources to be put in place (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.3*). Becoming more than just passive onlookers (Greene 2011), these calls for support in arts education echo Fuchs Holzer's (2009) beliefs regarding teacher professional development being key to the revitalisation in arts education in schools. Aligning with national and international research which found that pre-service and in-service teacher education does not provide adequate support for teachers to meet the ongoing expectations of arts education (Bamford 2006; Russell-Bowie 2009, 2010; Grennan 2017), findings from this research also found that an overwhelming majority (78%) sought further teacher professional development in arts education (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.3*). This would suggest that, although teachers and schools positively engaged in the *CS* and are aware of the arts transformative potential both for themselves and their students, the need to garner further knowledge and experience in arts education was clear.

Results from this study indicated that the CA also played a crucial role regarding the facilitation of teacher professional development in arts education. Reflecting on this, CA 4 believed that the way forward in any outside arts engagement involved incorporating an element of continual professional development (CPD), upskilling and confidence building in teachers (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.2*). Having 'someone from the outside' enter the classroom and possibly 'alter' the space in a myriad of ways (Christophersen and Kenny 2018; Kenny 2020) also had a potentially transformational impact on teachers' practice in arts education (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1).* Although only a "a very small part of the initiative" (CA 4), co-ordinators spoke about how teachers looked forward to, and placed value on, when their CA came in and modelled their artistic practice with their classes. Providing valuable professional development in the arts, teachers were afforded opportunities to "pick up some skills and confidence through that process" (CA 1 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). By allowing new directional learning to take place (Galton 2010), CAs enabled teachers to become risk-takers and develop confidence as creative professionals, challenging the unknown and the unpredictability of learning (Maddock *et al.* 2007).

As evidenced by these findings, Greene's petition to ignite the "possibilities of alternative realities" (Greene 2001, p.75) is more relevant than ever before. Unafraid to take risks, Greene encouraged teachers to tap into the imagination as a new way of "decentring ourselves" (1995, p. 31). Therefore, for educators to "break the ordinary ways of seeing and hearing" (Greene 1980, p.319) and for partnerships to be truly transformative, these findings suggest that future programmes need to provide further professional development opportunities for teachers. Consequently, to ensure the retention of valuable knowledge and the outsourcing of arts education (Christophersen 2013) is avoided in schools, arts partnerships need to tap into and dedicate more time and resources to upskilling and training of mentor teachers. By devoting more time and resources to upskilling and training teachers - coupled with ongoing support from the CA – a sustained and truly transformative approach to teaching arts education in schools could be embedded in schools.

7.3 Collaborative practice

John-Steiner emphasises the transformational nature of collaboration, noting that, "by joining with others, we accept their gift of confidence and through interdependence, we achieve competence and connection" (2000, p.204). Echoing Dewey's (1934) and Greene's (1995, 2001) beliefs that sharing ideas with others in the community was a crucial component of making sense of and learning from experience, findings revealed that the CA was central to

promoting collaborative practice (which in turn facilitated transformational learning). Curating the artist's involvement with “a view to thinking….how can we make it the most meaningful engagement possible?" (CA 4), CAs were in a pivotal position to facilitate an enhanced mutual understanding between stakeholders. Believing that there had to be a “whole school approach with the CA facilitating artist engagement, but with a view to thinking, how does this fit into the jigsaw of the wider school” (CA 4), CAs guided schools through the process in a worthwhile way. By curating these collaborative stakeholder relationships, CAs strove to embed the initiative so that schools could continue to access and receive support from outside artists and creative agencies, even when the initiative had ceased in schools (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.3*).

Reiterating the importance of developing strong relationships between stakeholders, findings from surveyed participants revealed that these types of engagement were positively received, with 68% of teachers acknowledging that artists and performers can support and enrich a school arts education curriculum (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.2.1*). 26% of teachers also referenced the positive impact of outside facilitators and artists collaborating and working alongside classroom teachers (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.2).* Emphasising the transformative nature of the arts, these finding resonate with Dewey’s (1934) and Greene's theories (1995) which advocate the sharing and engagement in a variety of art forms, by utilising artists and teachers’ expertise and experience. Bearing this in mind, these findings indicate that collaborative partnerships can provide opportunities to create something bigger than ourselves (Bresler 2018), by providing stakeholders with prospects to develop, challenge and potentially transform their pedagogical practices (Kenny 2020).

7.3.1 Factors contributing to collaborative practice

As previously discussed, key findings from this study indicated that developing collaborative practice among stakeholders was crucial to the transformational effect of arts partnerships in schools. However, it emerged that contributing factors such as building relationships, the voice of an outsider and the ‘right fit’ were also integral to the effective facilitation of collaborative practice (C/F Figure 7.11). These will now be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

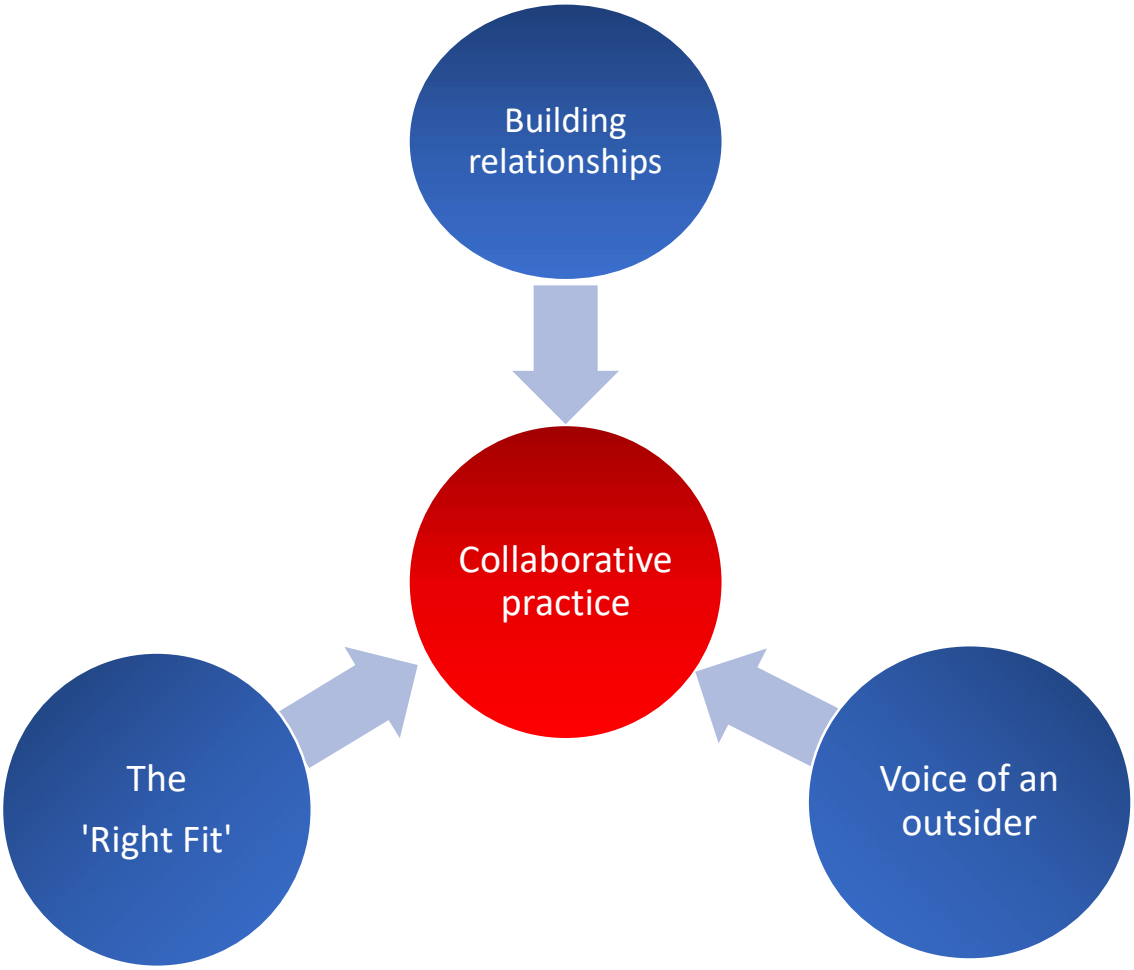

Figure 7.11 Factors contributing to collaborative practice

7.3.1.1 Building relationships

With the potential to be transformative, positive working relationships between teachers and artists need to be nurtured and developed for partnerships to flourish in schools. Results from this study indicated that the true success of the initiative depended on the ability of stakeholders to build relationships and work alongside each other. Strongly aligning with Greene's calls to for a critical, collaborative community to be opened up in our teaching and in our schools which "seek out more and more" (2011, p.8), findings indicated that the CA was pivotal to the facilitation of these collaborative relationships. Connecting them to each other and their surrounding environment (Greene 1995), results revealed that the CA can provide schools with scaffolds for new learning (Chapter 5), while also matching the needs of schools to arts and creative opportunities in their locality (*The Arts Council* website 2022). "Like the tour guide with the umbrella" (Principal E), CAs endeavoured to lead and guide schools through the *CS* process. This was reiterated by 62% of teachers believing that their CA played a crucial role in embedding the initiative in their school (Chapter 6, *Section*

6.6.2.1). Aware that "the relationship building piece with your school is massive" (CA 4), CAs viewed themselves as a "critical friend, a project manager, and a consultant of sorts to the school" (CA 4), who could potentially facilitate and "guide schools on their journey" (CA 2). One co-ordinator noted that, "from the beginning….our CA was a great support all the way through, he had a step-by-step approach… to show me what the process was about." This in turn, provided teachers with opportunities to "pick up some skills and confidence through this process" (CA 1 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1*).

Findings from this study also suggested that, by enabling and building on what schools already had, CAs acted as "a kickstart and a support for a classroom" (Co-ordinator D in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.5.1*). This in turn provided them with access to the arts outside of school, "showing us a way and helping us to explore that wider realm" (Co-ordinator D). Co-ordinator D highlighted how their CA used their creative energy in a positive manner to engage and present new ideas to schools and their staff. Teachers and principals also spoke of the positive impact on building relationships through staff engagement in immersive, modelling experiences, facilitated by their CA (Chapter 5, Section *5.6.2).* In this way, "professional development opportunities for teachers wishing to improve their arts education and practice" (Kind *et al.* 2007, p.840) could be provided by building relationships between artists, outside creative organisations, CAs and schools. This also corroborates with evidence from a report put forward by Kenny and Morrissey (2016, p.85) which suggested that "both teacher and artist skills, knowledge and understandings can complement each other very successfully….where meaningful, sustained partnerships are invested in." Bearing this in mind, these findings indicated that the *CS* can be effective in supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education, if time is given to curate positive stakeholder relationships, building mutual trust and collegial ways of working (Kenny and Morrissey 2016, 2020).

7.3.1.2 Voice of an outsider

Vital to transformational learning in arts education, Greene (2001, p.206) reminds us that the "untapped possibility" of individuals is what enables us to "reach beyond the familiar." In this instance, the CA can be that individual who enables teachers to "reach beyond the familiar" (Greene 2001, p.206), helping to navigate a journey which can be sometimes wrought with challenges. Acutely aware of the fact that it takes political know-how and negotiating skills to make all groups stay on-board (Froehlich 2018), CAs were in a key position to support teachers to tap into these possibilities. Having this skill set enabled CAs

"to build upon relationships with local arts infrastructure, and local practitioners" (CA 4 in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*), maintaining and sustaining successful collaborations.

Principals and co-ordinators alike were excited at the prospect of engaging with outside artists and creative organisations, allowing them "access to the arts outside of school" (Co-ordinator D in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*). As mentioned previously, teachers really liked the idea of someone else coming in with a different viewpoint and perspective, to model new ideas and approaches. This resonates with previously referenced research regarding the impact of 'someone from the outside' who can potentially make things happen and add elements of "surprise, tension and/or interest" (Christophersen and Kenny 2018, p.3). Therefore, these findings suggest that by continuing to build and develop positive collaborative working relationships between all stakeholders, teachers could be enabled as creative, agentic professionals, who were more prepared to take risks in their teaching of arts education.

7.3.1.3 The 'Right Fit'

As previously highlighted, the term "collaboration" can sometimes be a contested one (Christophersen and Kenny 2018; Partington 2018). Consequently, tensions and challenges sometimes emerged in schools due to fact that the CA and the partnership school were not always the 'right fit'. The fact that some CAs were not primary school teachers and did not fully understand what schools needed as a school, came to the fore on more than one occasion (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). A difference in mindset regarding differing perceptions of creativity (Maddock *et al*. 2007) was also apparent. A disparity between how teachers and CAs facilitated the creative process also emerged. This is in contrast with feedback received from schools who worked alongside a CA who was a primary teacher. Schools who collaborated with this CA viewed his primary teaching experience as a great asset due to the fact that "they just understand the workings, number one, of the primary teachers and how we think, and number two, they understand the little ones" (Principal B in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). Aligning with research undertaken by Snook and Buck (2014), who noted that teachers prefer when a colleague with similar classroom experience is involved in the provision of CPD, these findings also resonate with studies undertaken by Hanley (2003). Hanley's (2003, p.11) research revealed that "sound pedagogical knowledge" required to mentor successfully is more likely to be found among teachers who are artists, or who have significant expertise in arts education. Consequently, findings would indicate that schools felt that a CA with a teaching background could potentially be a better fit in supporting their

needs in relation to arts education (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). Therefore, further training and upskilling of teachers as CAs must be rolled out so that "the training is valuable and stays within the school and it's not lost" (Co-ordinator G in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*), ensuring the legacy of partnerships are effectively embedded in schools.

Tensions and challenges also arose due to lack of 'buy-in' from other principals and staff alike. Although most principals were strong advocates of the initiative, CAs acknowledged the "complex, layered" nature of working with schools, explaining "a lot of schools applied for the initiative thinking that it was something else" (CA 4). Because of this, CAs sometimes found it difficult to meet with principals or provide updates regarding the progress of the initiative at staff meetings (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.3.3*). Therefore, it was apparent that the relationship building piece between the school leadership team and the CA was pivotal to navigating these challenges. Resonating with research undertaken by Sharpe (2006, p.44), who emphasised that "successful partnerships need support from the principal, school management team, and enthusiastic co-ordinators", these findings acknowledge the value of external arts partners while also validating the participation of teachers as leaders beyond their classrooms. With this in mind, principals could play a key role in ensuring that supportive, meaningful structures are put in place to guide schools and their management teams through the process in a timely manner, resulting in greater 'buy-in' into the programme. Shifting the ownership of the initiative to schools, principals and teachers could have the capacity to internally sustain the *CS* on a long-term basis. This, coupled with ongoing support from the CA, "could lead to even further success" (Principal H), ensuring that the programme is positively received and strongly implemented as part of schools' arts education policies.

7.4 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative (CS)* can potentially support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. Underpinned by this study's conceptual framework (Chapter 3) and literature review (Chapter 2/Article 1), this chapter presented a discussion of the research findings as reported in Chapter 5 (Article 2) and Chapter 6 (Article 3). In synthesising these findings, this chapter proposes that the *CS* did successfully support teachers in their teaching of arts education in primary schools. By acting as a catalytic agent for teacher agency and facilitating collaborative practice, findings from this study revealed that the *CS* did create opportunities for transformational learning to occur, promoting thoughtful and inspired change (Hubbard

and Power 2003; Mills 2007). Providing evidence of transformational learning, expanded teacher agency and a potential shift towards collaborative practice, this researcher employed the lens of the conceptual framework (Chapter 3) to establish a case in support of such an assertion.

As previously discussed, findings revealed that the *CS* did provide teachers with transformational learning opportunities in arts education, with a majority of teachers indicating that they had a more positive attitude towards teaching arts education as a result of their schools' engagement in the programme. Teachers were also more likely to take an integrated approach to teaching arts education with almost a third of participants changing the way they facilitated drama and music. Interestingly, although teachers engaged positively with the initiative, it had only some impact on teachers' confidence in relation to teaching arts education overall. Key findings also indicated that the CA provided schools and teachers with opportunities for transformational learning to occur. By 'bridging the gap' between schools, teachers and artists and providing consistent scaffolds, CAs potentially enabled and supported teachers in their teaching of arts education, further embedding the legacy of the programme.

Findings from this study also indicated that teacher agency was key to the transformational impact of arts partnerships in schools. Results demonstrated that teachers had an interest in and wanted to teach the arts, but there was a need for them to be empowered by their own practice. With this in mind, it emerged once again, that the CA played a pivotal role in empowering and supporting teachers. However, factors such as teacher confidence, professional development for teachers and marginalisation of the arts acted as potential barriers to unlocking teacher agency. Consequently, these findings signified that, by tapping into the autonomy of teachers, schools are more likely to take ownership of the process, ensuring the impact of the partnership was sustained and long-lasting.

Key findings also revealed that developing collaborative practice among stakeholders was crucial to the transformational effect of arts partnerships in schools. This was strongly influenced by contributing factors such as: building relationships; the voice of an outsider and the 'right fit'. Underpinning these three factors, it was clear that the CA was central to promoting collaborative practice (which in turn facilitated transformational learning). Building and nurturing relationships, CAs aimed to guide schools through the *CS* process in a meaningful way, while curating a mutual understanding between artists, teachers and creative organisations. Survey results also revealed that these types of engagement were positively received with teachers acknowledging the positive, enriching impact of artists and performers on a school arts education curriculum. Therefore, although inevitable tensions and challenges

arose, these findings would indicate that collaborative partnerships such as the *CS,* could be hugely advantageous to schools, teachers and the artists themselves (Christophersen and Kenny 2018), providing stakeholders with transformative opportunities to develop their practice in arts education.

Given the current focus on standardisation in education, there is a great need for transformative practice in relation to the teaching arts education in schools. Maxine Greene (1995, p.21) warned, if "nothing intervenes to overcome such inertia, it joins with the sense of repetitiveness and uniformity to discourage active learning." Referencing the collaborative nature of partnerships as potential 'transformative practice zones' (Bresler 2018), arts partnerships could be that intervention to "overcome such inertia" (Greene 1995, p.21). Taking a new standpoint on the world (Greene 1980) and "building on what we have" (Principal B), initiatives such as the *CS* could have the potential to empower all stakeholders – school management, teachers, artists and creative organisations - to fully engage with arts education in a collaborative, creative capacity. Coupled with support from HEI's and further policy developments in arts education, findings from this study indicate that these collaborative engagements could empower and transform the way teachers teach arts education and how their students learn, awakening and enabling them to "reach beyond…for what is not yet" (Greene 1984, p.66). In light of this, Chapter 8 considers the implications of this study and contributions to knowledge into the future.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.0 Introduction

This research began as a result of my interest in teachers' continual professional development in arts education and the factors that potentially impacted the teaching of arts education in primary schools. As previously highlighted, there is currently a significant gap in research regarding professional development for Irish primary teachers in arts education. Although the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999) emphasises that the classroom teacher is best placed to teach the arts curriculum, the challenges in teaching arts education have been well documented (INTO 2010). Alongside these concerns, arts partnerships have gained increased popularity as a means of delivering arts education in schools (Christophersen and Kenny 2018). In Ireland, the past two decades have borne witness to the revival of such arts initiatives. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánnacha (CS)*, could potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education. Guided by five research questions, this study explored, analysed and documented the perspectives of principals, teachers, *CS* school co-ordinators and Creative Associates in eight primary schools regarding the impact of an arts partnership on the teaching of arts education. As previously stated, the timeliness of this research was also significant as very little research has been undertaken on the *CS* to date. Consequently, it was important that this investigation happened alongside the development of the initiative.

This concluding chapter presents an overview of the entire study, discusses the contributions of this study to the existing knowledge base while also examining the study's implications and limitations. Future recommendations for research, practice and policy are also outlined. Results from this study will inform both policy and practice approaches to arts partnerships in schools and could enable the *CS* to further refine and develop its programme. This will have an impact on schools, principals, teachers and children, highlighting the significance of pre-service teacher training, in-service and continual professional development in arts education for Irish primary teachers. Findings could also address possible gaps in arts education teacher programmes, benefiting and enhancing the content and delivery of arts education programmes in national Higher Education Institutes.

8.1 Overview of study

This study sought to investigate and provide an insight into how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative- Scoileanna Íldánnacha (CS),* can potentially support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education. Three peer-reviewed journal articles formed the core of this thesis. Serving a diversity of communities across different geographical regions of Ireland, this research was conducted in a purposive sample of eight primary schools who had participated in the *CS* (C/F Appendix A). A mixed-methods, multi-site case study design, was selected for this research project. With the following research questions in mind, data was collected using semi-structured interviews and surveys, to explore how the *CS* potentially supported primary teachers in their teaching of arts education:

1) What were teachers' perspectives regarding teaching arts education and what were the factors that influenced these?

2) What impact did the *CS* have on supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education?

3) How did the Creative Associate support teachers in their teaching of arts education?

4) What were the successes and challenges which arose as a result of schools' and teachers' engagement in the *CS?*

5) How can schools inform and develop the support offered by the *CS* to teachers, to further enhance their teaching of arts education?

Data was collected in two phases. Phase one was qualitative in nature and consisted of engaging twenty stakeholders in semi-structured interviews. These stakeholders included four CAs, eight school principals and eight school co-ordinators of the *CS*. Each lasting approximately forty minutes, the interview schedule focussed on certain themes and questions including: arts education and the curriculum; the role of arts partnerships in supporting arts education in schools; development of stakeholder relationships in arts partnerships and professional development for teachers in arts education. Using a framework put forward by Sinclair, Watkins and Jeanneret (2015), transcribed interviews were coded and analysed using *nVivo* software. These findings were presented in Chapter 5 (Article 2) – *Bridging the gap: the role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers.*

A mixed methods approach was used for Phase 2. Aiming to capture teachers' perspectives on how arts partnerships can support arts education in primary schools, approximately 90 teachers (in the same 8 schools) were targeted using an online survey

which was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. 50 (*n*=50) teachers completed this online survey (55% response rate). The statistical package *SPSS* was used to examine the quantitative, attitudinal items and *nVivo* was used to analyse the qualitative, open-ended questions. Both sets of data were merged, reviewed and categorized into macro themes. These findings were presented in Chapter 6 (Article 3) - *Teacher perspectives on an arts initiative in schools: 'Filling the pail or lighting the fire?'*. An overall synthesis of the research findings was presented in Chapter 7. Underpinned by this study's conceptual framework, a thematic analysis of a series of three papers presented in this thesis resulted in three interrelated, macro-themes emerging. These included: transformational learning, teacher agency and collaborative practice. The following section will now outline and discuss the contribution of the study to the existing knowledge base.

8.2 Contribution to knowledge

This research presents significant findings which will contribute to practice, research and policy developments regarding partnerships and arts education. These will now be discussed in the following sections.

8.2.1 Contribution to practice

Underpinned by the study's conceptual framework (Chapter 3), the following key findings emerged from the series of three papers presented in this thesis. These could inform approaches to arts partnerships in schools on both a national and international level, enabling the *CS* to further refine and develop its programme.

8.2.1.1 Transformational learning.

Findings from this research revealed that the *CS* had the potential to act as an agent for transformational learning, with a majority of teachers (68%) indicating that their competence (i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes) in relation to arts education had improved as a result of their engagement in the initiative (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.2.1*). As an integral part of the programme, key findings also indicated that the CA provided opportunities for transformational learning to occur (Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.1., 5.6.2., 5.6.3., 5.6.4.,* Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.2.1*). By 'bridging the gap' between schools, teachers and artists (Fahy and Kenny 2022), CAs supported teachers to challenge their thinking about things (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.1*), to take risks (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2*) and to collaborate and work alongside local arts infrastructure and practitioners (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.4*). Providing that "critical outside

eye" (CA 4), CAs also had the capacity to "make things happen" (CA 2) in relation to accessing artists and developing projects (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.1*). By working in this way teachers were encouraged to move away from the "predictable and familiar" (Maddock *et al.* 2007, p.51), which in turn, led to transformational learning.

Interestingly, although the majority of teachers indicated that they had a more positive attitude towards arts education, analysed data revealed that the *CS* had only some impact on teachers' confidence in relation to teaching arts education overall (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.2.2*). Therefore, supports such follow-up visits from the CA, teacher professional development in arts education and the creation and development of supportive communities grounded in ongoing dialogue and reflection (Wenger 1998; Wenger *et al*. 2002; Kenny 2016) could provide further opportunities for transformational learning to occur. This in turn, could ensure the legacy of the programme was further embedded.

8.2.1.2 Teacher agency

One of the most significant findings from this study revealed that teacher agency was key to the transformational impact of arts partnerships in schools. Due to the fact that they knew their class best, teachers felt they could more effectively integrate the arts with the broader curriculum (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.2*). It also arose that, although teachers had an interest in and wanted to teach the arts, there was a need for them to be empowered by their own practice. With this in mind, it emerged that the CA played a pivotal role in enabling and empowering teachers, as an integral part of the process (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.1.2*). A catalyst for transformational learning, the CA had the potential to build on schools' capacity to deliver on the arts (Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.1., 5.6.2*). Positively impacting on teachers' views of the arts and creativity, CAs endeavoured to 'broker' and build relationships between teachers, artists and outside creative organisations, ensuring that the initiative was meaningfully explored (Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.3, 5.6.4.).* However, factors such as teacher confidence, professional development for teachers and marginalisation of the arts acted as potential barriers to unlocking teacher agency (Chapter 7, *Section 7.2.1*). Consequently, findings revealed that, a school's engagement with the initiative should aim to tap into the autonomy of teachers. In this way, schools would be more likely to take ownership of the process, ensuring the impact of the partnership was ongoing and long-lasting.

8.2.1.3 Collaborative practice

Another notable finding from this research indicated that developing collaborative practice among stakeholders was crucial to the transformational effect of arts partnerships in schools. Contributing factors included: building relationships (Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.3.1, 5.6.5.1*); the voice of an outsider and the 'right fit' (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). It emerged that the CA played a central role in promoting collaborative practice, which in turn, facilitated transformational learning. Guiding schools through the *CS* process, CAs endeavoured to curate positive stakeholder relationships and develop mutual understanding between artists, teachers and creative organisations (Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.4, 5.6.5*). Survey results also revealed that these types of engagement were positively received (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.2.1*) with some teachers recognising the positive impact of artists and performers on a school arts education curriculum (Chapter 6, *Section 6.6.1.2*). "Like a tour guide with the umbrella" (Principal E), the CA emerged as the individual who enabled teachers to "reach beyond the familiar" (Greene 2001, p. 206), allowing them access to the arts outside of schools (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). By modelling new ideas and offering different viewpoints (Chapter 5, Section 5.6.2), CAs aimed to build on what schools already had, acting as a "kickstart and a support for the classroom" (Co-ordinator D in Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.5.1*). In this way, CAs facilitated positive collaborative practice, enabling and supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education.

However, tensions sometimes arose due to the fact that the CA and partnership school were not always the 'right fit'. A disparity between how teachers and the CAs facilitated the creative process emerged on more than one occasion (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.2.1*). Consequently, findings indicated that CAs with a teaching background could potentially be a better fit in supporting schools' needs in arts education (Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.2.1, 5.6.3.3*). Tensions and challenges also arose due to lack of 'buy-in' from some principals (Chapter 5, *Section 5.6.3.3*). Therefore, although inevitable challenges arose, it was apparent that the relationship piece between the school leadership team and the CA was pivotal to the successful implementation of the initiative. By facilitating meaningful collaborative practice and keeping all groups 'on board' (Christophersen and Kenny 2018), the CA could ensure that programmes such as the *CS* have a lasting, transformative impact on schools' arts education policies.

8.2.2 Contribution to research

This study has made contributions to the existing research in many different areas. The first contribution is to research on arts partnerships at primary school level in Ireland, in particular, the *CS.* There is a multitude of international studies (Wolf 2008; Clennon 2009; Holdus and Espeland 2013; Christophersen 2013, 2015; Abeles 2018) on the impact of arts partnerships in schools, however a lack of literature relating to the effectiveness of arts partnership in Ireland is noticeable. As previously highlighted, the timeliness of this research is significant as very little research has been undertaken on the *CS* to date. Therefore, this study fills a void in the literature by presenting arts partnerships as a potential support for Irish primary teachers in their teaching of arts education.

The second notable contribution to research is on the pivotal role of the Creative Associate (CA). As mentioned above, due to the fact that *CS* is a relatively new programme (2018), very little research has been undertaken on this initiative or on the role of the CA to date. It is also interesting to note that not all arts partnerships employ arts brokers to facilitate these initiatives. Indeed, there is a lack of research on the role of an arts broker in arts partnerships internationally. Bearing this in mind, it was crucial that this investigation into the role of the CA happened alongside the development of the *CS* programme. Findings from this study reiterates the vital role of the CA in contributing to the successful roll-out and implementation of the *CS* initiative (Chapter 5, *Sections 5.6.2., 5.6.3., 5.6.4., 5.6.5*). These findings could contribute to the development of such valued roles, further informing current directions and approaches of future arts partnerships on both a national and international level.

The third contribution is to the body of literature on professional development for teachers in arts education. This study contributes to the existing body of such research both nationally (Kenny and Morrissey 2016; Grennan 2017; Morrissey and Kenny 2021) and internationally (Wolf 2008; Kind *et al*. 2007; Christophersen 2013, 2015), potentially affirming the role of arts partnerships in supporting innovative professional development for teachers in arts education. Going forward, strategies for continued professional development for teachers in arts education need to be provided as an integral part of future long-term arts partnerships, to further support the teaching of arts education.

The fourth contribution is to literature on primary teacher confidence and agency regarding teaching arts education. Findings from this study confirm concerns expressed by research regarding the under-resourced primary arts education provision in Ireland (INTO 2010; Ó Sé et *al.* 2013; Grennan 2017) and the challenges faced by primary teachers in

attempting to meet the requirements of the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (Craft 2000; Grennan 2017). Similarly, these findings also concur with many international research studies (Hanley 2003; Russell-Bowie 2010; Garvis and Lemon 2013). Therefore, this study adds to this body of research by providing an insight into the factors impacting Irish primary teachers' confidence and agency in relation to teaching arts education.

The fifth contribution is to research regarding the impact of the marginalisation of arts education. This has been well documented on both a national (Ó Breacháin and O'Toole 2013; Ó Se *et al.* 2013; Grennan 2017) and international level (Greene 1995; Eisner 2002; Russell-Bowie 2010; Robinson 1999; 2011; Morris *et al.* 2017). Key findings indicated that arts partnerships such as the *CS,* could potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education in an integrated capacity. Therefore, this research could feed into the ongoing developments of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* (NCCA 2020) which supports an integrated, inter-related approach to teaching arts education. These findings could also add to the body of international research regarding the effective delivery of arts education in an integrated way.

Finally, the last contribution is to theory. Advocating for meaningful 'real-life' arts education experiences to construct knowledge (Kenny 2017), this study came under the paradigm of constructivism. This paradigm also lent itself to this research since this study's conceptual framework drew on educational theorists such as Greene (1984, 1995, 2001, 2011), Dewey (1934, 1935, 1938) and Eisner (1993, 2002). Consequently, by drawing on stakeholders' (principals, teachers, CA's and *CS* school co-ordinators) experiences and perspectives, this study expanded and built upon previous research undertaken by aforementioned educational theorists. This in turn, provided an insightful understanding of how the *CS* potentially transformed, empowered and supported teachers in their teaching of arts education.

8.2.3 Contribution to policy

This research could contribute to the development of the *CS* with a recommendation that further provision for professional development for teachers should become an integral part of the programme. Findings from this study could also contribute to policy developments on the role of the CA and how they can further support teachers in their teaching of arts education. A multi-faceted role, the CA has the potential to ensure that the *CS* has a lasting and sustained impact on the delivery of arts education in schools. By examining opportunities to integrate arts partnership programmes in a cross curricular capacity, findings from this

research could also feed into the ongoing development of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* (NCCA 2020) which supports an integrated, inter-related approach to teaching arts education. This could potentially alleviate the pressure of curriculum overload and increased focus on literacy and numeracy, ensuring the impact of partnerships is long lasting and transformative.

A combined, collaborative approach between teacher and outside facilitator or artist could be further embedded into arts education policy documents. This approach could also be integrated into pre-service training of teachers as a cohesive means of delivering arts education programmes in schools. The impact of teacher educators, classroom teachers and teaching artist collaborating together could be far-reaching. By working in this way to build curricula, all stakeholders could positively impact on teaching and learning, creating a communicative space in which an exciting, innovative arts education curriculum could evolve.

8.3 Recommendations

This mixed methods, multi-site case study provided interesting insights into how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative-Scoileanna Íldánacha (CS)* could potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education. To support the development of future arts partnerships, the following recommendations for practice, research and policy are now offered.

8.3.1 Recommendations for practice

- CPD for teachers regarding the delivery of arts education in schools must become an integral part of future arts partnerships. By opening up on-going learning possibilities for teachers through the arts, partnerships could have long lasting and sustainable impact on the delivery of arts education in primary schools.
- Key to the provision of professional development, it is recommended that arts partnerships tap into, and dedicate more time and resources to upskilling and training of 'mentor' teachers. This would ensure the retention of valuable knowledge and the outsourcing of arts education is avoided in schools. Therefore, CPD courses should be provided for teachers who wish to become CAs. Providing these participants with ample knowledge and skills, teachers could then maximise these programmes potential, tailoring them to their respective schools' needs in arts education.

- Findings from this study indicated that greater sustained support is required beyond the partnership itself to ensure high quality arts education in schools. Therefore, ongoing support needs to be provided by the CA, even when an initiative has ceased in schools. This could include follow-up visits with school management and school co-ordinators, reviewing what has happened or is happening in schools, while also eliciting future targets.
- The creation and development of supportive spaces or communities grounded in ongoing dialogue and reflection is also recommended. These supportive spaces will enable more meaningful teaching and learning to occur in arts education. Led by the CA, these communities would have an impact on empowering teachers in their own artistic and educational practice, further sustaining the legacy of arts partnerships in schools.
- Implications for teacher education programmes also arise from this study's findings. It is recommended that a combined approach between teacher and artist is further embedded into teacher education programmes. Feeding into the ongoing developments of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* (NCCA 2020), this research could also inform teacher training programmes on how they can prepare pre-service teachers to teach arts education in a more inter-related, integrated capacity. This, coupled with the strong, creative foundations provided by pre-service training, will ensure that teachers commence their careers with passion and an enthusiasm for teaching arts education.

8.3.2 Recommendations for research

- Findings from this study could actively inform future research in relation to arts partnerships and how they can support schools and teachers in arts education. These findings could also inform future partnerships such as the *CS,* to further refine and develop their programmes. Building on this, research is needed to investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of such initiatives regarding whether or not they give teachers their full status as partners on the creative journey. This would result in teachers becoming confident, knowledgeable and agentic practitioners regarding the teaching of arts education.
- Exploring the importance of preparation and professional development experiences during the *CS* initiation process*,* it is recommended that research is conducted on the development of CPD supports for teachers, artists and creative organisations. This

could result in partnerships establishing a strategy for providing continued, sustained support for teachers, through extended collaborations between schools, artists and creative organisations, even when they have ceased in schools.

- As previously mentioned, ongoing developments of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* support an integrated, inter-related approach to teaching and learning in arts education (NCCA 2020). Therefore, future research is recommended regarding how HEI's can better prepare pre-service teachers to teach arts education in an integrated capacity. In light of an ever-evolving, dynamic Irish arts education curriculum, further studies on how arts partnership programmes continue to support teachers as self-directed learners in arts education could also be explored.
- The voice, values and attitudes of artists (musician, actor, artist, dancer) are of particular relevance regarding the impact of the *CS.* Therefore, a comparative study examining the experiences and perspectives of artists is recommended so as to compare the various perspectives of stakeholders involved in the programme.
- While this study focused on supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education, it is recommended that further research could explore the arts partnership experience from the perspective of a child in the Irish primary classroom. Research could also be carried out by undertaking a larger national study, extending over a broad range of primary schools, exploring the current roll-out of the *CS.*
- Additionally, to further explore and understand how arts partnerships can support teachers in their teaching of arts education in a more cohesive manner, a similar study with secondary schools in Ireland is also recommended.

8.3.3 Recommendation for policy

- Aligning with the current redevelopment of the *Irish Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999), further opportunities to integrate arts partnership programmes in a cross-curricular capacity needs to be explored and could be driven by the CA. This could also lead to increased 'buy in' in participating schools, ensuring partnerships have a sustained impact on the delivery of arts education.
- A combined, collaborative approach between teacher and outside facilitator or artist as a possibility for effectively facilitating arts education was identified by participants in this study. It is therefore recommended that this approach could be further embedded into arts education policy documents. This approach could also be integrated into pre-service training of teachers as a cohesive means of delivering arts

education programmes in schools. The impact of teacher educators, classroom teachers and artists collaborating together would be far-reaching. By working in this way to build curricula, delivering instruction and learning from each other, stakeholders would positively impact on teaching and learning, creating and sustaining a communicative space in which an innovative arts education curriculum could evolve.

- It is recommended that findings from this research would feed into the consultation review process of *The Arts-in-Education Charter* (DES and DHAG 2013). This will have an impact on schools, principals, teachers and children and will highlight the significance of pre-service teacher training, in-service and continual professional development in arts education in Irish primary schools.

8.4 Limitations

The data collection for this research took place during the COVID pandemic (October 2020-May 2021). Fortunately, the majority of schools partaking in this research had completed the *CS* programme before restrictions were put in place. However, this researcher had hoped to engage in observations and focus groups as part of the data collection process, but this was impossible due to COVID-19 restrictions. Therefore, in-depth semi-structured interviews took place via Zoom or telephone and surveys were administered online. Interestingly, although all interviews took place virtually, interviewees were quite relaxed and forthcoming in their answers. There was also a high return in relation to online surveys. However, the pandemic did potentially impact on the number of teachers willing to participate in the study. Further research could include a larger cross-section of schools, involving a larger number of stakeholders (principals, teachers, CAs and *CS* school co-ordinators). This research could focus on the impact of the present roll-out of the *CS* in relation to how the partnership is currently supporting teachers in teaching arts education. Reflecting a broader selection of participants, a broader range of data collection methods could also be used in future studies. These could include observation methods, reflection diaries and focus groups.

This study explored the perspectives of principals, teachers, CAs and *CS* school co-ordinators in participating *CS* schools. However, as previously highlighted the voice of the child and artist was not included. Further research could include viewpoints and experiences of both child and artist, ensuring all stakeholder perspectives are taken into account. It is also worth noting that schools and teachers in the current study had applied to participate in the *CS,* indicating that they may have already have had a particular interest in arts education.

Consequently, it is possible that they do not represent the population of primary school teachers who require additional support in relation to their teaching of arts education. Therefore, a comparative study between *Creative Schools* i.e., those who have participated in the *CS* and schools who have not, may provide a more robust account of the impact of the *CS* on the teaching of arts education in primary schools.

8.5 Dissemination of Findings

As promised (C/F Chapter 4, *Section 4.5*), the dissemination of this research will include providing a summary of the main findings to *Creative Schools* Education Advisors and how these could contribute the ongoing development of the *CS.* A concise summary will also be provided to interview participants (CAs, principals and *CS* school co-ordinators) who took part in the study. Findings from this study may also have particular professional significance to national agencies such as HEI's, other teacher education providers and the Department of Education and Skills. The findings may also prove useful to primary school principals and Boards of Management who wish to participate in the current roll out of the *CS* or other similar partnership programmes. As previously highlighted, findings from this research have been widely disseminated. Three journal articles have been published (Fahy and Kenny 2021, 2022; Fahy 2022) and many papers based on this research have been presented at both national and international conferences (C/F Appendix X). These include: *AHSS* (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) 2020, 2021; *RiME* (Research in Music Education) 2021, 2023; *Trinity Laban Online Symposium,* 2021; *SMEI* (Society of Music Education in Ireland) 2021; *ESAI* (Educational Studies Association of Ireland) 2022; *ATEE* (Association of Teacher Education in Europe) 2022; *ECER* (European Conference of Educational Research) 2022 and the *International Froebel Conference*, Maynooth University (2023).

8.6 Conclusion

This study sought to investigate and provide insights into how an Irish arts partnership, the *Creative Schools Initiative (CS),* can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education in primary schools. 'Igniting a spark', key findings from this study indicated that engagement in an arts partnership did provide rich opportunities for transformational learning to occur, through engagement in collaborative practice and facilitating agency. With this in mind, Greene's call to educators to "to light the fuse" (2011, p.9) is more pertinent than ever before. Arguing for relational pedagogic spaces for the transformative nature of arts to occur, Greene (1995) reiterates that teachers and students alike need this 'space' for arts education

and aesthetic learning to take place in their classrooms. Within such spaces, arts partnerships could serve as an effective means to support and, as indicated by findings from this study, transform the teaching of arts education in schools.

However, for a sustainable future in classroom-based arts education and to avoid arts partnerships becoming a support measure, stronger emphasis needs to be placed on teacher professional development within an arts partnership approach to arts education. Teachers who want to take their own initiative and move beyond what they are taught "need to be empowered by their own practice" (CA 4), opening themselves up to new and innovative perspectives. Embracing "possibilities that open new horizons" (Greene 2013, p.252), teachers, artists and creative organisations need to be encouraged to embark on the creative learning journey together, to lean on each other, take further risks and reflect on their decisions. In this way, arts partnerships have the potential to support transformational learning in schools, enabling and empowering agentic teachers in their teaching of arts education.

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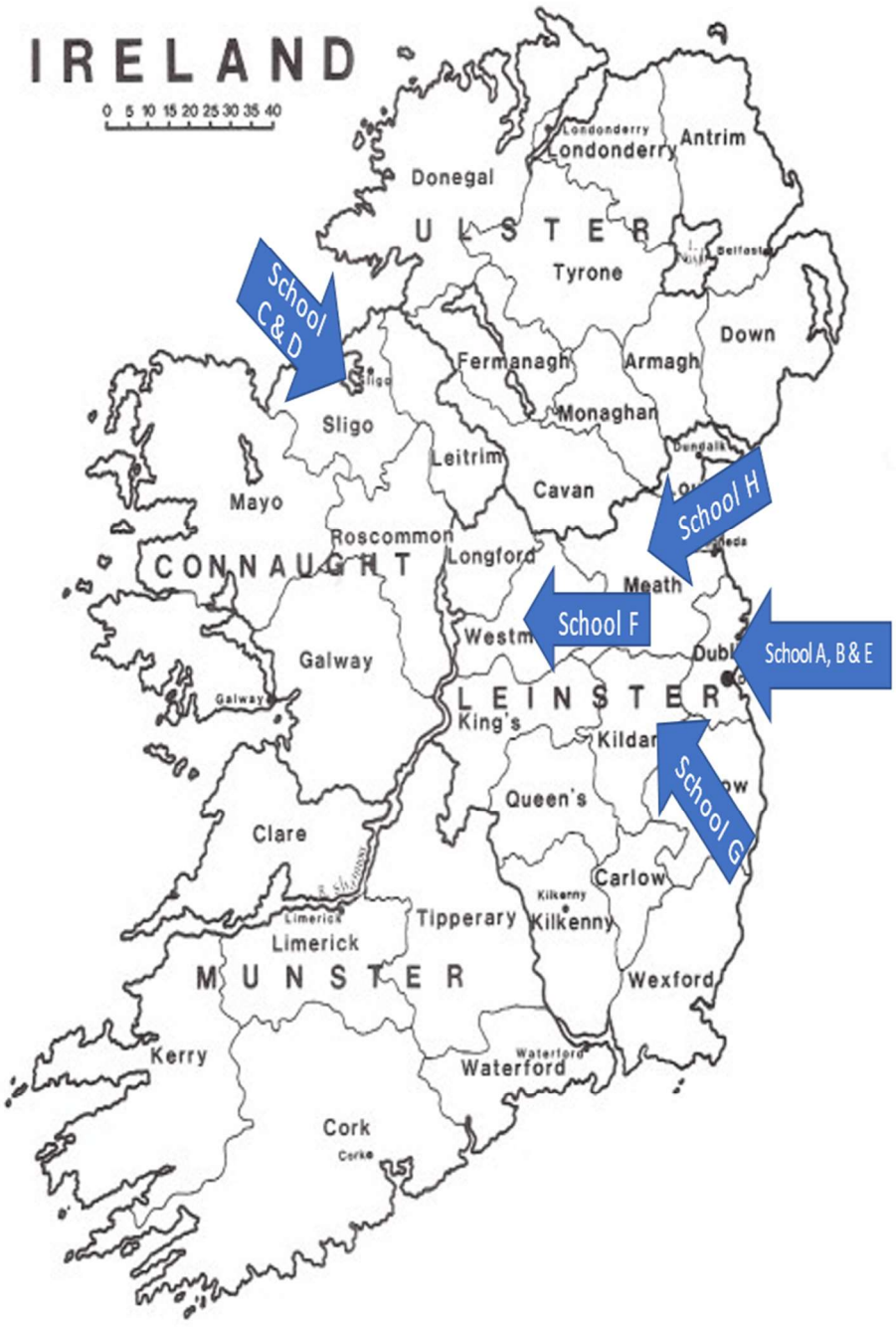
List of Appendices

Appendix A

Geographical location of research sites



Appendix B

Principal Interview Schedule and Sample Interview Extracts

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools

Principal Interview Schedule

Introduction

1. Can you tell me a little about your school and your teaching career to date?

Facilitating the Arts Education Curriculum

2. In your opinion, what are the main benefits of arts education in the classroom?

3. Do you believe that the class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate arts education in the classroom (Music, Drama, Visual Arts)?

4. What do teachers perceive to be the main challenges, if any, in relation to facilitating arts education in their classrooms?

5. Do you feel that increasing emphasis on literacy and numeracy has impacted on the delivery of arts education in classrooms? If yes, how has your school overcome this?

Arts partnerships and schools

6. Why did you feel, the need arose for the *Creative Schools Initiative (CS)* to be implemented in your school?

7. What did your school hope to learn by engaging in *CS?* Did it meet your expectations? Why/why not?

8. Do you feel there was sufficient 'buy-in' from teachers in your school into the *CS,* for it to be of optimum benefit to all involved?

9. How important is your role as the principal (and the leadership team) in generating and sustaining 'buy-in' into the *CS* initiative?

10. Do you feel that teacher's attitudes towards teaching or facilitating arts education has changed?

11. Has it impacted teachers' approach to teaching the arts? If not or if yes, how did it do this?

12. Do you believe that sufficient time was allocated to the initiative in your school, for it to be of benefit to all those involved?

13. Did you feel that both teachers' and artists' skills and knowledge were shared throughout the *CS* creative process?

14. Do you believe that teachers were given ownership in the creative journey during the *CS* process?

15. Do you feel that arts education has been firmly embedded in your school due to your involvement in the *CS*? Has the spark been ignited? Will the legacy of the initiative live on?

16. How can the legacy of the *CS* be further imbedded so that it will continue, even when the cycle has been completed?

17. Were there challenges or tensions which arose as a result of engaging in the *CS?* How were these challenges/tensions overcome?

18. What aspects of the *CS* did you feel worked particularly well? How could the *CS* build on these for future implementation of the programme?

Professional Learning for Teachers

19. Do you believe that teachers receive sufficient training throughout college to prepare them for teaching arts education in their classrooms?

20. What further supports could be put in place by *Higher Education Institutes* (HEI's) to further enhance teachers' facilitation of arts education?

21. Do you believe that teachers are provided with sufficient ongoing professional development in arts education?

22. What measures could be put in place by the Department of Education and Skills (in-service training etc) to support teachers' professional development in arts education?

23. Do you feel that the implementation of the *CS* has met teachers' professional development needs in arts education in your school? If yes, how did it do this?

Conclusion

24. In light of your experience with the *CS,* are there any recommendations regarding teacher professional development in arts education, you would suggest for future implementation of the programme?

Thank you for taking time out of your day to participate in this interview activity. I have really enjoyed our discussion. A copy of the transcript of this interview will be available if you wish to read it.

Principal B Interview Extract

Interviewer:

That’s great. And what were your expectations of your schools’ engagement in the Creative Schools?

Principal B:

Well, to be quite honest, I didn't have any expectations, I was just interested to, you know, or somebody coming in from outside to help us. Let's go with the process, kind of ...I didn't have huge expectations from it. I just said, "Oh, this is interesting. Somebody else coming in to see what happens. Let's kind of go with the flow for once." I mean, just sat back and let it happen and our Creative Associate took over and our school co-ordinator, and they got it going, which was great.

Interviewer:

Great. And you watched this whole process unfolding with the Creative Associate coming in. Do you think there was sufficient buy-in then from the teachers and the school into the initiative?

Principal B:

Oh yeah. I think, I mean, teachers were ... They were delighted to be on that together and gave their opinions and they were very happy that something was happening and that something different, something challenging, something new. A breath of fresh air is what I put down. I was happy that the other members of the leadership team were willing to kind of go with it and go with the flow and kind of keep the momentum going, they’re great.

Interviewer:

That’s great. And you mentioned there earlier on about maybe confidence in teaching the arts. Do you think maybe have teachers been further supported to overcome this challenge to have the belief in themselves to teach the arts?

Principal B:

I think maybe that's one of the areas we probably need to work on here. I think sometimes when some teachers see somebody who is brilliant at Drama or Art, they kind of say, "Well, I'd never be able to do that." But it doesn't mean that they can't lead their children in some kind of an experience for art, you know? I mean, I'm not saying they don't do it, but they wouldn't be ... They'd same, "Oh, well, I'm not great." Some children are very ... Or some teachers are very good at noticing the child is very good at that ...And sometimes they can take the cue from that child, which is good. The child might create something, and they go, "God, that's brilliant." To the child, and they can build on it for the class and say, "Oh, look at Mary's now with this great idea." And that can be good.

Interviewer:

Yeah, absolutely.

Principal B:

Some teachers are great at that, at knowing who the artist in the class is and see what they produce and then build on it, and that's good too. But they can't all be good at everything.

Interviewer:

Yeah, that's very interesting. And you mentioned there about the photographer and the jeweller coming in as well, do you think, that there was a danger of teachers feeling a little bit de-skilled by this person or this artist coming in and saying, "Oh, I can't do that."

Principal B:

I don't think so, I think teachers, it gives them an idea and they work alongside the person. I think teachers are open to that. So, I don't know that they kind of see it, oh, kind of de-skilling them. I think they can feel it, it's adding to their classroom experience for the children.

Interviewer:

Brilliant. And do you think that there's a strong working relationship now between your Creative Associate and the teachers? How important do you think this is?

Principal B:

Oh, I think so. Yeah, I think, I mean, our Creative Associate is kind of nearly part of the staff now. And he has been in and met the children with the artists. And he's done some introductory Drama workshops with us. But yeah, I see he has a rapport. And then you see, I think as well, he himself is primary teacher ...Which has been a great asset than somebody that mightn't necessarily be a primary teacher.

Interviewer:

Why do you think that is so important?

Principal B:

I think they just understand the workings, number one, of the primary teachers and how we think, and number two, they understand the little ones. Now, that's not to say ... That's not a criticism, I'm sure there's fantastic other people who are not primary teachers who are the arts and liaison persons, but I do think there's an added benefit for us that he was a primary teacher.

Interviewer:

Brilliant. And do you think if that relationship hadn't been as strong, do you think so far it would it been as successful as it seems to have been?

Principal B:

Yeah, I would agree with you on that. And I think it's interesting. We are human and personalities are important. And, I mean, our Creative Associate made it clear from the beginning that he wasn't coming in to tell us how to do it. Or what to do or tell us when you can't do it right here in this school. Like he said, "Look, I'm here, I'm enabling you and building on what you have." So, so that was like he didn't come in as kind of," Oh my God, is that what you're still doing here?" You know? People felt relaxed about it, I think, yeah.

Principal E Interview Extract

Interviewer:

So why do you feel the need arose for the Creative Schools Initiative to be implemented in your school?

Principal E:

We would be a very sporty school in that we would do a lot on the sports. We would do GAA and we do athletics, and we have cultures that come in for rugby and cricket and soccer and all sorts of things. I mean, literally everything we seem to be... And I suppose from my point of view, as a principal, I felt that we were a little bit too... Our emphasis was generally, we did the PE and the sports very well. But that we needed a bit of balance. We needed to look at and the Creative Schools Initiative came along. I wasn't actually aware that it even existed. And I got an email from one of the parents to say that it was open at the moment, I'd never even heard of it. And I looked into it then, and I said, "Right, well we'll..."

"We'll apply for that, we'll go for that." And I got talking to one of the teachers and we put together a submission. We didn't get it the first time, the first time we applied, we didn't get a place on it. But then the second year, then we reapplied again, and we did get it. But it was just a thing that, I suppose just like in sports and PE, you'd have experts that come in who coach and work alongside teachers. There's an up-skilling aspect to that. And obviously kids enjoy someone else coming in and it reinvigorates the situation. It also opens the door to outside clubs and connects them with the clubs and the teams that are in the locality.

Interviewer:

Yes.

Principal E:

And I suppose we were looking for something similar in the creative arts just to say, right well, there's nothing like having someone who's passionate about a certain thing, to come in and work with kids. Because it is infectious. And they'll bring a perspective that as teachers, we want to have. They can bring that perspective in. And the other thing I liked about it as well, we would have done one-off initiatives or one-off activities. But with that it was more of a sustained engagement. And I liked that about it, the fact that there were eight or nine school visits over the course of the year. And I just felt that it would be a more, as you say, sustained model. And you could actually pop something cohesive, something whole school in place and that's what I liked about it.

Interviewer:

Brilliant. And so far, do you think, has the Creative School Initiative met your expectations?

Principal E:

It has, yeah. We had workshops with the Creative Associate, and she was very good. In terms of working with staff and trying to tease out what our emphasis should be, or what the areas that we should be working on were. She was really good at that, very good at eliciting from people what they felt the needs were in the school. And she was also very good, she came in and worked with the kids as well. And again, drawing them out in terms of what they would like to see more of. She met with the parents' groups as well. And again, got an idea from them. Really good engagement at an early stage and good consultation. And it just meant

that, it was a ground up approach in that it was obviously being led by the creative associates. But the ideas and the needs were very much locally based, which is a nice way of starting out.

Interviewer:

That sounds great. And did you engage in some training that would prepare you for what was going to happen when working with the Creative Schools?

Principal E:

I had a lead teacher who was... She's leading the creative project, the school's project. And she went and she did the training. And there were a number of other teachers who were interested as well. So, they work as a little subcommittee or a focus group. And she's the link person between the creative associate and the staff. And she also has those other teachers just to help out as well because they've an interest in the creative arts and that. So that's the way it operated and there was a good engagement right from the start. I suppose that was the nice thing about it, is that even for teachers who are sporty, there was lots of different things for them to latch on to in the school. Because we had so much going on, but for teachers who are really creative and had all of that, particularly Music and Visual Arts we wouldn't have done a lot, other than just prepping the curriculum requirements, wouldn't be doing a whole lot. So, they've been able to lead something like that. It opened up opportunities for people who otherwise wouldn't have had something that they were passionate about to of work with as such.

Interviewer:

Yeah, that sounds great. And I love the way you mentioned the ground up approach. Do you think the relationship between yourselves and the creative associate is a strong working relationship? And how important is this relationship?

Principal E:

Yeah, I think that's very important. And I think particularly the engagement between the creative associate and the lead teacher, I think that's the key. They've a really good working relationship there and it just means that an awful lot of the smaller stuff and organization things are being sorted between them. For example, once the decision was made in terms of what particular emphasis we were going to have. They then go and work on the specifics and then bring back a proposal. And I think it's very good like that. And where there was consultation needed, or where it was difficult for the lead teacher just to get a straight answers, or get a clear direction. That's where the creative associate then got involved and moved it along.

Appendix C

Creative Schools Co-ordinator Interview Schedule and Sample Interview Extracts

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools

Creative Schools Co-ordinator Interview Schedule

Introduction

1. Can you tell me a little about your career and your teaching career to date? For example, where you qualified as a teacher? How many years have you being teaching?

Facilitating the Arts Education Curriculum

2. In your opinion, what are the main benefits of arts education in the classroom?

3. Do you believe that the class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate arts education in the classroom (Music, Drama, Visual Arts)?

4. What do teachers in your school perceive to be the main challenges, if any, in relation to facilitating arts education in their classroom?

5. Do you feel that increasing emphasis on literacy and numeracy has impacted on the delivery of arts education in your school? If yes, how has your school overcome this?

Arts partnerships and Schools

6. Why do you feel, the need arose for the *Creative Schools Initiative (CS)* to be implemented in your school?

7. What did you and your school hope to learn by engaging in *CS?* Did it meet your expectations? Why/why not?

8. Can you provide me with an insight into your role as *CS* Co-ordinator?

9. Could you provide me with an insight into the training provided by the *CS* to prepare you for your role?

10. Do you feel there was sufficient 'buy-in' from teachers in your school into the *CS* for it to be of optimum benefit to all involved?

11. How important is the role of the principal and the leadership time in generating and sustaining 'buy-in' into the *CS* initiative?

12. Do you feel that teacher's attitudes towards teaching or facilitating arts education has changed?

13. Has it impacted teachers' approach to teaching the arts? If not or if yes, how did it do this?

14. Has teachers' arts education practice been further supported and enhanced by engaging in the *CS?*

15. Were teachers further supported to overcome challenges encountered when facilitating arts education? (if yes, how did it do this?)

16. Have teachers been upskilled (or indeed deskilled) in their facilitation of arts education in their classrooms?

17. Do you feel that a strong working relationship was developed between teachers and the Creative Associate? In your opinion, how important is this?

18. Did you feel that both teachers' and artists' skills and knowledge were shared throughout the *CS* creative process?

19. Do you believe that teachers were given ownership in the creative journey during the *CS* process?

20. Do you feel that arts education has been firmly embedded in your school due to your involvement in the *CS?* Has the spark been ignited? Will the legacy of the initiative live on?

21. How can the legacy of the *CS* Initiative be further imbedded so that it will continue, even when the cycle has been completed?

22. Do you believe that sufficient time was allocated to the initiative in your school, for it to be of benefit to all those involved?

23. Did any challenges or tensions arise as a result of engaging in the *CS?* How were these challenges/tensions overcome?

24. What aspects of the *CS* did you feel worked particularly well? How could the *CS* build on these for future 'roll-outs' of the programme?

Professional Learning for Teachers

25. Do you believe that teachers receive sufficient training throughout college to prepare you for teaching arts education in your classroom?

26. What further supports could be put in place by *Higher Education Institutes* (HEI) to further enhance student teachers' facilitation of arts education?

27. Do you believe that teachers are provided with sufficient ongoing professional development in arts education?

28. What measures could be put in place by the Department of Education and Skills (in-service training etc) to support teachers' professional development in arts education?

Conclusion

29. Do you feel that the *CS* has met some of teachers' professional development needs in arts education in your school?

Thank you for taking time out of your day to participate in this interview activity. I have really enjoyed our discussion. A copy of the transcript of this interview will be available should you wish to read it.

CS School Co-ordinator F Interview Extract

Interviewer:

So why do you feel the need arose for the Creative Schools to be implemented in your school?

Co-ordinator F:

Well in my school, the reason I was pushing for the Creative Schools was because our school is a very sporty school. And if you go into our school and all the pictures on the walls in the in the reception area are all teams and what they won and what they did win, and I just wanted ... Well, look, there are kids who aren't into sports, which is brilliant. But maybe some recognition in other areas as well, like the arts.

Interviewer:

Yes.

Co-ordinator F:

That it's not just for sports. And I suppose, as well, for the whole mindfulness thing, that there is another way of relaxing and expressing yourself. And hopefully, that ... Even though, as I said, I've never been one for putting on school plays. But I would hope, if they're confident in drama, that, later on, if they wished, they wouldn't be afraid to go off to a musical society or go do a play, because they figured they enjoyed it in primary school. And also, even if they never set foot on the stage, just the confidence, if they stand up in front of their peers and say something, for, obviously, interviews or any area of life, it will help.

Interviewer:

Yes, definitely. And did you have a specific focus in mind when you applied for the Creative Schools? What did you hope to learn by engaging in the Creative Schools Initiative?

Co-ordinator F:

Well, I think, basically, we all wanted help. That we figured, yeah, we needed support in drama and music. And our first year, we concentrated on art and visual art, and we still have a beautiful mural on the wall. And what was nice about that was the kids did it, past students came back, their parents. We had grandparents. So, it was very much about the community.

Interviewer:

Yeah. That’s really lovely.

Co-ordinator F:

And then we did things like had an art exhibition at the end of the year. Just art kids had done. And again, for me, it was the recognition that, okay, it wasn't just because you won a match or something but you created something. Your parents came in, and its art, which is great.

Interviewer:

Lovely.

Co-ordinator F:

And then last year, we decided to concentrate more on the drama and music side of things. Now, we did it in our arts centre. And what happened was, they have this initiative, so a choreographer and a director came out to the school once a week for two or three months. And then we actually... in February, the kids performed Aladdin as a pantomime, in the arts centre.

Interviewer:

Wow, that sounds fabulous.

Co-ordinator F:

Because the arts centre had done Aladdin as their panto, we had the props. We had the set. The kids went, they got stage make-up, they had all the costumes, they got the full production-value of it. Parents came, obviously, and also, we made .. Oh, what was it? It was about two grand for that. But then we kept all the proceeds. So, as a fundraiser, also, for school, we raised a good few thousand.

Interviewer:

Wow, okay. That's brilliant.

Co-ordinator F:

But it wasn't that. That, for me, was a lovely side effect. The main thing was the kids got to do a performance on the stage. A proper performance; not a school one. But that was it really... It was a great thing for the school and for the kids to have.

Interviewer:

And do you think, I suppose, by doing something like that, or maybe of that nature, do you think maybe that the teachers were further up-skilled in relation to arts education?

Co-ordinator F:

Oh, they were. They were, yeah. And they could see, "Oh, yeah, we see what we did there." And also, because, normally it's only fourth, fifth, and sixth class that do it. I did ask, and what happened was our second and third and some of fourth were in the choir on either side to the stage. But we still got the children involved, so it was practically the whole school. Not infants, but then again, the day was too long, because they rehearsed during the day and the performance was at night-time, so it wouldn't have been feasible there. But hopefully, we will do it again next year or the year after, so as the kids go up through the school, it's something we would love to do again.

Interviewer:

That sounds fantastic. And was there lots of artists from the community involved in that? Or were you the driving force behind the production?

Co-ordinator F:

Well, no. We've had the team from Arts Centre. So, there was a choreographer. There was a musical director. There was a director. So, they saw also how a show was put together. That it wasn't just one person, it was a team approach, yeah.

CS School Co-ordinator G Interview Extract

Interviewer:

So, thank you so much for agreeing to do this interview, I really appreciate it. So, can you tell me a little bit about your background in teaching, about your school?

Co-ordinator G:

So, I'm 18 years teaching. My first four years were spent in Dublin, in a senior school. I worked there for four years. Then, I moved here, interviewed for a permanent job in this school, 14 years ago, and I was successful. I was a class teacher then, for 10 years, here and the last four years I am in Sen here in this school. In pre-children, I also was a speech and drama teacher for a while as well. Now, kids have taken over and time has become a little bit more scarce.

Interviewer:

A very interesting background. So, what were your motivations for taking part in the Creative Schools Initiative?

Co-ordinator G:

One of our motivations for taking part in this project, was that I felt that our school was pretty good at the whole Visual Arts side of the Arts. A little bit less so in Music and quite a bit lower down was Drama. So, I think that being involved in this project has brought Drama and Music up. I think we already have facilities for children who are into sport, who are into reading. I think, as regards music and drama, I think we're probably somewhat lacking. There are children out there that aren't sporty, and they aren't into team sports and things, and they are left aside. So, it will be nice, now, that their talent is highlighted or spotlighted and that they feel that they have little skills and talents that they can show to the class as well. We have some very creative children. We've limited opportunity for them.

Interviewer:

Yes.

Co-ordinator G:

One of the main opportunities children in the past in the school have had for Drama and Music, would've been the Christmas concert. It was an absolute delight to see some of the children that might be not so strong in their Maths or their History, but they were up on stage and performing and really enjoying it and coming alive and also seeing a whole other side of them.

Interviewer:

That sounds lovely. And do you think that the class teacher the best person to facilitate arts education in their classrooms?

Co-ordinator G:

Oh yeah. I think it has to come from the teacher, because the child won't feel comfortable with other people coming in. They feed from the teacher. Kids know what teachers are into

and if teacher likes Music or Drama, they feed off that. I think the class teacher is probably the main person.

Interviewer:

Mmmmm…very interesting and what kind of challenges do you think the teachers in your school perceive to be associated with teaching arts education in their classrooms? Music, Drama?

Co-ordinator G:

I think teachers have a certain comfort zone and it's very easy to stay in that. Drama pushes you outside of that comfort zone. We all have this fake mask we put on as teachers, and to step outside of that, you need to have a certain level of confidence to do that, because you're coming across as vulnerable to the children, because kids see you differently. You have to build a certain relationship to be able to comfortably take part in a Drama lesson, I think. Even with Music, I think we feel that we don't have the skills, so we're nervous about trying to teach children Music, when we feel like it's a specific skill that we don't have. Yet, we feel comfortable teaching other subjects that we don't have any special skill in.

Interviewer:

That's very interesting. I know you are a very creative school, so why do you feel, though, the need arose for the Creative Schools Initiative to be implemented in your school?

Co-ordinator G:

We got an email about the Creative Schools and I also was aware one of our teachers had huge talent and experience in this area, and I thought, "This is it." Well, we worked together, initially and then, I suppose, we formed a Creative School team. Other teachers came onboard then, as well, along with the lady who has the post in our school. That's where it went from there.

Interviewer:

And did you have any kind of expectations? What did you hope to learn and take away from engaging in the Creative Schools Initiative?

Co-ordinator G:

I suppose, initially, we were obviously delighted with the money. It was important as well and how could we spend it and so on. Years ago, back in the day, I did a little bit of research in the school and I surveyed all the teachers in the school. The teachers had to write the subjects that they felt they needed the most help with, or CPD with. Drama and Music were the two subjects that came up. So, that's where the need from baseline support started. Teachers were aware of this, anyway, because teachers would openly talk about it and mention it. So, it kind of made sense then, that we would choose the subjects then, that we felt was lacking in the school. There was already support out there in the community and children already had a natural interest for it anyway.

Appendix D

Creative Associate Interview Schedule and Sample Interview Extracts

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools

Creative Associate Interview Schedule

Introduction

1. Can you tell me a little about your career in arts education to date?

Arts Education and the Curriculum

2. In your opinion, what are the main benefits of arts education in the classroom?

3. In your opinion, what do you feel are the challenges teachers face, when implementing the arts education curriculum at primary level?

4. Do you believe that the arts education curricular areas are best taught by the classroom teacher or by an 'expert' or 'specialist'? Can you give reasons for your answer?

Arts partnerships and schools

5. Can you tell me a little about your why you were drawn to the *Creative Schools Initiative (CS)*?

6. Can you describe your role as a Creative Associate?

7. Could you provide me with an insight into the training provided by the *CS* to prepare you for your role?

8. What did you feel your schools hoped to learn by engaging in *CS?* Do you think it meet their expectations? Why/why not?

9. Do you feel there was sufficient 'buy-in' from teachers in your school into the *CS,* for it to be of optimum benefit to all involved?

10. How important is the role of the principal and the leadership time in generating and sustaining 'buy-in' into the *CS* initiative?

11. Do you think that teachers' arts education practice was further supported and enhanced by engaging in the *CS?*

12. Do you feel that teacher's attitudes towards teaching or facilitating arts education has changed? Has it impacted their approach to teaching the arts? If not or if yes, how did it do this?

13. Did you feel that participating teachers were upskilled (or indeed deskilled) as a result of being involved in the *CS?*

14. Do you feel that a strong working relationship was developed between teachers and the Creative Associate? In your opinion, how important is this?

15. Did you feel that both teachers' and artists' skills and knowledge were shared throughout the *CS* creative process?

16. Do you believe that teachers were given ownership in the creative journey during the *CS* process?

17. Do you believe that sufficient time was allocated to the initiative in the schools you worked in, for it to be of benefit to all those involved?

18. Do you feel that arts education has been firmly embedded in your school due to your involvement in the *CS?* Has the spark been ignited? Will the legacy of the initiative live on?

19. How can the legacy of the *CS* be further imbedded so that it will continue, even when the cycle has been completed?

20. Were there any challenges or tensions which arose as a result of engaging in the *CS?* How were these challenges/tensions overcome?

21. What aspects of the *CS* did you feel worked particularly well? How could the *CS* build on these for future implementation of the programme?

22. What further supports (if any) could be put in place by the *CS* to further support teachers in their facilitation of arts education in schools?

23. Do you feel that the *CS* enabled and supported teachers in your schools to overcome some of challenges associated with facilitating arts education? If yes, how did it do this?

Conclusion

24. In light of your experience with the *CS*, are there further recommendations regarding teacher professional development in arts education you would suggest for future implementation of the programme?

Thank you for taking time out of your day to participate in this interview activity. I have really enjoyed our discussion. A copy of the transcript of this interview will be available if you wish to read it.

Creative Associate 1 Interview Extract

Interviewer:

Thanks a million for agreeing to do this, I do really appreciate this. So, I suppose even just ease us into the whole interview process, could you maybe tell me a little bit about yourself, about maybe your own career in art education today?

Creative Associate 1:

Okay. I'm from the West of Ireland, I came to Dublin to train to be a primary school teacher. So that's part of the reason. So, I'll start there because that's part of the reason why I ended up applying for the job, I suppose. But I left teaching then in the mid 80's and became an actor, and I've been doing that for 30 odd years and there's always lean patches when you're acting. And even I did a bit of directing as well in the last 10 years, but it's still difficult to keep a full-time job.

Interviewer:

Ok…

Creative Associate 1:

Yeah. So, I suppose my interest then in arts education would be where this job came along and fell into, a which is inspiring people to experience art as part of their education. So that it provides them the opportunity to maybe find a part of themselves or a way to express themselves that isn't available to them any other way, particularly kids who maybe aren't academic or who are shy or whatever, there's a whole lot of reasons. So that's the area that I am interested in in terms of arts education. So that's why I was drawn to this role. And I suppose when I'm teaching, I'm always trying to be creative and use the arts wherever you can. It makes it so much more fun for the kids and for yourself, and I think you genuinely learn more if you're being fed information from different sources.

Interviewer:

You have very interesting background! So, from your own point of view, what do you think are the challenges facing teachers in relation to the facilitation of arts education in their classrooms - music, visual arts, drama as per the Irish curriculum.

Creative Associate 1:

Two spring to mind. I think the biggest challenge is pressure of time and workload. It's a huge challenge. We'll come to it later, I think that's one of the values of this creative schools project. So you go in as a young teacher and you just have all this curriculum to get through, even in the primary school, there's still a lot of material. In fourth class they've got to know their long division at the end, their long multiplication and get moved on to maybe to new place values. So all of that has to be done.

And they're there on their tier two words in English, so all of that has to be done, and it's difficult then to find time to do the art side of things. And it almost then becomes viewed in some cases, I think, as a bit of a break, that it's not a learning thing necessarily, that it's just a break. It's a bit of fun. Let's mess around with a bit of paint, let's do a little sketch or a play or something like that. Which is fine, and that's great. That is one of the values of it, but it doesn't seem to carry the same weight as the other subjects for a lot of people. And then the second problem is clearly a lot of teachers don't have the confidence if they're not good at the

subject themselves. And even some of them who are good, they just feel a little bit inhibited and maybe not talented enough to do maybe music, for example. That would probably be the most difficult one. A lot of people will try their hand at the drama, and then the visual art people who aren't talented in that area, they, I suppose they tend to follow here are some great resources and they just kind of follow those.

And so there's a little bit more confidence in that area because I think ... It's an interesting one though because I've never thought about this before, but maybe there seems to be more freedom of expression in art, or people perceive it, maybe teachers perceive it that it's okay to make mistakes. There are a lot of colours in the rainbow, and you could do your own colours, Whereas if you start getting into drama and music, teachers tend to back themselves into a corner where they're producing something. And by week three, I was in a school last week and they were just tearing their hairs out because it was the Christmas play and it had got to that point where the kids were just sick of it and just wanted it to be over. And I can identify with that.

Interviewer:

Yes, yes, I know. I can hear your passion for the arts and for drama! Do you think then, is arts education best taught by the classroom teacher or do you think an expert or a specialist, are better placed to teach arts education in schools?

Creative Associate 1:

Yeah, good question. I fluctuate back and forth between the two. I think the older I get the more I'm in favour of bringing somebody in to do it. It is lovely. I don't know, you see. There I go again, you see, if you bring somebody in, then it's great because you're getting all that wonderful skill and maybe the freedom of not having to produce a play, although a lot of times they do get put under that pressure. But it's easier for them to avoid that pressure if they want to and keep it a bit freer and more open. So that's the benefit of a coming in, and maybe the teacher then picks up some skills and confidence through that. It depends maybe on how that's structured. But the downside of it then is that you've got a teacher who feels that that's taken care of and so that's put it into even more of a box, rather than having it as something that just flows through your curriculum. The number of times I used to have little sketches in Maths, because it just was an easy way to ... You're trying to teach subtraction in second class, and I used to have corporal units and sergeant tens and all that kind of stuff.

Interviewer:

Brilliant.

Creative Associate 1:

And it was great fun. The kids loved it and they got to .... They were walking through the thing as well as using the deans blocks. So as well as just visualizing it they were kinetically able to conceptualize it in some way or give it some sort of a context. So that's the downside of it. So I don't know if I really answered your question there. I think a mix both would be the ideal way to go about it, and to structure it in a way that maybe the artist you choose are the relationship you establish right from the beginning. I'm not coming in here to give you a half an hour break, I'm coming in here to work with you and let's work together on this and you'll pick up stuff from me that might then be useful across your curriculum. And maybe to find ... It's difficult to get artists who would be ... It's merely up to the teachers afterwards to find a way to apply it to the curriculum. It would be difficult to get artists to do that unless they have some experience of education themselves.

Creative Associate 4 Interview Extract

Interviewer:

And I suppose then, your role as a Creative Associate, could you give me an outline of what you do, or describe your role as a Creative Associate?

Creative Associate 4:

I think I've tried to get really succinct at that, because you have to communicate that when you're going into a school, what your role is, and what it isn't. What it is, in my mind, to be really blunt about it, is that you kind of are a project manager for the Creative Schools initiative within the school.

Interviewer:

Great.

Creative Associate 4:

You're a critical friend, as they call it at Creative Schools, but I would see it more as... you're a bit of a critical friend, a project manager, and a consultant of sorts, to the school support. Multi-faceted really, supporting them on their journey. What you're not there to do, is to really explicitly practice your art form. And I feel that you're there because, if you're an artist associate, I suppose you're expected to bring your knowledge of the creative arts landscape, and cultural infrastructure, to bear, to the benefit of the school. You're there to broker relationships. And you're there to guide the school, and facilitate the school, through the process in a meaningful way. So what that can look like is, help supporting them with the logistical aspects of the initiative, like their paperwork and that type of a thing, but also being the kind of facilitator. Facilitator comes from the French word facile, to make easy, so you are there to make their journey through this process. You've got a bird's eye view of what you've come in to see, so you're helping them truly understand, develop, and celebrate process, by providing that critical outside eye, that little bit of creative arts expertise, and the logistical support, to make sure the initiative is explored meaningfully. Because teachers are so busy, and so pressed, you're a valuable resource to them on their journey, to capture the creative conversations.

Interviewer:

Great, that's very succinct! And every journey in every school is going to be very different as well really, isn't it?

Creative Associate 4:

Exactly. And the way you go about the journey. You're encouraged, as a creative associate, to bring your own arts practice into that, into the development, understanding, analysis, implementation, and evaluation of the initiative, you can use your arts practice any way that you want.

Interviewer:

That’s great. So you have a wealth of experience from dealing with schools. Do you think that the schools that you have worked with, what did they hope to learn by engaging in the Creative Schools initiative? And do you think it met their expectations?

Creative Associate 4:

I'd say, that would have been very varied, definitely the schools that I have worked with from 2018, I'd say they went in without too many expectations, in the sense that, nobody really knew what it was, it had never been done before. So I would have to be honest and say that a lot of schools applied thinking it was an artist in schools initiative. So they expected that they were going to get an artist in residence for nine days. A lot of them didn't expect that it was going to be this journey…..So did it meet people's expectations? No, probably not. But in some cases, it probably exceeded them.

Interviewer:

That's great! And do you think there was sufficient buy-in, from teachers in the schools that you worked in, for it to be of optimum benefit for everybody involved?

Creative Associate 4:

Varied school to school. Definitely the case that the more buy-in, the more the initiative can achieve, that's without a doubt. So the more excited about the initiative a school is, the more buy-in you have, the more that you'll end up implementing, has been my experience. And the more the impact will trickle all the way down to the children, and to every child in the school. So you're asking, was there sufficient buy-in?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Creative Associate 4:

It did vary from school to school, but there was, particularly in small schools, smaller schools were hugely enthusiastic about the initiative, because they felt like maybe they don't get selected for things like this. And also, when you have a smaller school, it's much, much easier to build a relationship, and garner awareness of the initiative, all the way around the school. In larger schools, there was buy-in from sections of the school, and in some ways that was sufficient, like in School G, that were willing to form a creative team, like a dedicated small team of teachers who'd plug away at this. But eliciting the buy-in of the wider school community, is much more challenging, because as teachers will point out, there's a lot of shiny new initiatives being... A principal said to me recently, she said she never realized that when she became principal, that every day people would be trying to sell her things. And she was saying that she opens up her inbox and there's this, that, and the other coming at you.

Appendix E

Information Letters

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education

Information Letter for *Creative Schools* Education Advisors

Focus of the Study: This study will explore and investigate an Irish arts partnership - *The Creative Schools Initiative* - and how it can potentially enable primary school teachers to teach arts education in their schools. Studies have found that challenges such as teacher confidence and a perceived lack of expertise often impedes the facilitation of arts education in classrooms. This proposed study will aim to examine whether the introduction of the Creative Schools Initiative can overcome these challenges, supporting teachers in their teaching of arts education in their respective classrooms.

Who is undertaking it: My name is Edel Fahy and I a doctoral student in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (MIC). I am presently completing a PhD by research in the Department of Arts Education and Physical Education under the supervision of Dr. Ailbhe Kenny.

Possible Benefits of this research: Findings from this research will enable the Creative Schools Initiative to further develop the support it offers teachers and feed into consultation review process of *The Arts-in-Education Charter*. This study will also recognise and address possible gaps in Arts Education teacher programmes, enriching and enhancing the content and delivery of these, in both national and international teacher training colleges.

What exactly is involved for participants: Research will be carried out using semi-structured interviews and surveys. This researcher will spend time visiting pilot primary schools who have participated in the Creative Schools Initiative, interviewing and surveying teachers, principals and Creative Associates, investigating whether the Creative Schools initiative enabled and supported teachers in their teaching of arts education in their respective schools. Semi-structured interviews will be recorded, and all transcripts and surveys will be anonymised.

Voluntary Participation: From the outset, participation in the proposed research is entirely voluntary and that the research will be carried out in a sensitive and non-stressful manner. Participants will also be made aware that they have the right to cease participation at any time and without the need to provide a reason up until the commencement of data analysis.

Confidentiality and anonymity: There are no known risks to participants in this study.
Every effort will be made to preserve the identity of the institutions involved in the proposed research. Additionally, the semi structured interview data will be anonymised, and the audio-recording will be deleted as soon as is possible following transcription. Every effort will be made to ensure that participants are not identified or identifiable in the final thesis or in any conference paper or publication arising from the research. The data will be only accessible through engagement with university systems and initially, will be read only by MIC supervisors and external examiners. Participants will also be asked whether they would like to read the interview transcript and sections of the project as they are completed. Throughout the duration of this proposed project, data gathered from semi-structured interviews and surveys will be secured in a

locked drawer, while soft data of same will be encrypted and password protected on a password protected computer. Following the completion of the study, it will be kept for 7 years in line with Mary Immaculate College, Limerick legal/policy requirements.

Contact Details: Edel Fahy, edel.fahy@mic.ul

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education in Irish Primary Schools

Interview Participant Information Letter

Focus of Study:
This study will explore and investigate an Irish arts partnership - *the Creative Schools Initiative* - and how it can potentially enable primary school teachers to enhance Arts Education in their schools. Studies have found that challenges such as teacher confidence and a perceived lack of expertise often impedes the facilitation of Arts Education in classrooms. This proposed study will aim to examine whether the introduction of the Creative Schools Initiative can overcome these challenges, enabling and supporting teachers in successfully enhancing arts education in their respective schools.

Who is undertaking it:
My name is Edel Fahy and I am a doctoral student in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (MIC). I am presently completing a PhD by research in the Department of Arts Education and Physical Education under the supervision of Dr. Ailbhe Kenny.

Why is it being undertaken:
The objective of this study is to investigate how the *Creative Schools Initiative* can potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools. This proposed study will aim to examine what has motivated schools to apply and become involved in the *Creative Schools Initiative.* This study will also explore the successes, challenges and tensions which potentially arose as a result of schools' involvement in the *Creative Schools Initiative* and how these pilot schools can further inform and develop the support offered to teachers in arts education.

Benefits of this research:
Findings from this research will enable the *Creative Schools Initiative* to further develop the support it offers teachers and feed into consultation review process of *The Arts-in-Education Charter*. This will have an impact on schools, principals, teachers and children and will highlight the significance of pre-service teacher training, in-service and continual professional development in arts education in Irish primary schools. This study will also recognise and address possible gaps in arts education teacher programmes, enriching and enhancing the content and delivery of these, in national teacher training colleges.

What exactly is involved for participants:
This researcher will spend time visiting pilot primary schools who have participated in the *Creative Schools Initiative*, engaging principals, school co-ordinators of the *Creative Schools* and Creative Associates (a mix of artists with a background in education or teachers with a background in the arts) in semi-structured interviews, investigating whether the *Creative Schools Initiative* has potentially enabled and supported teachers in the enhancement of Arts Education in their respective schools. For principals and school co-ordinators of the *Creative*

Schools, semi-structured interviews will be approximately 30-40minutes in duration and will be conducted in participating schools.*

Interviews with Creative Associates will also be 30-40minutes in duration and be conducted at a location that is suitable for both parties. All semi-structured interviews will be recorded, and all transcripts will be anonymised.*

**Pending the current COVID-19 situation, these interviews may also occur virtually via Skype or Zoom.*

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw:
From the outset, participation in the proposed research is entirely voluntary and that the research will be carried out in a sensitive and non-stressful manner. Participants will also be made aware that they have the right to cease participation at any time and without the need to provide a reason up until the commencement of data analysis.

Confidentiality and anonymity:
There are no known risks to participants in this study. Every effort will be made to preserve the identity of the institutions involved in the proposed research. Additionally, the semi structured interview data will be anonymised, and the audio-recording will be deleted as soon as is possible following transcription. A random ID number will be generated for each participant, ensuring that they are not identified or identifiable in the final thesis or in any conference paper or publication arising from the research. This number, rather than the participant's name, will be held with their data to maintain their anonymity.

How will the data be used/disseminated?
The data from all semi-structured interviews will be combined with that of other participants to form the results section of the thesis. This researcher will also be actively presenting at relevant local, national and international conferences namely: *ESAI* (Educational Studies Association of Ireland) Conference, *SMEI* (Society for Music Education in Ireland) Conference, *ADEI* (Association for Drama Education in Ireland) Conference and *INTO* (Irish National Teacher's Organisation) Conference where the impact of this research will be disseminated. Due to the structure of this 'thesis by article', ongoing findings from this data will be published in peer reviewed journals throughout the duration of this proposed project. These peer-reviewed education journals will include *Irish Educational Studies, International Journal of Education and the Arts, Arts, Education and Policy Review, Teaching and Teacher Education.*

What will happen to the data after the research has been completed?
The data will be initially accessible through engagement with university systems and will be read by MIC supervisors and external examiners. Participants will also be asked whether they would like to read the interview transcript and sections of the project as they are completed. Data gathered from semi-structured interviews will be secured in a locked drawer, while soft data of same will be encrypted and password protected on a password protected computer. Throughout the duration of this proposed project, ongoing findings from this data will be also be published in peer reviewed journals (see above). In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule, anonymised data may be retained indefinitely.

Contact Details:
If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study, my contact details are:
Name: Edel Fahy **Email address:** Edel.Fahy@mic.ul.ie

Supervisor details:
Name: Dr. Ailbhe Kenny, Lecturer in Music Education, Department of Arts Education and Physical Education **Email address:** Ailbhe.Kenny@mic.ul.ie

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact: Mary Collins, MIREC Administrator, Research and Graduate School, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick, Telephone: 061-204980, Email: mirec@mic.ul.ie

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form for Interviewees

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education in Irish Primary Schools

Informed Consent Form for Interviewees

Dear Participant,

As outlined in the **participant information letter** the current study will how the *Creative Schools Initiative* can potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools.

Your anonymity is assured, and every effort will be made to preserve the identity of the institutions involved in the proposed research. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time and all information gathered will remain confidential. In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule, all participants data will be stored for the duration of the project, plus three years at which time it will be destroyed.

Please read the following statements before signing the consent form:

- I have read and understood the **participant information letter.**
- I understand what the project is about and what the results will be used for.
- I am fully aware that ongoing findings from this research will be published in peer reviewed journals throughout the duration of the research project.
- I am fully aware of all the procedures involving myself and any of the benefits and risks associated with this study.
- I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.

- I am aware that data from my interview will be anonymised and confidential.

Name
(PRINTED): _____

Name
(Signature): _____

Date: _____

Appendix G

Interview Timetable

Creative Associate	**Date/Time/Interview Platform**	**School**	**Name /Position**	**Date/Time/Interview Platform**
Creative Associate 1	Monday, 21st December 2020 at 10am via Zoom	School A	CS School Co-ordinator A	Thursday, 5th November 2020 at 4.15pm via telephone
		School A	Principal A	Friday, 6th November 2020 at 4.30pm via telephone
		School B	Principal B	Friday, 27th November 2020 at 9.30am via telephone
		School B	CS School Co-ordinator B	Thursday, 26th November 2020 at 2pm via telephone
Creative Associate 2	Tuesday, 15th December 2020 at 10am via telephone	School C	Principal C and CS School Co-ordinator C	Monday, 9th November at 11.15am via telephone
		School D	Principal D	Monday, 16th November at 10.25 via telephone
		School D	CS School Co-ordinator D	Monday, 16th November at 11.30 via telephone
Creative Associate 3	Wednesday 16th December 2020 at 10am via Zoom	School E	Principal E	Thursday, 12th November at 10am via telephone
		School E	CS School Co-ordinator E	Friday, 13th November at 10.15 via telephone
		School F	Principal F	Thursday, 3rd December 2020 at 9.30am via telephone
		School F	CS School Co-ordinator F	Thursday, 26th November 2020 at 6.30pm via telephone
Creative Associate 4	Thursday, 26th November at 3pm via Zoom	School G	Principal G	Tuesday, 17th November at 3pm via Zoom
		School G	CS School Co-ordinator G	Tuesday 17th November at 4pm via Zoom
		School H	Principal H and CS School Co-ordinator H	Thursday, 19th November at 3.15pm via telephone

Appendix H – Online survey

How the Creative Schools Initiative can Support Primary Teachers to Enhance Arts Education

Survey

* Required

Introduction
Dear Teachers,

As part of my doctoral studies in education with Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, this survey seeks to hear classroom teachers' voices on how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools. This survey has also been approved by Mary Immaculate College Research and Ethics Committee.

This short survey should take approximately 5-6 minutes to complete. There are four sections in this survey which are as follows:
Section 1 - Your educational background.
Section 2 - Arts education and the curriculum.
Section 3 - The impact of the Creative Schools Initiative on supporting teachers' in arts education in your school.
Section 4 - Teacher professional development in arts education.

Absolute anonymity and confidentiality is assured. Thank you in advance for your help, time and co-operation in facilitating the gathering of this data in these uncertain times – I really appreciate it.

Kind regards,

Edel Fahy

Educational Background

1. 1. Age

Mark only one oval.

- 20-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-65 years
- Other

2. 2. Years' teaching experience

Mark only one oval.

- 0-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-40 years
- Other

3. 3. Class level you are teaching

Mark only one oval.

- Junior and/or Senior Infants
- 1st and/or 2nd Class
- 3rd and/or 4th Class
- 5th and/or 6th Class
- SET/ Resource teacher
- Other

4. 4. Time devoted to teaching Drama per week

Mark only one oval.

- 0 minutes
- 15-30 minutes
- 31-45 minutes
- 46minutes -1hour
- Other

5. 5. Time devoted to teaching Music per week

Mark only one oval.

- 0 minutes
- 15-30 minutes
- 31-45 minutes
- 46minutes-1hour
- Other

6. 6. Time devoted to teaching Visual Arts per week

Mark only one oval.

- 0 minutes
- 15-30 minutes
- 31-45 minutes
- 46-minutes - 1hour
- Other

Skip to question 7

Arts Education and the Curriculum

7. 7a. The class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate Arts Education (Music, Drama, Visual Arts) in the classroom

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

8. 7b. Additional comments on your answer: *

9. 8a. Arts Education subjects are best taught by an 'expert' or 'specialist'

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

10. 8b. Additional comments on your answer: *

11. 9a. Teaching Arts Education subjects (Music, Drama, Visual Arts) is more challenging than other curricular areas

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

12. 9b. Additional comments on your answer: *

13. 10a. Increasing emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy has impacted on the delivery of Arts Education in classrooms

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

14. 10b. Additional comments on your answer: *

15. 11. Prior to the introduction of the Creative Schools Initiative in our school, I was confident teaching the Music Curriculum

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

16. 12. Prior to the introduction of the Creative Schools Initiative in our school, I was confident teaching the Drama Curriculum

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

17. 13. Prior to the introduction of the Creative Schools Initiative in our school, I was confident teaching the Visual Arts Curriculum

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

The Creative Schools Initiative

18. 14. My competence (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes) in Arts Education improved as a result of my school's engagement in the Creative Schools Initiative.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

19. 15. Both teachers' and artists' skills and knowledge were shared throughout the Creative Schools Initiative process

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

20. 16. I have a more positive attitude towards teaching Arts Education as a result of my school's engagement in the Creative Schools Initiative

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

21. 17. My Arts Education practice was enhanced as a result of my school's involvement in the Creative Schools Initiative.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

22. 18. I am more confident teaching Drama as a result of my school's involvement in the Creative Schools Initiative

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

23. 19. I am more confident teaching Music as a result of my school's involvement in the Creative Schools Initiative

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

24. 20. I am more confident teaching Visual Arts as a result of my school's involvement in the Creative Schools Initiative

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

25. 21. The Creative Associate played an important role in the implementation of the Creative Schools Initiative in our school

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

26. 22. Sufficient time was allocated to the implementation of the Creative Schools Initiative in your school

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

Professional Development in Arts Education

27. 23. Teachers are provided with sufficient, ongoing professional development in Arts Education

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

28. 24. Pre-service teachers are sufficiently prepared for teaching Arts Education in their future classrooms

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly agree

29. 25. What supports could be put in place by Higher Education Institutes to further enhance pre-service teachers' facilitation of Arts Education? *

30. 26. What future measures could be put in place by the Department of Education and Skills to further support teachers' professional development in Arts Education? *

31. 27. Did you change the way you teach Arts Education as a result of your school's engagement with the Creative Schools Initiative? If so, please provide details: *

32. 28. What further supports could be put in place by the Creative Schools Initiative to support teachers in their enhancement of Arts Education? *

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, I really appreciate it. Kind regards, Edel Fahy

Appendix I

Survey Participant Information Letter

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education in Irish Primary Schools

Survey Participant Information Letter

Focus of Study:
This study will explore and investigate an Irish arts partnership - the *Creative Schools Initiative* - and how it can potentially support primary school teachers in their teaching of arts education. Studies have found that challenges such as teacher confidence and a perceived lack of expertise often impedes the facilitation of arts education in classrooms. This proposed study will aim to examine whether the introduction of the *Creative Schools Initiative* can overcome these challenges, enabling and supporting teachers in successfully enhancing arts education in their respective schools.

Who is undertaking it:
My name is Edel Fahy and I am a doctoral student in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (MIC). I am presently completing a PhD by research in the Department of Arts Education and Physical Education under the supervision of Dr. Ailbhe Kenny.

Why is it being undertaken:
The objective of this study is to investigate how the *Creative Schools Initiative* can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education in Irish Primary Schools. This proposed study will aim to examine what has motivated schools to apply and become involved in the *Creative Schools Initiative.* The objective of this study is to investigate how the *Creative Schools Initiative* can potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools. This proposed study will aim to examine what has motivated schools to apply and become involved in the *Creative Schools Initiative.* This study will also explore the successes, challenges and tensions which potentially arose as a result of schools' involvement in the *Creative Schools Initiative* and how these pilot schools can further inform and develop the support offered to teachers in arts education.

Benefits of this research:
Findings from this research will enable the *Creative Schools Initiative* to further develop the support it offers teachers and feed into consultation review process of *The Arts-in-Education Charter*. This will have an impact on schools, principals, teachers and children and will highlight the significance of pre-service teacher training, in-service and continual professional development in arts education in Irish primary schools. This study will also recognise and

address possible gaps in arts education teacher programmes, enriching and enhancing the content and delivery of these, in national teacher training colleges.

What exactly is involved for participants (time, location etc):
Teachers will be required to complete an online survey investigating whether the *Creative Schools Initiative* has potentially enabled and supported teachers in the enhancement of arts education in their respective schools. Completion of this online survey will last approximately 5-6 minutes. This survey will be administered via Google Survey.

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw:
From the outset, participation in the proposed research is entirely voluntary and that the research will be carried out in a sensitive and non-stressful manner. Participants will also be made aware that they have the right to cease participation at any time and without the need to provide a reason up until the commencement of data analysis.

Confidentiality and anonymity:
There are no known risks to participants in this study. Every effort will be made to preserve the identity of the institutions involved in the proposed research. Additionally, all data generated from questionnaires is confidential and anonymous.

How will the data be used/disseminated?
The data from all surveys will be combined with that of other participants to form the results section of the thesis. This researcher will also be actively presenting at relevant local, national and international conferences namely: *ESAI* (Educational Studies Association of Ireland) Conference, *SMEI* (Society for Music Education in Ireland) Conference, *ADEI* (Association for Drama Education in Ireland) Conference and *INTO* (Irish National Teacher's Organisation) Conference where the impact of this research will be disseminated. Due to the structure of this 'thesis by article', ongoing findings from this data will be published in peer reviewed journals throughout the duration of this proposed project. These peer-reviewed education journals will include *Irish Educational Studies, International Journal of Education and the Arts, Arts, Education and Policy Review, Teaching and Teacher Education.*

What will happen to the data after the research has been completed?
The data will be initially accessible through engagement with university systems and will be read by MIC supervisors and external examiners. Participants will also be asked whether they would like to read the interview transcript and sections of the project as they are completed. Data gathered from semi-structured interviews will be secured in a locked drawer, while soft data of same will be encrypted and password protected on a password protected computer. Throughout the duration of this proposed project, ongoing findings from this data will be also be published in peer reviewed journals (see above). In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule, anonymised data may be retained indefinitely.

Contact Details:
If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study, my contact details are as follows: **Name:** Edel Fahy, **Email address:** Edel.Fahy@mic.ul.ie

Supervisor details:
Name: Dr. Ailbhe Kenny, Lecturer in Music Education, Department of Arts Education and Physical Education **Email address:** Ailbhe.Kenny@mic.ul.ie

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact: Mary, Collins, MIREC Administrator, Research and Graduate School, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick, Telephone: 061-204980 Email: mirec@mic.ul.ie

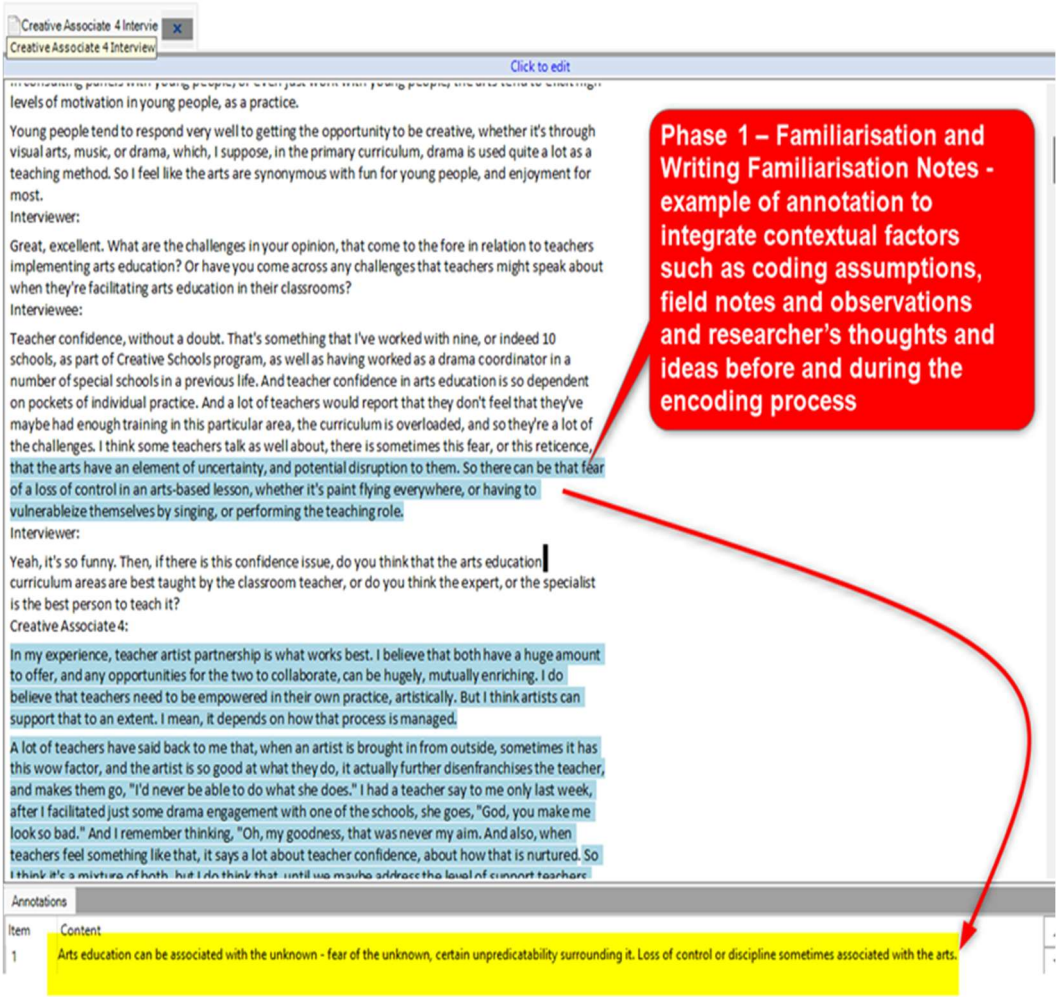
Appendix J

Surveys sent and returned

School	**Number of teachers accessed**	**Date sent**	**Date returned by**
Batch 1			
School B	14	22nd February 2021	19th March 2021
School F	7	22nd February 2021	19th March 2021
School H	3	22nd February 2021	19th March 2021
School D	14	22nd February 2021	19th March 2021
School E	10	22nd February 2021	19th March 2021
Batch 2			
School G	25	19th April 2021	14th May 2021
School C	3	19th April 2021	14th May 2021
School A	14	19th April 2021	14th May 2021
	90 teachers in total		50 out of a possible 90 surveys completed on 14th May 2021

Appendix K

nVivo Codebook- Phase 1: Familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes[49]



[49] Codebook – example of annotation to integrate contextual factors such as coding assumptions, field notes and observations and researcher's thoughts and ideas during the encoding process.

Appendix L

vVivo Codebook Phase 2: Systematic data coding (open coding)

Phase 2 – Familiarisation and Writing Familiarisation Notes (40 initial codes created at phase 2)	Code Definition (rules for inclusion)	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Artist relationship		5	11
Benefits of arts education		1	1
Broker	Establishing and brokering relationships between schools and artist/ creative and artistic organisations	19	55
CA as catalyst		11	25
Change in pedagogy	Teachers change the way that they teach	3	4
Children	Relationship and partnership building between children to ensure that their voice is heard	3	5
Confidence	Teacher confidence in relation to teaching arts education	3	11
Covid	Impact of COVID on the implementation of Creative Schools Initiative	4	10
CPD for Teachers	Professional Development for teacher in relation to arts education	4	17
Creative Arts		4	8
Creative Associates	Professional development and time for reflection for Creative Associates, enabling them to improve at their job	4	14
Curriculum		4	9
Education		5	13
Facilitator	Scaffolding Pedagogical Learning	18	85
Funding		4	7
Impact and influence of principals	Impact and influence of principals on success of partnership / initiative	4	7
Lack of CPD	Lack of professional development for teachers re: arts education	4	10
Lack of emphasis on teacher CPD		3	13
Lack of interest		4	15
Legacy	Legacy of the Creative Schools Initiative, to ensure that it is embedded and sustained	6	22
Mento		20	89
	Establishing dialogue in action and on action	1	9
Mento		20	89
	Establishing dialogue in action and on action	1	9
Mindset	Creative mindset of teacher vs creative mindset of Creative Associate	3	8
Model	Artistic practice in action; reflective practice in action	13	35
Principal Buy In	Principal's 'buy in' into the initiative or partnership was often a factor of how successful the initiative was.	2	9
Principal relationship	Relationship with principal can determine whether the partnership will be a success	8	25
Special Educational Needs		3	4
Staff turnover		2	3
Support of DES	Weighing in of Department of Education and Skills behind this initiative - giving it support	2	6
Supporting Artists		2	2
Teacher and Staff Buy In		3	7
Teacher artist partnership	Teacher and artist working alongside each other	3	7
Teacher as Creative Associate		4	8
Teacher relationship		15	34
Teacher vs Artist	Teacher vs Artist in relation to facilitating arts education	6	14
Tensions	Tensions and challenges arising as a result of school's engagement with the Creative Schools Initiative	2	4
Tensions and challenges		8	24
Time	Sufficient time to facilitate arts in the classroom	5	7
Translator	From artist to teacher, from teacher to artist	9	33
Validator	Endorsing the teacher and school's commitment to the arts	18	79

Appendix M

nVivo codebook Phase 3: Generating initial themes from coded and collated data (Developing categories)[50]

Phase 3 Generating Initial Themes from Coded and Collated Data (Developing categories) 40 initial codes mapped to 6 categories of codes with 9 sub-categories (focus for Article 2)	Code Definition (rules for inclusion)	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Facilitator	Scaffolding Pedagogical Learning	19	85
Professional Development	How the role of the Creative Associate can facilitate professional development for teachers in arts education	2	7
Mentor		20	89
Relationships	Building and maintaining relationships between key stakeholders - principals, teachers and children	20	102
Model	Artistic practice in action; reflective practice in action	13	35
Interests		5	35
Teacher as Creative Associate		4	8
Tensions and challenges		12	35
Impact and influence of principals	Impact and influence of principals on success of partnership / initiative	4	7
Tensions	Tensions and challenges arising as a result of school's engagement with the Creative Schools Initiative	2	4
Translator	From artist to teacher, from teacher to artist	16	88
Broker	Establishing and brokering relationships between schools and artist/ creative and artistic organisations	16	55
Validator	Endorsing the teacher and school's commitment to the arts	17	79
CA as catalyst		11	25

[50] Codebook – Phase 3 – Searching for Themes – involved merging, renaming, distilling, and clustering related coded into broader categories of codes to reconstruct the data into a framework that makes sense to further the analysis.

Appendix N

SPSS Code Book for Survey

How the *Creative Schools Initiative* can support primary teachers in their teaching of arts education

Variable Number	Variable Location (Column)	Variable Name	Description and Comments
1	1	Quest id	Individual questionnaire code: Number = id number of questionnaire
2	2	Age	Age 1=20-30years; 2=31-40years; 3=41-50years; 4=41-65years; 5=Other; 99=Missing/invalid response
3	3	Yrsexp	Years' teaching experience 1=0-10years; 2=11-20years; 3=21-30years 4=31-40years; 5=Other; 99=Missing/invalid response
4	4	Classlev	Class level which you are teaching 1=Junior and/or Senior Infants; 2=1st and/or 2nd class; 3= 3rd and/or 4th class; 4= 5th and/or 6th class 5= SET and/or Resource teacher 6 = Other 99=Missing/invalid response
5	5	Dramtime	Time devoted to teaching Drama per week 1= 0minutes 2= 15-30minutes; 3 = 31-45minutes; 4 = 46minutes – 1hour 5 = Other 99=Missing/invalid response
6	6	Mustime	Time devoted to teaching Music per week 1= 0 minutes 2= 15-30minutes; 3 = 31-45minutes;

			4 = 46minutes – 1hour 5 = Other 99=Missing/invalid response
7	7	Varttime	Time devoted to teaching Visual Arts per week 1= 0 minutes 2= 15-30minutes; 3 = 31-45minutes; 4 = 46minutes – 1hour 5 = Other 99=Missing/invalid response
8	8	teafacae	The class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate Arts Education. Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
8b	8b	teafacae	The class teacher is the most suitable person to facilitate Arts Education. Additional comments on your answer:
9	9	aetauexp	Arts Education subjects are best taught by an 'expert' or a 'specialist'. Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
9b	9b	aetauexp	Arts Education subjects are best taught by an 'expert' or a 'specialist' Additional comments on your answer:
10	10	aeteachal	Teaching Arts Education subjects (Music, Drama, Visual Arts) is more

			challenging than other curricular areas. Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
10b	10b	aeteachal	Teaching Arts Education subjects (Music, Drama, Visual Arts) is more challenging than other curricular areas Additional comments on your answer:
11	11	nulitima	Increasing emphasis on Numeracy and Literacy has impacted on the delivery of Arts Education in classrooms. Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
11b	11b	nulitima	Increasing emphasis on Numeracy and Literacy has impacted on the delivery of Arts Education in classrooms. Additional comments on your answer:
12	12	teconfmu	Prior to the introduction of the *CS* in our school, I was confident teaching the Music Curriculum Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree;

			5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
13	13	teconfdr	Prior to the introduction of the *CS* in our school, I was confident teaching the Drama Curriculum Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
14	14	teconfva	Prior to the introduction of the *CS* in our school, I was confident teaching the Visual Arts Curriculum Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
15	15	comimpaae	My competence (i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes) in Arts Education improved as a result of my school's involvement engagement in the *CS.* Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
16	16	bothtart	Both teachers' and artists' skills and knowledge were shared throughout the *CS* process. Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree;

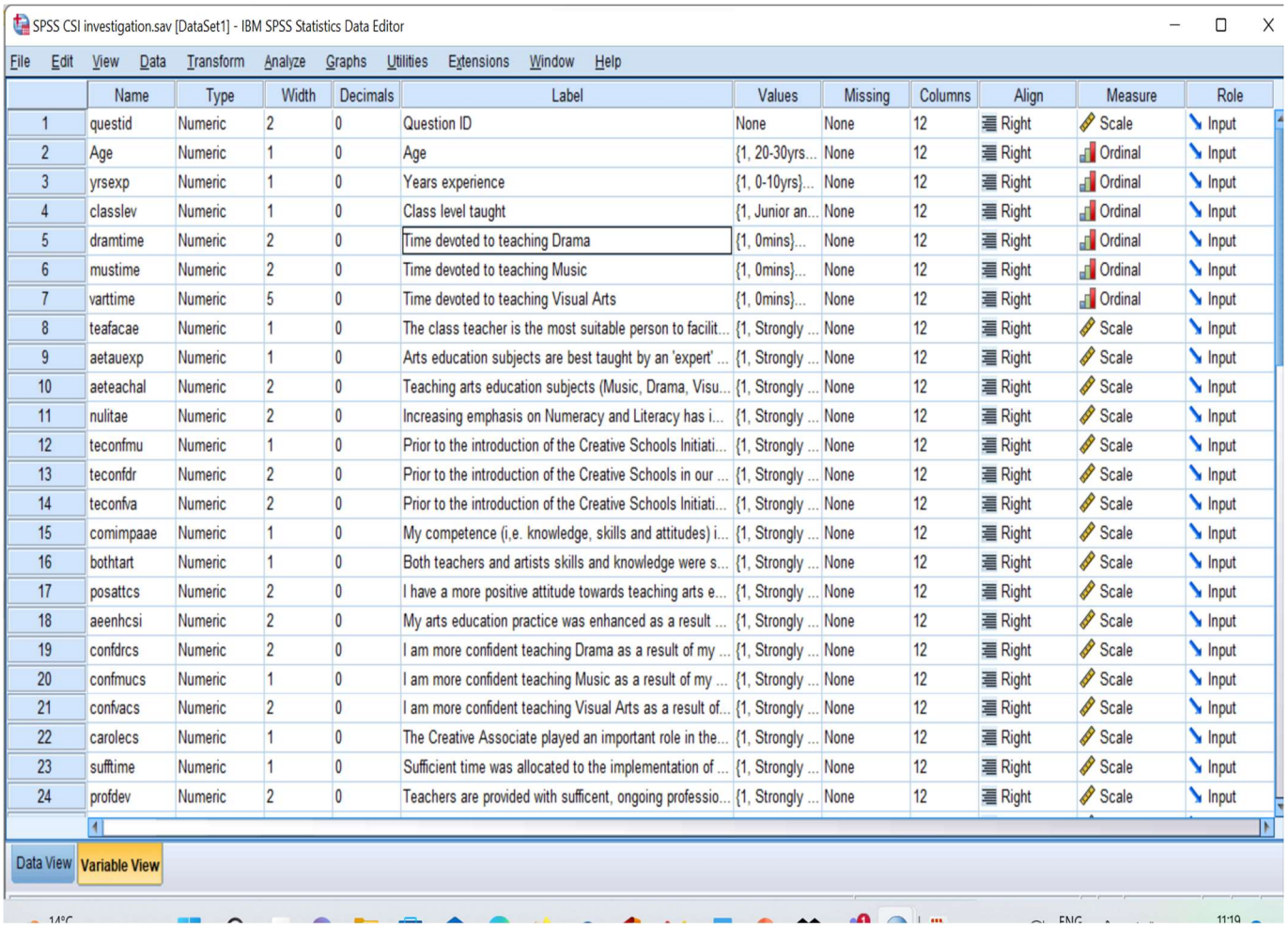
			5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
17	17	posattcs	I have a more positive attitude towards teaching Arts Education as a result of my school's engagement in the *CS.* Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
18	18	aeenhcsi	My Arts Education practice was enhanced as a result of our school's involvement in the *CS.* Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
19	19	confdrcs	I am more confident teaching Drama as a result of my school's involvement in the *CS.* Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
20	20	confmucs	I am more confident teaching Music as a result of my school's involvement in the *CS.* Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree;

			2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
21	21	confvacs	I am more confident teaching Visual Arts as a result of my school's involvement in the *CS.* Likert Scale Responses 1=Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
22	22	carolecs	The Creative Associate played an important role in the implementation of the *CS* in our school. Likert Scale Responses 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4=Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
23	23	Sufftime	Sufficient time was allocated to the implementation of the Creative Schools Initiative in our school. Likert Scale Responses 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4= Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
24	24	profdev	Teachers are provided with sufficient, ongoing professional development in Arts Education. Likert Scale Responses 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion;

			4= Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
25	25	teachpre	Pre-service teachers are sufficiently prepared for teaching Arts Education in their future classrooms Likert Scale Responses 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Somewhat Disagree; 3= No Opinion; 4= Somewhat Agree; 5= Strongly Agree; 99=Missing/invalid response
26	26	supports	What supports could be put in place by Higher Education Institutes to further enhance pre-service teachers' facilitation of Arts Education?
27	27	tprofdev	What future measures could be put in place by the Department of Education and Skills to further support teachers' professional development in Arts Education?
28	28	changeae	Did you change the way you teach Arts Education as a result of your schools' engagement with the Creative Schools Initiative? If so, please provide details.
29	29	futsuppo	What further supports could be put in place by the Creative Schools Initiative to support teachers in their enhancement of Arts Education?

Appendix O

SPSS Variable View

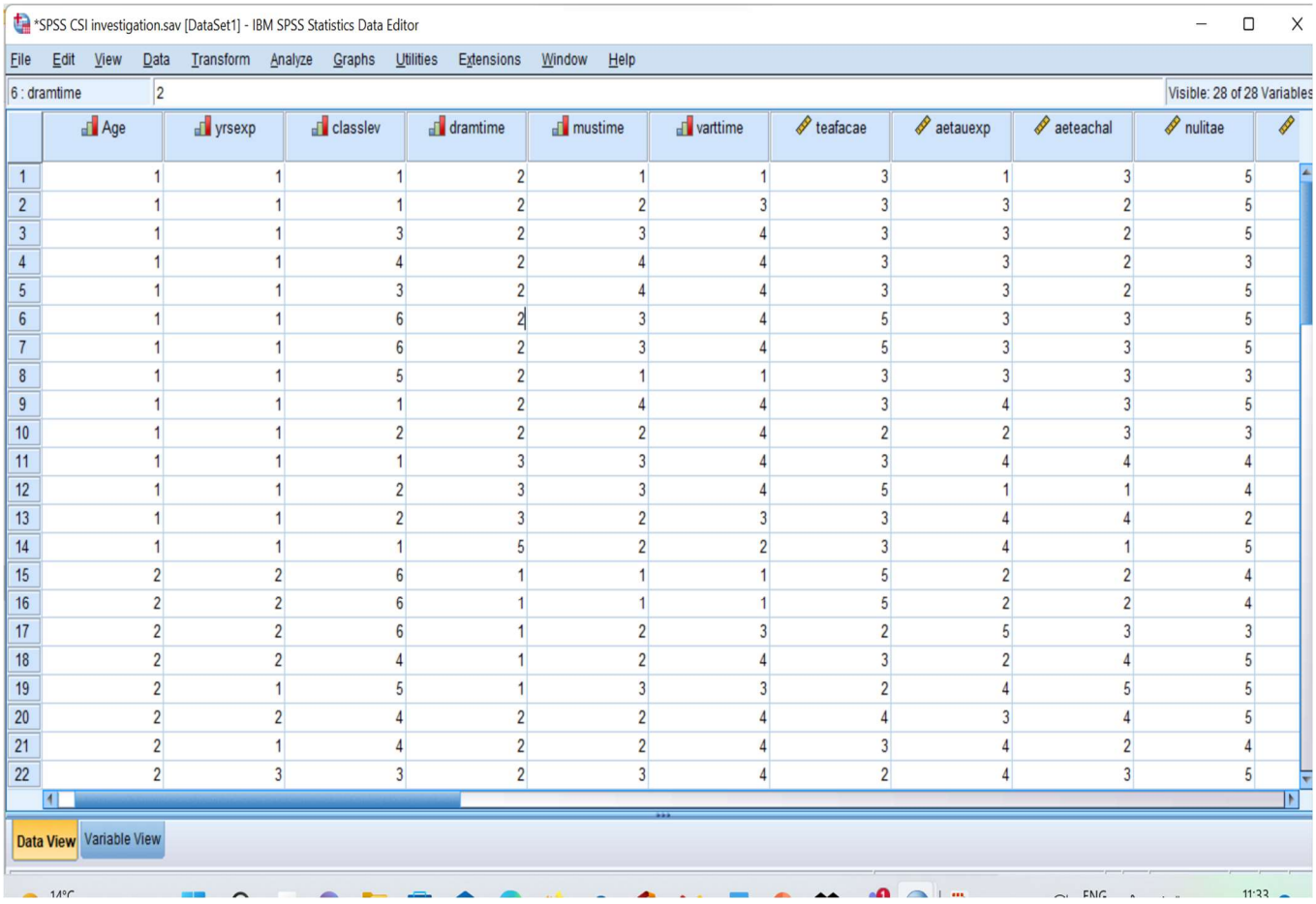

SPSS CSI investigation.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

File Edit View Data Transform Analyze Graphs Utilities Extensions Window Help

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	questid	Numeric	2	0	Question ID	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
2	Age	Numeric	1	0	Age	{1, 20-30yrs...	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
3	yrsexp	Numeric	1	0	Years experience	{1, 0-10yrs}...	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
4	classlev	Numeric	1	0	Class level taught	{1, Junior an...	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
5	dramtime	Numeric	2	0	Time devoted to teaching Drama	{1, 0mins}...	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
6	mustime	Numeric	2	0	Time devoted to teaching Music	{1, 0mins}...	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
7	varttime	Numeric	5	0	Time devoted to teaching Visual Arts	{1, 0mins}...	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
8	teafacae	Numeric	1	0	The class teacher is the most suitable person to facilit...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
9	aetauexp	Numeric	1	0	Arts education subjects are best taught by an 'expert' ...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
10	aeteachal	Numeric	2	0	Teaching arts education subjects (Music, Drama, Visu...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
11	nulitae	Numeric	2	0	Increasing emphasis on Numeracy and Literacy has i...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
12	teconfmu	Numeric	1	0	Prior to the introduction of the Creative Schools Initiati...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
13	teconfdr	Numeric	2	0	Prior to the introduction of the Creative Schools in our ...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
14	teconfva	Numeric	2	0	Prior to the introduction of the Creative Schools Initiati...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
15	comimpaae	Numeric	1	0	My competence (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes) i...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
16	bothtart	Numeric	1	0	Both teachers and artists skills and knowledge were s...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
17	posattcs	Numeric	2	0	I have a more positive attitude towards teaching arts e...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
18	aeenhcsi	Numeric	2	0	My arts education practice was enhanced as a result ...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
19	confdrcs	Numeric	2	0	I am more confident teaching Drama as a result of my ...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
20	confmucs	Numeric	1	0	I am more confident teaching Music as a result of my ...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
21	confvacs	Numeric	2	0	I am more confident teaching Visual Arts as a result of...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
22	carolecs	Numeric	1	0	The Creative Associate played an important role in the...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
23	sufftime	Numeric	1	0	Sufficient time was allocated to the implementation of ...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
24	profdev	Numeric	2	0	Teachers are provided with sufficent, ongoing professio...	{1, Strongly ...	None	12	Right	Scale	Input

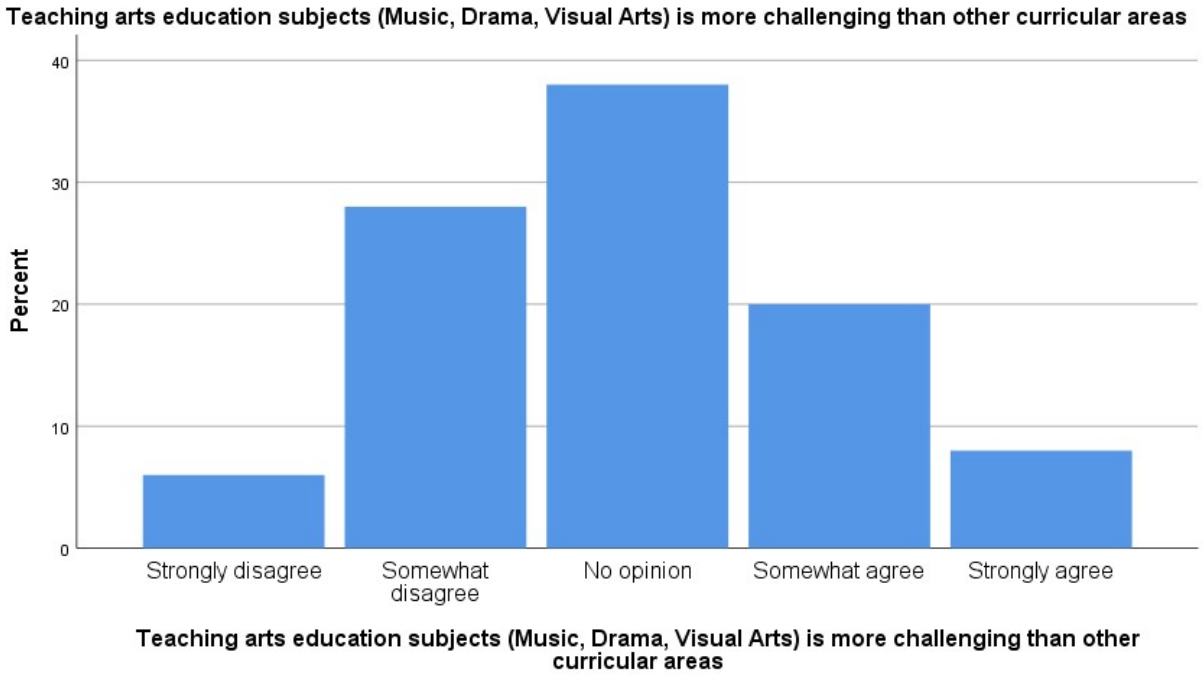
Data View | Variable View

SPSS Data View



Sample SPSS Outputs – Chapter 6

6.6.1 Factors influencing the teaching of arts education



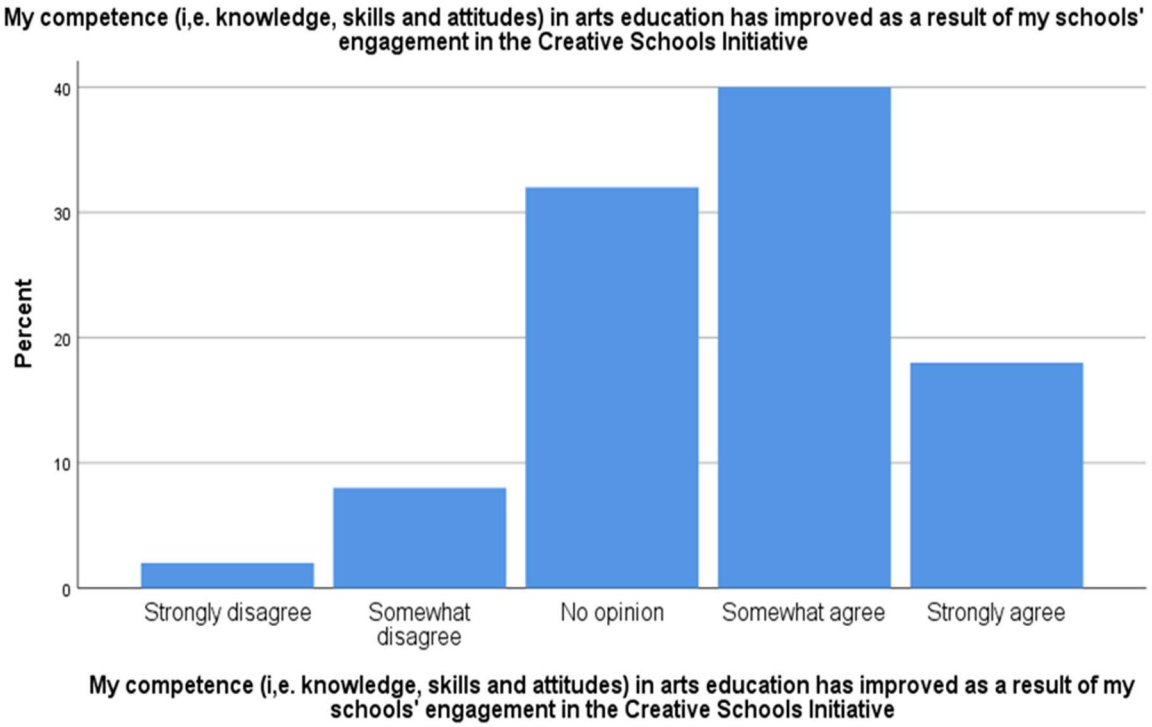
6.6.1.2 Impact of outside facilitators and artists

Arts education subjects are best taught by an 'expert' or a 'specialist'					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Somewhat disagree	10	20.0	20.0	30.0
	No opinion	18	36.0	36.0	66.0
	Somewhat agree	14	28.0	28.0	94.0
	Strongly agree	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

6.6.1.3 Time devoted to teaching arts education

Increasing emphasis on Numeracy and Literacy has impacted on the delivery of arts education in classrooms					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat disagree	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	No opinion	12	24.0	24.0	32.0
	Somewhat agree	18	36.0	36.0	68.0
	Strongly agree	16	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

6.6.2.1 Positive impact



I have a more positive attitude towards teaching arts education as a result of my schools' engagement in the CS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Somewhat disagree	2	4.0	4.0	6.0
	No opinion	15	30.0	30.0	36.0
	Somewhat agree	20	40.0	40.0	76.0
	Strongly agree	12	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The Creative Associate played an important role in the implementation of the CS in our school					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat disagree	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	No opinion	15	30.0	30.0	38.0
	Somewhat agree	16	32.0	32.0	70.0
	Strongly agree	15	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Appendix P

nVivo Codebook Phase 4[51]: Developing and reviewing themes (coding on)

Main focus on survey data at Phase 4 (Article 3)

Phase 4 Developing and Reviewing Themes (coding on) Main focus on survey data at phase 4 (Article 3)	Surveys Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Arts education subjects are best taught by an expert or a specialist	**1**	**50**
Artists' knowledge and rapport	1	13
Budget	1	1
CPD for teachers	1	8
Teacher relationship with children	1	15
Teacher subject knowledge	1	13
Changing ways of teaching Arts Education as a result of school's engagement with the Creative Schools Initiative If so, please provide details	**1**	**50**
Impact of COVID	1	1
Indifferent impact	1	2
More integrated approach	1	12
More time allocated to Drama	1	13
Positive impact	1	22
Class teacher as the most suitable person to facilitate arts education	**1**	**50**
Arts education subjects viewed as specialist areas	1	2
Combined approach of teacher and artist	1	8
Expertise needed in teaching music	1	1
Lack of CPD for teachers	1	1
Marginalisation of arts subjects in curriculum	1	1
Positive attitude towards outside facilitators and artists	1	13
Teacher confidence	1	3
Teacher relationship with class	1	2
Teacher strengths and subject knowledge	1	19
Future measures could be put in place by the Department of Education and Skills to further support teachers professional development in Arts Education	**1**	**50**
Further resources and opportunities for CPD	1	23
Not sure	1	4
Further time allocated to arts education	1	5
In school demonstrations	1	18
Increasing emphasis on Numeracy and Literacy has impacted on the delivery of arts education in schools	**1**	**50**
Indifferent impact	1	5
Integration of arts subjects	1	21
Overloaded curriculum	1	24
Requisite supports by Creative Schools Initiative to support teachers in their enhancement of Arts Education	**1**	**50**
Further funding	1	5
Further training and CPD	1	39
Simpler application process	1	6
Requisite supports by Higher Education Institutes to further enhance pre-service teachers facilitation of Arts Education	**1**	**50**
Confidence building in arts ed	1	11
Opportunities for integration	1	4
Opportunities to specialise in arts subject areas	1	16
Practical hands-on experience	1	19
Teaching Arts Education subjects (Music, Drama, Visual Arts) is more challenging than other curricular areas	**1**	**50**
Impact of COVID	1	3
Integration	1	11
Lack of CPD	1	6
Lack of subject knowledge	1	21
Marginalisation of arts	1	9

[51] Codebook – Phase 4 – Reviewing Themes involved breaking down the now reorganised categories into sub-categories to better understand the meanings embedded therein.

Appendix Q

Braun and Clarke's Six Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	**Description of the Process**
1. Familiarising yourself with the data	Transcribing data, reading, re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each theme.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic map of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selections of vivid compelling extract example, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Appendix R

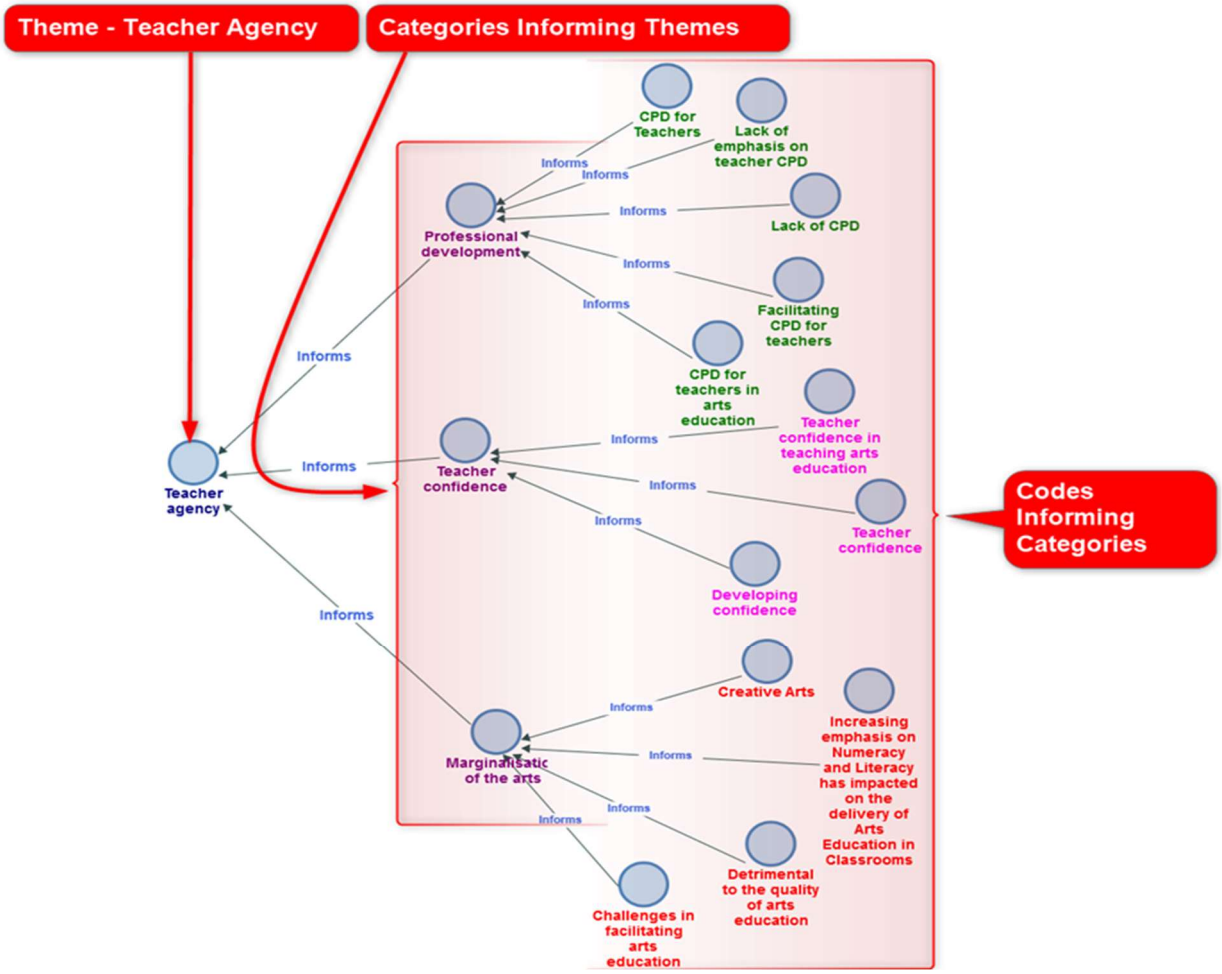
nVivo codebook Phase 5: Developing a Thematic Framework[52]

Phase 5 Refining, Defining and Naming Themes (Developing a Thematic Framework) 3 major themes identified from all data	Documents Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Collaborative practice	7	58
Building relationships	6	44
Generating buy-in	3	14
Voice of an outsider	3	11
Teacher agency	7	45
Marginalisation of the arts	5	20
Professional development	5	27
Teacher confidence	5	25
Transformative learning	7	41

[52] Codebook – Phase 5 – Defining and Naming Themes involved conceptually mapping and collapsing categories into a broader thematic framework.

Appendix S

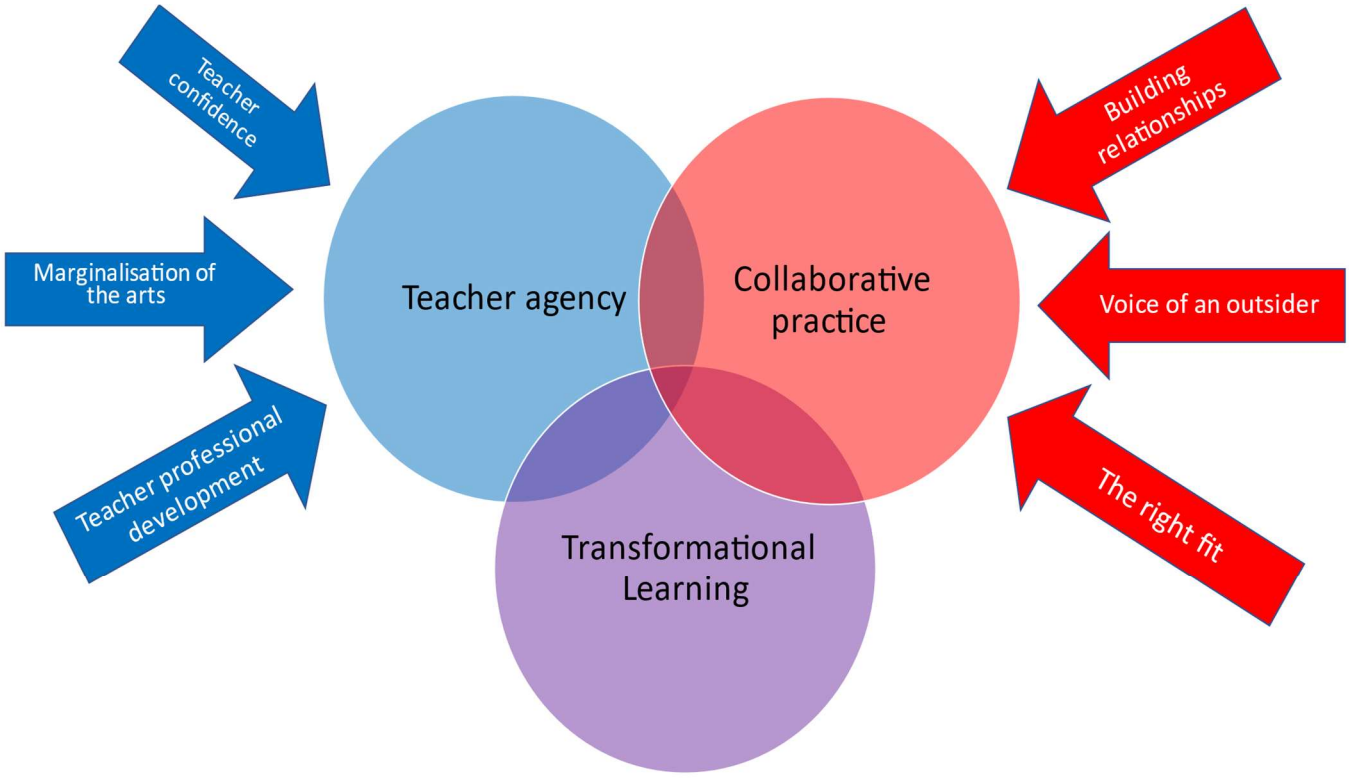
Example of flow from codes to categories to themes[53]



[53] Codebook – example of construction of the theme 'Teacher Agency' which was informed from categories which in-turn were formed by earlier codes showing the flow form codes, to categories of codes to themes.

Appendix T

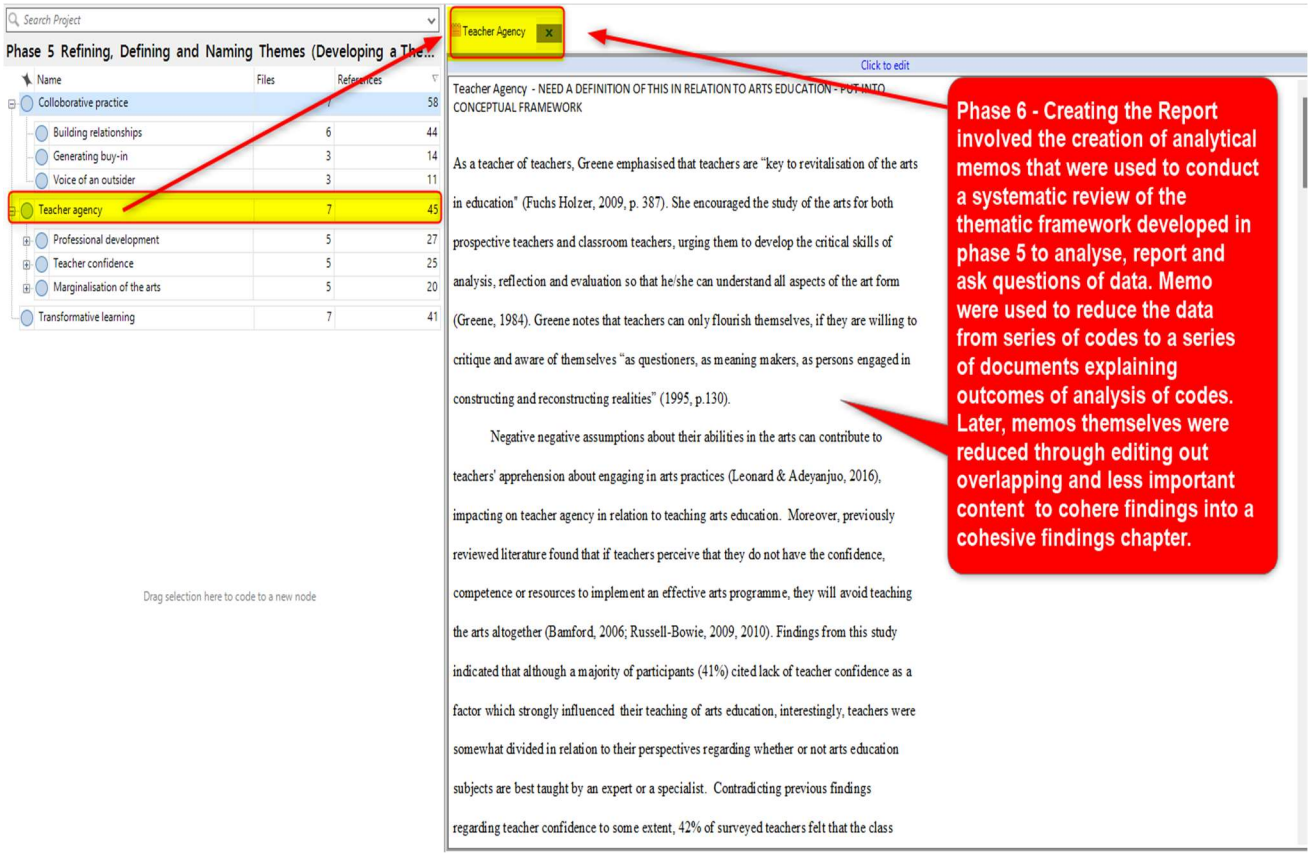
Example of conceptual mapping[54]



[54] Codebook – example of conceptual mapping and how the researcher makes sense of codes and categories to identify latent themes embedded in data. Conceptual mapping aids the researcher in the process of abstracting themes important to the research questions from complex data

Appendix U

Example of an anlytic memo [55]



[55] Codebook – Phase 6 - Creating the Report involved the creation of analytical memos that were used to conduct a systematic review of the thematic framework developed in phase 5 to analyse, report and ask questions of data. Memo was used to reduce the data from series of codes to a series of documents explaining outcomes of analysis of codes. Later, memos themselves were reduced through editing out overlapping and less important content to cohere findings into a cohesive findings chapter.

Appendix V

Ethics Approval Form

Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee

MIREC-4: MIREC Chair Decision Form

APPLICATION NO. A20-046

1. PROJECT TITLE

An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools

2. APPLICANT

Name:	Edel Fahy
Department / Centre / Other:	Arts Education & Physical Education
Position:	Postgraduate Researcher

3. DECISION OF MIREC CHAIR

☐	Ethical clearance through MIREC is required.
☐	Ethical clearance through MIREC is not required and therefore the researcher need take no further action in this regard.
✓	Ethical clearance is required and granted. Referral to MIREC is not necessary.
☐	Ethical clearance is required but the full MIREC process is not. Ethical clearance is therefore granted if required for external funding applications and the researcher need take no further action in this regard.
☐	Insufficient information provided by applicant / Amendments required.

4. REASON(S) FOR DECISION

Application Ref. A20-046 – Edel Fahy - 'An investigation into how the Creative Schools Initiative can potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools'

I have reviewed this application and I believe it satisfies MIREC requirements. It is, therefore, approved.

5. DECLARATION (On behalf of MIREC CHAIR)

Name (Print):	Professor Michael Healy
Signature:	
Date:	28th September 2020

Appendix W

Permission to Conduct Research

Mary Immaculate College,

South Circular Road,

Limerick.

Name of School,

Address of school.

Dear Principal,

My name is Edel Fahy and I am a doctoral student in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (MIC). I am presently completing a PhD by research in the Department of Arts Education and Physical Education under the supervision of Dr. Ailbhe Kenny. The objective of my study is to investigate how the *Creative Schools Initiative* can potentially enable and support teachers to enhance arts education in Irish Primary Schools. This proposed study will aim to examine what has motivated schools to apply and become involved in the *Creative Schools Initiative.* This study will also explore the successes, challenges and tensions which potentially arose as a result of schools' involvement in the *Creative Schools Initiative* and how these pilot schools can further inform and develop the support offered to teachers in arts education.

Findings from this research will enable the *Creative Schools Initiative* to further develop the support it offers teachers and feed into consultation review process of *The Arts-in-Education Charter*. This will have an impact on schools, principals, teachers and children and will highlight the significance of pre-service teacher training, in-service and continual professional development in arts education in Irish primary schools. This study will also recognise and address possible gaps in arts education teacher programmes, enriching and enhancing the content and delivery of these programmes.

In order to complete this research, I would like to engage you, the principal and your school co-ordinator of the *Creative Schools* in semi-structured interviews. These individual interviews will be approximately 30-40minutes in duration. I would also be grateful if permission was granted for teachers in your school, to complete an online survey investigating whether the *Creative Schools Initiative* has potentially enabled and supported them in their teaching of arts education. Completion of this online survey will last approximately 5-6 minutes.

Absolute confidentiality and anonymity is assured - every effort will be made to preserve the identity of your school and participants involved in the proposed research. Participants will also be made aware that they have the right to cease participation at any time and without the need to provide a reason up until the commencement of data analysis. If you have any queries in relation to the above, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Kind regards,

Edel Fahy
Edel.Fahy@mic.ul.ie

Appendix X

Conference Presentations

Date	*Conference/Event*	*Presentation/Activity*
June 2023	International Froebel Conference, Maynooth University	Paper presentation *Igniting a spark? How an Irish arts partnership potentially supported teachers in their teaching of arts education*
April 2023	*RIME* (Research in Music Education) online conference	Paper presentation *Igniting a spark? How an Irish arts partnership potentially supported teachers in their teaching of arts education*
Sept 2022	*ECER* (European Conference on Educational Research) online conference	Paper presentation *Teacher perspectives on arts partnerships in schools - Filling the pail or lighting the fire?*
May 2022	*EAS* (European Association for Music in Schools) online conference	Paper presentation *Bridging the gap: The role of an arts broker in supporting arts partnerships with teachers*
	ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe), Marino Institute of Education, Dublin	Paper presentation *Teacher perspectives on arts partnerships in schools - Filling the pail or lighting the fire?*
April 2022	Mary Immaculate College Research Week	'Thesis-in-3' presentation: *An investigation into how an Irish arts partnership can potentially support teachers in their teaching of arts education.*
	ESAI (Educational Studies Association of Ireland) online conference	Paper presentation *Teacher perspectives on arts partnerships in schools: Filling the pail or lighting the fire?*
November 2021	*SMEI* (Society of Music Education in Ireland) online conference	Paper presentation *Bridging the gap: The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers*
October 2021	Guest lecturer on the Master's in Music Education programme, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick	Lecture: *The Creative Schools Initiative: How an Irish Arts Partnership can Support Teachers in Arts Education*
	The International Trinity Laban Research in Music Education Online Symposium	Paper presentation *Bridging the gap: The role of an arts broker in supporting partnerships with teachers*
May 2021	*AHSS* (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) online conference	Paper presentation *The potential of arts partnerships to support teachers: Learning from the field*

April 2021	*RIME* (Research in Music Education) online conference	Paper presentation *The Potential of Arts Partnerships to Support Teachers: Learning from the Field*
April 2020	*AHSS* (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) online conference	Poster presentation *The Creative Schools Initiative: How an Irish arts partnership can support teachers in their teaching of arts education*