Arts for Transformative Education: A Guide for Teachers Informed by Learning Experiences from the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

Draft June 9, 2023

Benjamin Bolden
Sean Corcoran
Tiina Kukkonen
Jeff Newberry
Nathan Rickey

Table of Contents

<div align="center">**Short Summary**</div>

Arts for Transformative Education

At the core of UNESCO's vision of transformative education is the goal of building learners' capacities and motivating them to take action for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

The arts offer tremendous potential for enriching, enlivening, and propelling learning that transforms individuals and communities. However, to fully realize that potential, teachers must mindfully structure and support educational experiences to optimize what students will take away from them. This guide invites teachers to harness the transformative power of the arts.

The research-informed *Arts for Transformative Education* model, a thinking tool for teachers, is at the heart of the guide. The model was developed through analysis of data provided by over 600 teachers of the UNESCO Associated Schools network, from 39 countries.[i] The model identifies four dimensions of arts learning experiences:

- learning actions
- learning context
- learning relevance
- learning outcomes
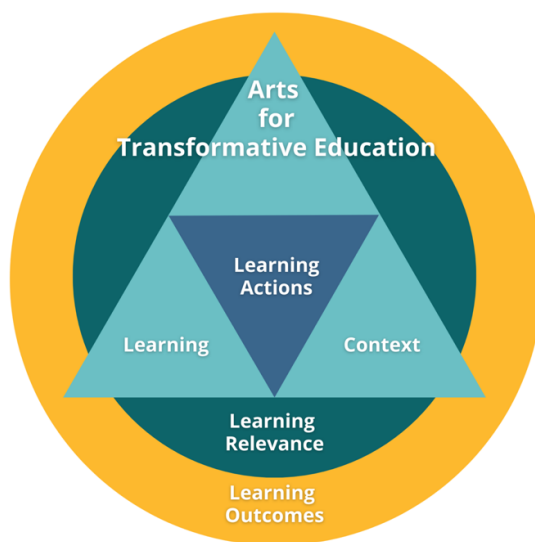
The model also recognizes distinctive affordances associated with the arts that can *enhance* learning. "**Arts assets**" are situated within or transcend the learning dimensions. Arts assets hold the power to provoke transformation.

Twelve *Learning Experience Descriptions* illustrate in detail how the *Arts for Transformative Education* model functions in real-world learning projects. Twelve *Learning Experience Snapshots* provide additional, shorter project examples. *Guidelines for Teachers* outline a step-by-step process for activating arts learning to empower transformative education.

Teachers say: "I believe that students come to value artmaking as a way to *imagine otherwise*. The creative process asks us to move beyond what we see around us, what we witness or see in the physical environment, and imagine other possibilities. In the best case scenario students imagine better worlds and maybe through imagining better worlds, maybe they start to create one."

Authors' note re: publication layout: The 'Teachers say' quotes will be positioned within text boxes separated from the main body text. We envision approximately one per page of the document. In this draft we intentionally included more than we expect to see in the publication, thinking we can cut them as necessary for layout purposes. BB

Foreword – UNESCO ADG ED

Forward – Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts

It is my pleasure to provide a preface for this informative and practical guide for teachers. As Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts, I am reminded daily of the power of the arts. As the Council's Strategic Plan, *Art, now more than ever*, emphasizes, "Art nourishes our sense of belonging, strengthening our connections to the wider world, as well as to the many communities to which we belong – by origin, adoption, and aspiration. The power of art endures when everything else falls apart; art is an essential need."

Art has a key role to play in education, as this guide strongly asserts. Edgar Morin, in the paper he wrote for UNESCO titled "Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future," underscores the importance of preparing youth for a world of uncertainty. He writes that "the course of the human adventure is unpredictable; this should incite us to prepare our minds to expect the unexpected and confront it. Every person who takes on educational responsibilities must be ready to go to the forward posts of uncertainty in our times." While Morin wrote this in 1999, his words have become increasingly relevant over the past few years. The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on youth around the world. Climate change, war, and systemic injustice continue to pose significant threats to our global future. Young people today live in a world of tremendous uncertainty.

Despite this stark reality, I take comfort in the examples described in this guide: the creativity of teachers in addressing uncertainty through the arts in their classrooms and the courage of students to participate in artistic work. Indeed, the power of the arts lies in its ability to foster engagement with the intellect as well as the heart. It fosters creative ways to approach daunting challenges.

And so, I encourage teachers to persevere in their critical work of transformative education through the arts. This work is not only the transformation of students and schools but of our world.

Simon Brault
Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts

Acknowledgements

What is Transformative Education?

"Transformative education" involves co-created teaching and learning that recognizes and valorizes the diversity of learners in educational settings, eliminates all barriers to their learning and motivates and empowers them to take informed decisions and actions at the individual, community, national and global levels that support the building of peaceful, just, inclusive, equal, equitable, healthy and sustainable societies.[ii]

> – Draft Recommendation concerning Education for Global Citizenship, Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development

UNESCO's "Future of Education" initiative addresses the vital need to reimagine knowledge, education and learning in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity. The broad-reaching initiative has invited input from diverse experts and stakeholders including school leaders, teachers, students and parents.[iii] A primary outcome of the initiative is the report "Reimagining our Futures Together." The report emphasizes the foundational role of education in transforming human societies: connecting us to the world and to each other, exposing us to new possibilities, and building our capacities for dialogue and action.[iv]

UNESCO's concept of transformative education unites education initiatives that advance peace, human rights, and sustainable development.[v] Transformative education addresses target 4.7 of the United Nations Agenda 2030 by encompassing Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Heritage Education, Education for Health and Well-Being and other focused education priorities, recognizing that the issues they address are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.[vi] Crucially, UNESCO asserts that transformative education must be "grounded in human rights and based on principles of non-discrimination, social justice, respect for life, human dignity and cultural diversity. It must encompass an ethic of care, reciprocity, and solidarity."[vii]

Layout note: Positioned within text box separated from the main body text:
Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Transformative education engages teaching and learning – inside and outside schools and across the life-cycle – that inspire and empower people of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they need to fully develop their human potential.[viii] At the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres presented a vision statement on transforming education. He explained:

> *A truly transformative education should build on what communities, families, parents, and children treasure most, and respond to local, national, and global needs, cultures, and capacities. It should promote the holistic development of all learners throughout their lives, supporting them to realize their aspirations and to contribute to their families, communities, and societies.[ix]*

Teachers say: "Making art . . . it helps them realize innate potential."

How Can the Arts Support Transformative Education?

The arts – including music, drama, dance, visual arts, literary arts, media arts, digital arts, circus arts, and more – have tremendous potential for supporting transformative education.

To be transformative, education needs to spark deep learning that engages both cognitive and social emotional processes.[x] It needs to provoke the dissonance and discomfort necessary to change thinking and trigger action.[xi] When education is transformative, learners experience a profound structural shift in thought, feelings, and actions.[xii] The arts, with their capacity to activate cognition *and* emotion, are powerfully positioned to fuel transformative learning. Arts learning can integrate head, hand, and heart.

The arts can also support transformative education by connecting students to profoundly human mechanisms for learning and communicating. Archeological evidence – fragments of an ancient flute discovered in a Neanderthal settlement dating from 43,000 years in the past – demonstrates that the roots of artistic practice stretch deep into human evolutionary prehistory.[xiii] Humans are, in an essential way, an artistic species. For countless years we have turned to the arts to explore our deepest humanity and highest spiritual aspirations.[xiv] In addressing today's current and emerging challenges, the arts continue to help us imagine and negotiate possible paths forward. In a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity arts education can invite humanistic approaches to being, contributing, and flourishing as transformed citizens of the future.

Teachers say: "We must add the fun that the field of the arts allows, it allows them moments of joy and sharing!"

What Does Research Tell Us?

At the core of UNESCO's notion of transformative education is the goal of building learners' capacities and motivating them to take action for a more peaceful and sustainable world.[xv] The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) suggest specifically what those actions need to address. Together, the SDGs indicate a path forward towards the sustainable development of our communities and planet.

Arts learning can directly support sustainable development in multiple ways. For example:

- Research compellingly demonstrates that arts engagement advances learners' good health and well-being[xvi] (SDG 3).
- Arts learning is integral to learners' experience of quality education[xvii] (SDG 4), because arts experiences can positively impact learners' school engagement, as well as social, emotional, and academic outcomes.[xviii]

- The arts can promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies (SDG 14) by framing a relationship or issue in ways that strengthen empathy and open minds to new perspectives and possibilities for transformation.[xix]
- Arts learning can raise awareness and increase knowledge of sustainability issues. The arts function as a mode of knowing, and so can complement scientific explanations of phenomena with alternative representations and communication of meaning.[xx]

More broadly, arts learning supports sustainable development by helping students acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to understand and take action to address sustainability challenges. For example, arts experiences can enhance learners' knowledge, recognition, and valuing of diverse cultures and peoples.[xxi] Through arts engagement learners can build skills in critical thinking,[xxii] as well as self-regulation, self-expression, and communication.[xxiii] Arts experiences can nurture agency,[xxiv] along with values and attitudes such as empathy[xxv] and appreciation of diversity and inclusion.[xxvi]

> **Teachers say:** "Arts education is not only about technique and aesthetics, it's about contemporary issues and actual problems of the world today. I think this is why the SDGs and art go well together."

An Invitation to Teachers

Arts learning has much to offer. But for learners to fully experience what arts learning can provide, teachers are essential. When engaging students with the arts in dedicated arts learning contexts *or* in support of other learning across curricula, teachers have a crucial role in actualizing the potential of learning in and through the arts. This guide invites teachers to design and support the learning experiences that *unlock* potential.

It is teachers who are best positioned to discern how learning in the arts can contribute to sustainability goals most meaningfully within their own changing contexts, whether through advancement of physical and mental health and well-being, climate action, social justice and reconciliation, responsible consumption, intercultural understanding, social cohesion, democracy, or conflict resolution. It is teachers who choose and enact pedagogical approaches for students to engage with the arts in ways that promote a deep and lasting development of social and emotional skills, enhance well-being, and foster the creative capacities necessary to cope with current issues and opportunities as well as those that cannot yet be foreseen.

It is teachers who activate arts learning to empower transformative education.

How the Guide Was Developed

The development of this guide began with an analysis of recently published UNESCO policy documents to identify and distill the organization's key goals and priorities for education. The research team drafted a preliminary conceptualization of the *Arts for Transformative Education* model to theoretically categorize the findings. Next, the researchers examined over 50 examples of arts learning experiences submitted from around the world by teachers of the UNESCO

Associated Schools Network (ASPnet). This global network of educational institutions of all levels of education serves as a laboratory of ideas dedicated to Transformative Education for Global Citizenship, Sustainable Development and Intercultural Understanding.[xxvii] The research team drew from analysis of these examples and a scoping review of arts education research literature to further develop the model. Finally, a survey was designed and interviews conducted to seek the perspectives of arts teachers across the globe. Input from over 600 teachers from 39 countries informed refinement of the final version of the *Arts for Transformative Education* model presented here.

Due to the nature of the data collected and analyzed, which did not include in situ observations of teaching and learning, this guide does not focus on the words and actions of teachers. The guide focuses instead on the structures that teachers put in place and the student actions they encourage to support transformative arts learning experiences.

Teachers say: "Arts learning is . . . laughter, joy, anger . . . emotions at work."

How to Use this Guide

This document offers guidance, suggestions, and examples of practice for teachers to engage learners in and through the arts. In the following section, the *Arts for Transformative Education* model is presented as a thinking tool to assist in the design and support of transformative arts learning experiences across arts disciplines and learning contexts.

The *Learning Experience Descriptions* that follow the explanation of the model serve two purposes. First, they illustrate in detail how the *Arts for Transformative Education* model functions in real-world learning projects. Second, they offer examples of specific transformative arts learning experiences that teachers may wish to adapt and try out with their own students. The *Learning Experience Snapshots* provide additional, shorter project examples that teachers may wish to emulate. Finally, the *Guidelines for Teachers* outline a detailed step-by-step process that teachers can use to design and support transformative arts learning experiences.

Teachers carry out their work within education systems and are accountable to those systems and associated curricular and pedagogical expectations. Accordingly, this guide is not offered prescriptively, but as a resource that teachers can access to the extent that it is helpful in meeting their needs. The *Arts for Transformative Education* model provides an *outline* of transformative arts education. It is up to teachers and learners to fill the outline with colours that make sense within their lives and contexts.

The Arts for Transformative Education Model: A Thinking Tool for Teachers

The Arts for Transformative Education *model was developed through analysing UNESCO policy documents, arts education practices from ASPnet schools around the world, and international survey responses from over 600 teachers in 39 countries. The model is offered to teachers and other education stakeholders as a thinking tool for understanding, planning, and guiding transformative arts learning experiences.*

A Learning Ecology Perspective

A learning ecology is an ecosystem where learning takes place.[xxviii] An arts learning ecosystem is complex, comprising learners and teachers and all their interactions with art and each other and everyone and everything that influences their work. The *Arts for Transformative Education* model does *not* account for all that is involved in an arts learning ecosystem. Instead, it identifies four dimensions that together serve as a simple framework for thinking about arts learning:

- **Learning actions** *(opportunities to develop and apply knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes)*
- **Learning context** *(environmental factors and teaching orientations)*
- **Learning relevance** *(meaningfulness to learners' lives)*
- **Learning outcomes** *(knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes)*

Figure 1
Visual Representation of the Arts for Transformative Education Model
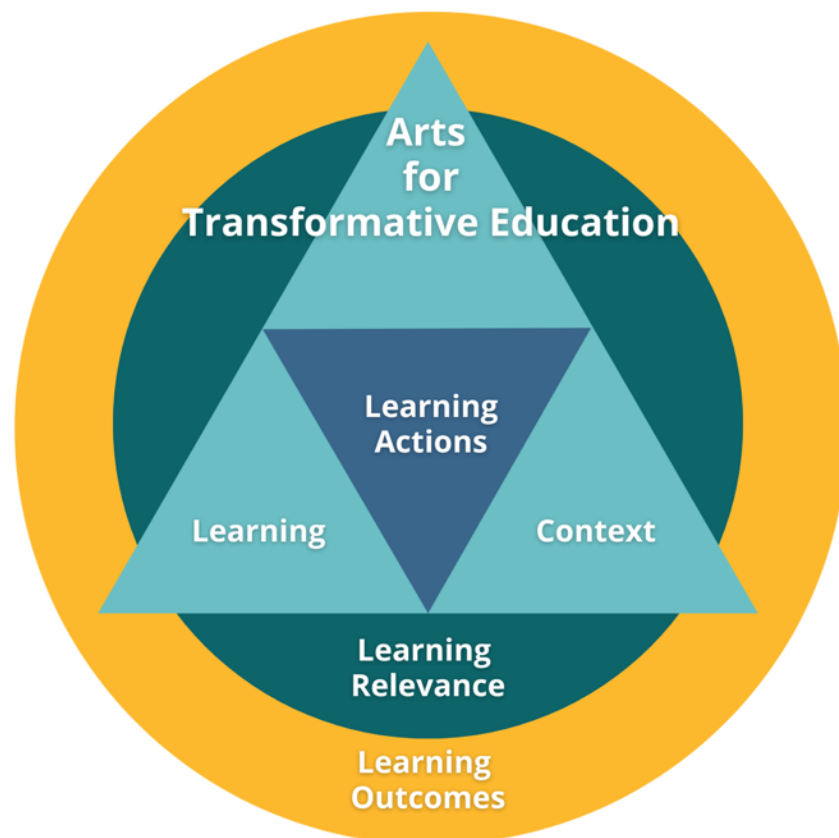
How the Model Works

At the heart of an arts learning ecosystem, students engage in learning actions (e.g., preparing a performance or exhibition on a theme of 'diversity within community'). The actions are influenced by factors within the learning context (e.g., access to materials and a performance or exhibition space, and learner-centred teaching choices). The actions are fueled by relevance to students' lives (e.g., the opportunity for students to explore their own community, to shine in front of friends and family, and to communicate what they have learned and want to express). The actions lead to learning outcomes (e.g., knowledge of local diversity and communication skills).

Figure 2
Example Actions, Contextual Factors, Relevance, Learning Outcomes
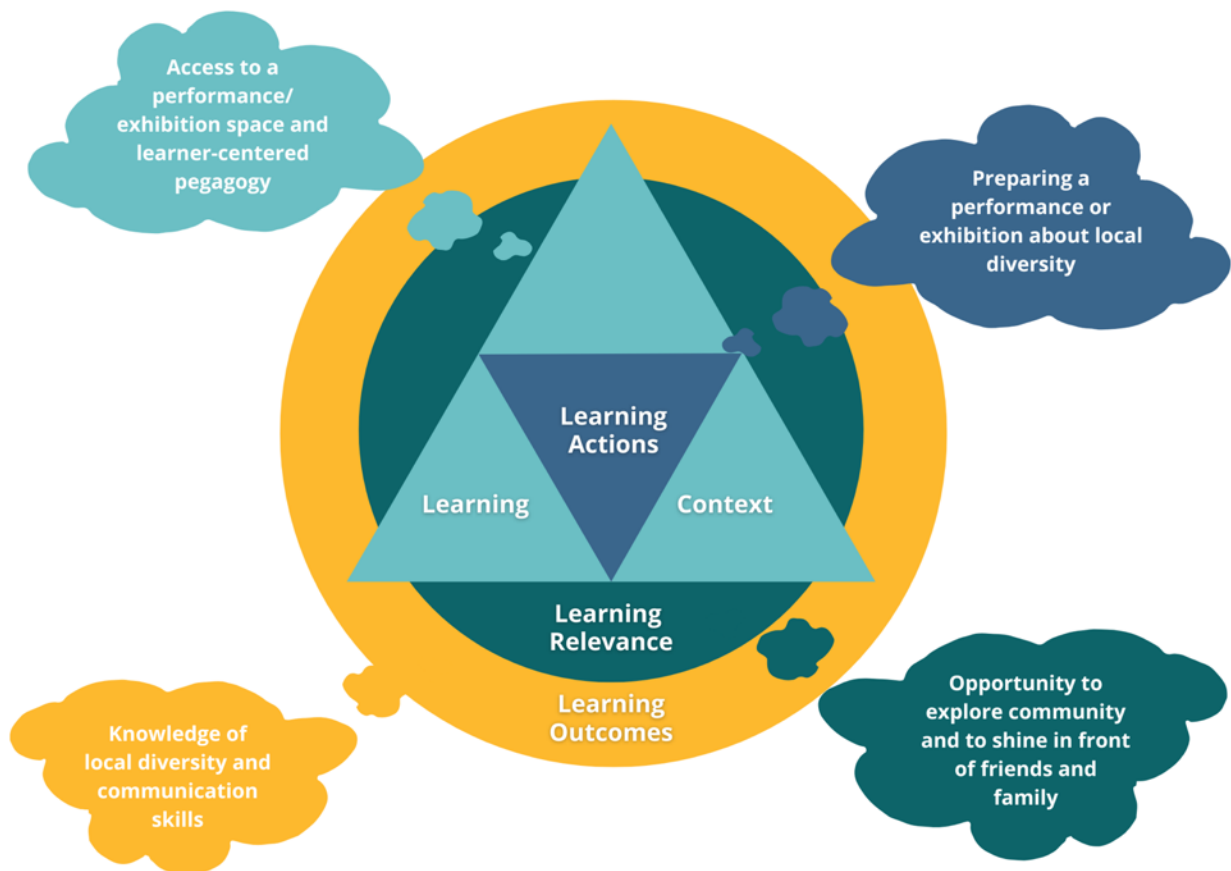
Learning Actions

Learning actions provide opportunities for students to develop and apply knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Actions happen at individual, community, and global levels. They range in scope and complexity, from simple actions such as rehearsing dance gestures alone, to complex actions such as performing in collaboration with dancers from multiple communities to raise funds for an environmental conservation initiative. Visual arts learning actions could range from commenting on a peer's first draft sketch to organizing a multi-school mural painting project that welcomes newcomers to a community. Large-scale learning actions comprise clusters of smaller learning actions. For instance, putting on a concert involves learning how to play instruments, composing or choosing and rehearsing repertoire, exploring meanings represented within the musical selections, performing for an audience, and so on.

Another way to think about learning actions is to recognize that little actions, or *seed* actions, can grow into bigger *impact* actions. Seed actions can prepare the learner for taking more impactful action later. For example, practicing a musical riff, dance move, line delivery, or brushstroke are seed actions. Performing a musical, dance, or theatre piece or exhibiting a painting for an audience are impact actions that can have influence out in the world. Often, however, learning actions are both seed actions *and* impact actions at the same time. For example, creating songs and performing them in class may be viewed as seed actions, in that they prepare the learners for future composing and performing. But the actions may also be impactful, by provoking change within the learners themselves and/or within the classroom community.

Figure 3
Visual Representation of Seed and Impact Action Relationship

Arts learning, like other areas of learning, involves many seed actions. But arts learning has *particular* potential for impact actions, because learners' artistic work can have real-world value and influence at individual, community, and even global levels.

> ***Teachers say:*** "I've seen adults moved to tears by children's artwork. . . they too have experienced a shift in thinking. Busy parents expect to come in and out quickly, but many slow down, linger and say they've been inspired."

Learning Context
A learning context is made up of many factors that influence learning. Factors include the materials, tools, technologies, and other resources available; the physical or digital spaces where learning happens; and the teaching approaches and structures that influence how learners feel included, recognized, and valued within the learning community. Teachers can impact the learning context with the resources they introduce, the environments they curate, and the relationships they cultivate.[xxix] In an arts learning context, teachers might help ensure the accessibility of materials, such as paper for painting or instruments for playing. Teachers might strive to create a physical environment where students have sufficient light to work and are

comfortable. Teachers might seek opportunities to reduce hierarchical structures by making art alongside their students, and recognizing students (not just teachers) as experts.[xxx]

> ***Teachers say:*** "It's not that kind of rigid sitting environment."

> ***Teachers say:*** "You have to create trust in the room where awareness, reflection, and dialogue are a part of that space.

Learning Relevance

Learning relevance refers to the meaningfulness of learning actions and outcomes within students' lives. Learning relevance addresses coherence between what students experience inside school and out in the world. Relevance addresses how learning experiences connect to students' natural, political, economic, and cultural contexts. Learning experiences are relevant when students actively participate in ways that connect to their own narratives.[xxxi] For example, learning print-making skills can have direct relevance for a learner who wants to make art to sell at a local market or to make posters for a community event. Learning relevance can also be less obvious; a learner rehearsing a role in a play can gain insight into how people experience and respond emotionally in different situations. Such knowledge may prove useful for young people seeking to understand the emotional responses, of peers, family, or community members – or to understand their own feelings.

> ***Teachers say:*** "What I appreciate the most about this type of project is that it is born from a personal interest, so everyone is free and feels motivated to delve deeper, create, and give their best."

> ***Teachers say:*** "I think you have to bring the arts to kids by way of something that's close to them."

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that students develop and take away from learning experiences. Outcomes can be both intentional and unintentional – planned and emergent. Ideally, teachers create spaces for learners to reflect on learning experiences and to identify and celebrate the learning outcomes that result.

There are often reciprocal relationships between learning actions and outcomes. For example, the learning actions of imagining and creating help to develop imagination and creativity skills. Those skills can then be applied in other aspects of learners' lives. Often, however, the relationship between actions and outcomes is more complicated. Practicing and rehearsing can involve sub-actions such as experimenting, learning from mistakes, and persevering. Together the actions can lead to self-regulation skills, knowledge of self, resilience, or all of these.

It is crucial to recognize that arts learning outcomes are not always positive. Arts learning experiences can also lead to negative outcomes, such as diminished self-confidence or disrespectful attitudes toward certain artistic expressions. Arts experiences can raise students to spectacular heights, but can also bring them crashing down. Teachers have a responsibility to carefully curate

learning experiences and help individual learners negotiate and understand them in ways that lead to positive learning outcomes.

> **Teachers say:** "This solidarity of transmitting and communicating through songs arouses the spirit of *living together* and destroys loneliness."

Bringing the Dimensions Together: Transformative Learning Experiences
Learning experiences include all four dimensions of learning. Learning actions are influenced by factors within the learning context, are fueled by learning relevance, and lead to learning outcomes.

Learning experiences can be transformative in multiple ways:

- They can transform the knowledge students hold by adding to it or re-configuring it.
- They can add or hone skills.
- They can establish or shift values and attitudes – especially when the experiences activate emotion.

Learning experiences can also be transformative by cultivating the knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes within learners that enable or propel them to transform their lives and communities.

Arts learning experiences are sites of tremendous potential. However, meaningful learning and beneficial outcomes are *not* guaranteed. If the goal is transformation, what is transformed into what?[xxxii] To fully realize the potential of learning in and through the arts, teachers must mindfully and intentionally structure and support experiences to optimize what students will take away from them. Careful consideration of learning actions, context, relevance, and outcomes can help teachers and students successfully activate the arts for positive transformative education.

> **Teachers say:** "The best part is when you see a student over a couple of years… you see the development process of their skills, whether it's drawing or painting, whatever, but also that beautiful transformation of a person."

Arts Assets

Arts learning can sometimes support unique or heightened experiences that are different from learning in other areas. Teachers and students can benefit from the powerful affordances that the arts provide – what the arts bring to the table. The term *'arts assets'* is introduced here to refer to the special things that can happen or be present within an arts learning experience. These affordances are seldom unique to the arts, but are closely associated with the arts. For example:

- arts learning can help people say what they want to say but cannot say with words alone
- arts learning can help people see and explore new possibilities
- arts learning can allow people to process experiences, concepts, information, and stories through cognitive, embodied, and emotional (head, hand, and heart) exploration and response

Arts assets are sometimes inherent to arts learning experiences, but can also be intentionally activated or enhanced. Arts assets can be found within or across the various dimensions of learning: actions, context, relevance, and outcomes (see table 1). Arts assets can support and enrich transformative learning.

Table 1
Arts Asset Examples Situated within Each Dimension of Learning

Learning Dimension		Arts Asset	Explanation
learning actions	• preparing and presenting a performance/ exhibit • raising awareness	*Arts learning can enable multi-faceted meaning-making and communicating.*	Students can negotiate and make personal meaning of a topic or issue by engaging with or creating art that tells related stories. Presenting the artwork to an audience then allows students to powerfully communicate their understanding outward, expressing and inviting emotional responses to important personal, local, and global issues.
learning context	• learner-centred	*Arts learning can invite and celebrate unique learner interests and abilities.*	Students can develop their personal potential by choosing performance/exhibition materials and/or taking on roles that match who they are and what they have to offer.
learning relevance	• students learn and share thoughts about an issue significant to themselves and/or their community	*Arts learning can result in artistic practices and products that have real value beyond the learning context.*	Through engaging in and presenting artistic work, students' thoughts, voices, expressions, and selves can be seen, acknowledged, and valued in real-world situations and settings.
learning outcomes	• self-regulation skills • communication skills	*Arts learning can invite perseverance & self-discipline.*	Arts learning often has very clear and tangible goals (e.g., presentation readiness) and rewards (e.g., appreciation of family and community) that can motivate and support the development of self-directed engagement and follow-through.

Teachers say: "Art making often stirs more questions."

Arts Asset Examples
In a preliminary qualitative analysis of arts assets identified across arts learning experiences, some salient themes emerged. Identified arts assets were associated with exploring self, expressing self, communicating, developing personal potential, connecting with others, building understanding, and taking action. For example:

- Arts learning can help people process emotion
- Arts learning can help people recognize and value their own and others' cultures and traditions
- Arts learning can provide opportunities for people's thoughts, voices, expressions, and selves to be seen, acknowledged, and valued
- Arts learning can offer different entry points and ways of communicating in difficult conversations
- Arts learning can build self-belief, confidence, adaptability, and resilience
- Arts learning can connect people through shared expressions and experiences
- Arts learning can support intimate exploration of complex topics
- Arts learning can provide a brave space for students to challenge systems and enact change

Teachers say: "The arts help them to see the world differently."

Learning Experience Descriptions

The collection of arts learning experiences featured in the following pages illustrates the *Arts for Transformative Education* model in action. These examples, submitted by ASPnet teachers from across the globe, span a variety of approaches to teaching and learning in the arts. The featured experiences represent different arts disciplines and world regions. Each highlights how particular *arts assets* were active within the learning experience.

While the projects described are certainly not transferable to all learning and teaching contexts, ideally there will be some features that resonate with diverse teachers and students and might be adapted to their own circumstances. A list of reflective questions provided with each description prompts teachers to think how these activities could be modified to suit their own students and settings.

It is important to acknowledge that the writing of the descriptions was influenced by the researchers' personal backgrounds as teachers, artists, and arts educators. The researchers focused their analyses on what they perceived to be valuable and significant. The researchers were not able to speak to the learners or teachers directly about their experiences; the descriptions were based solely on researcher perceptions of the documentation the teachers provided.

The learning experience descriptions are organized by artform and include dance, music, visual art, drama, and creative writing.

<center>**Argentina: La Danza**</center>

Arts Assets
- *Arts learning can facilitate exploration of relationships between self and environment*
- *Arts learning can connect people through shared experiences and expressions*
- *Arts learning can connect people to cultural heritage*
- *Arts learning can help process emotion*

Learning Actions

Students of the Escuela de Danzas Aida V Mastrazzi in Argentina choreographed, rehearsed, performed, and recorded short dance pieces. They then compiled the pieces in a video created for International Dance Day in 2020. Through dance, the students defied COVID-19 and the circumstances that required them to dance alone at home. You can watch the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=En1R00qvQnI
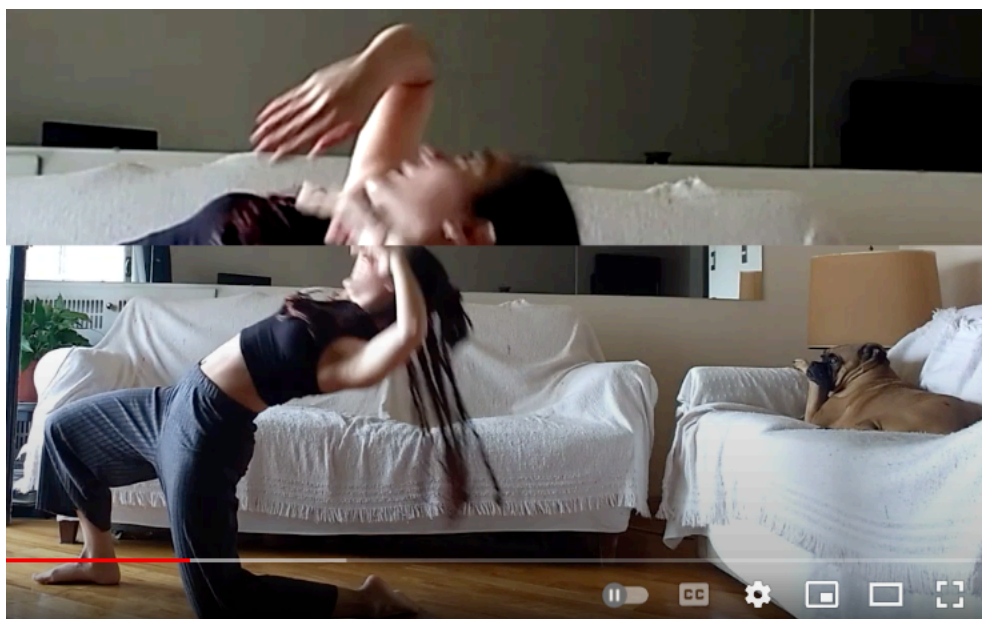
Learning actions occurred at individual, community, and global levels. At the individual level, while in isolation during the pandemic, students choreographed and performed solo dances in a variety of styles including traditional Argentine dance, modern dance, and ballet. They used their living areas as inspiration, exploring ways of using space and movement, and often physically interacting with the walls and windows around them. Sometimes a student's living environment became a duet partner in the dance. Students absorbed and responded to physical surfaces, confined settings, and weather. Through their art, the students explored what it meant to experience pandemic restrictions and how to symbolically dance beyond their confinement and isolation.

At a community level, the students collaborated with each other to present the work in a video. They used one piece of music to unite all the dancers' movements, and combined each solo work into a single dance narrative. Some of the dancers also cautiously brought their dance out into local communities; they performed at parks and other public places, in front of open windows, or on rooftops.

The students acted at a global level by posting the video online and offering it to the international community as an artistic reflection on and response to the impacts of COVID-19, and perhaps also as a rallying symbol of defiance.
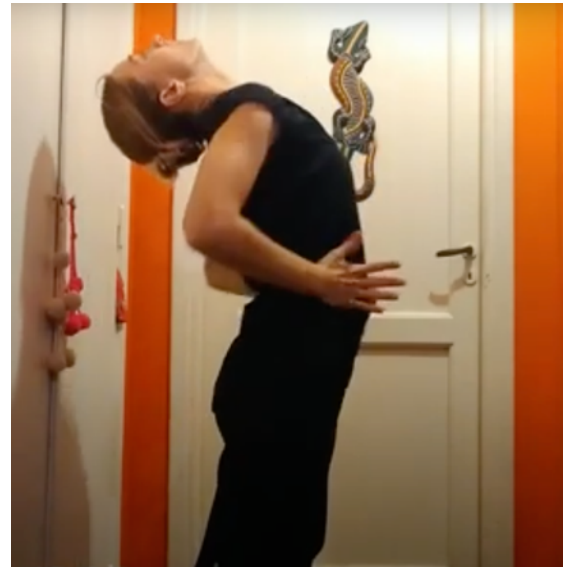
Learning Context
The project took advantage of natural, built, and virtual learning sites. Dancers interacted with nature, for example, when performing outside during a rainstorm. Built sites, such as bedrooms, featured prominently in this video as a reflection of pandemic isolation. The students were able to choose the spaces where they felt safe to be and to dance. Virtual spaces were re-imagined through virtuosic video editing techniques; multiple angles and repeated movements were overlayed, creating the impression of the dancers dancing with themselves. Collaborating via video enabled the students to be included together in the project despite their physical separation.

The learning experience centred students by inviting them to create, perform, and video their contributions on their own. Students chose the style and content of the dance segments they performed, allowing them to express their own artistic visions.

Learning Relevance
The relevance of the experience was apparent in the personally meaningful dance styles and gestures the students chose to display. The student-created choreography enabled students to connect their learning to their own interests and heritage. By posting the video online, the dancers had the opportunity for their work to be seen and acknowledged broadly. By dancing in public and virtual public spaces, their artistic practice could be enjoyed and celebrated by local and global communities.

This project was also highly relevant for students because it centred their experiences of the requirement to stay at home during the pandemic. The project invited students to reflect on their own emotions and struggles. It offered support to mental health and well-being via a cathartic release of pandemic anxiety.

Learning Outcomes

The students built skills of self-expression and communication as they shared their feelings and stories related to the pandemic and isolation through dance. Weaving the various solo dances together in one video gave students the opportunity to develop empathy for one another, as they considered representations of their own experiences positioned alongside the expressions of their colleagues.

The project also gave the students the chance to learn novel ways to choreograph and perform dance while in isolation. They found solutions to problems associated with space and physical constraint. For example, the dancers were required to fit their choreography into a stationary camera frame. By necessity, the dancers found innovative ways to create visually interesting dance while working with limited space.

The project also offered students the chance to advance knowledge of self and identity. By creatively expressing how they felt during the pandemic, the students had the opportunity to gain insight into their values while in crisis. They also had the chance to intimately explore how they exist in their environment and how their environment affects their daily lives. Finally, the experience offered the dancers the opportunity to develop resilience, by learning ways to cope with pandemic mental health challenges through reflection and artistic expression.

Reflective Questions

1. Students in this experience responded to their physical environment through dance. In what ways does the physical environment impact your students' learning spaces? How could you invite students to incorporate the physical environment into their artistic expressions?
2. The dancers expressed and processed emotions of anxiety, restlessness, and isolation during a COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. In what ways do your students process emotion through artistic expression? How can you facilitate exploration of emotion through art?

Portugal: The Chromosome Dance

Arts Asset

- *Arts learning can facilitate embodied exploration of abstract concepts through play and sensory connections*

Learning Actions

Students at the Escola Secundária de Loulé consolidated and demonstrated their understanding of biology using dance. The students connected physically with a rather abstract natural process, playfully embodying chromosomes during the miotic phase and using their bodies to model the movements of cellular structures. As students choreographed and rehearsed the dance, they collaborated and communicated with each other to refine a cohesive finished product. Each student performed a role in symbolically representing the chromosome movements. Their work integrated elements of dance, physical education, and biology.

Learning Context

A core driver of this experience was creative collaboration. Empowering the students to work together to develop their own choreography opened the door for students to construct understandings through rich social interaction, building on their own learning by drawing on the contributions and perspectives of others. In terms of the physical learning environment, this experience provoked a rethinking of learning sites, with the learning actions taking place in gymnasium and in a swimming pool. Each of these contrasting spaces introduced a unique sensory experience to the dance. Both welcomed playfulness, with students incorporating items found in each space (e.g., pool noodles, scarves) into the performance.

Learning Relevance

This learning experience had relevance for the learners by providing them with the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their scientific understandings in fun and playful ways beyond traditional science learning spaces.

Learning Outcomes
In addition to supporting arts learning outcomes such as self-regulation and collaboration skills, this experience enhanced students' biology knowledge. Transforming a biological process into dance requires students to develop and consolidate a strong understanding of that process. The students had the chance to increase their understanding of the topic by making art about it. The experience provided students a unique opportunity to gain an embodied perspective on a key biological process that is invisible to the naked eye.

Reflective Questions

1. How could you use the arts to support learning in other subjects?
2. How can changing the environment/setting of a performance change students' learning experience?
3. How could you support your students in choreographing a dance to represent something else? How could you similarly support student-centred creativity in other arts disciplines?
4. How might you support productive creative collaboration amongst students?
5. How can you welcome play in your arts teaching? What value, if any, might playfulness bring to your students' learning?

United Arab Emirates: Light for Hope

Arts Assets
- *Arts learning can enable action NOW—learners can apply learning and take action through artistic work*
- *Arts learning can connect people through shared experiences and expressions*
- *Arts learning can connect people to cultural heritage*

Learning Actions

Students from the Asian International School Ruwais in Abu Dhabi created a dance to raise awareness of the fight against COVID-19. The students individually videoed their part of the dance from their homes. Recordings were edited into a single video, highlighting each student's contribution. Through dance, the students pointed to the importance of mask wearing and handwashing for keeping themselves and their communities safe. The students conveyed their gratitude to frontline healthcare workers risking their lives to save others. The dance concluded with a message of hope: students displayed candles to symbolize the promise of better days to come when people work in solidarity to combat COVID-19. You can watch the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S61kpJWT3UY

This learning experience involved students creating, rehearsing, and collaborating remotely with their teacher and peers in order to coordinate choreography, lighting, and props. Through the medium and the message, students explored new ways of being in the world. Students communicated a clear message that masking and hand washing play a key role in daily routines to maintain healthy hygiene. Affirming their commitment to these routines and raising awareness of them, students addressed public and personal health challenges affecting both their local and global communities. The medium of this learning experience re-imagined traditional live dance performances in a post-COVID world, engaging students in a new way of creating and presenting dance. This project thus provided an opportunity for the students to make informed decisions at

individual and community levels, while developing a sense of belonging to and engaging with a global community.

Learning Context
Environmental and pedagogical factors supported students' learning. The teacher worked with students to develop individualized choreography that highlighted their unique expressions through dance. The environment provoked a rethinking of arts learning sites; rather than learning in a traditional classroom setting, students learned from their own homes. Finally, the environment created by the global pandemic created an affordance for this work, inviting students to develop a sense of responsibility for supporting safety within their local and global communities. Limiting the spread of COVID-19 necessitated action by all community members. This context created an opportunity for students to identify and take action in service of a sustainable society.

Learning Relevance
This learning experience was relevant to students on a number of levels. The pandemic, an inherently global issue, had real impacts on students' communities and lives, such as the unprecedented shift to remote learning. With such a strong connection to these impacts, this project was deeply rooted in students' lived experiences. Importantly, the creation of an edited video allowed all students' contributions to be highlighted. Students shared the spotlight equally as the focus of the video shifted from one to another. Within the choreography, students had the opportunity to contribute cultural and social dance references that were personally meaningful. This experience provided students with a heightened opportunity to be seen and to publicly shine as a collective and as individuals.

Learning Outcomes
A key learning outcome of this experience was a sense of belonging and responsibility to a global community. In their dance, the students expressed gratitude for healthcare workers, demonstrating the cultivation of an appreciation for others in their local and global communities. This public opportunity to voice gratitude not only gave students the chance to cultivate values for sustainable development, but also gave them the chance to engage in action in response to a global crisis.

A further learning outcome was that students engaged with public health guidelines and developed an artistic way to raise awareness about them. By addressing the importance of masking and hand washing, students developed age-appropriate health knowledge. By raising awareness of these important routines, students played a direct role in local and global disaster risk reduction efforts. This role was enhanced by their message of hope at the end of the video, supporting a resilient response to the challenges of the pandemic both in themselves and their audience.

This learning experience powerfully centered the capacity of students to transform themselves and to support societal transformation. Students were provided with the opportunity to learn about living safe and socially responsible lives during the pandemic by creating art about it. Instead of preparing students to address future global health challenges, this learning experience enabled students to take action *now*.

Reflective Questions
1. Limiting the spread of COVID-19 necessitates action by all members of society, including children. How might you leverage the arts to support students in taking action related to other global issues (e.g., climate change, food insecurity)?

2. In this learning experience, students took action to combat COVID-19 by raising awareness, expressing gratitude for frontline healthcare workers, and affirming their commitment to life-saving hygiene routines. How else can students take action?
3. If you prepared a dance with your students, how could you share it with others to maximize its impact and allow students to publicly shine? Who might you share it with?
4. This learning experience fostered a sense of gratitude to community members. How might you cultivate students' feelings of gratitude?
5. What other global issues could you teach students about through dance or other artforms? How could you cultivate their sense of social responsibility and connectedness to a global community related to that issue?
6. What *local* issues or stories in your students' communities might be effectively explored through dance or other artforms?
7. How could you support *student agency* in developing a dance video like the one described here? How could you center students' voices in the creative process?

Canada: Ancient and Forever

Arts Assets
- *Arts learning can help people see and explore who they are and who they want to be*
- *Arts learning can connect people to cultural heritage*
- *Arts learning can offer different entry points and ways of communicating in difficult conversations*
- *Arts learning can provide opportunities for students to be seen, acknowledged, and valued*

Learning Actions

Students and teachers of Allison Bernard Memorial High School in Eskasoni First Nation, Nova Scotia, Canada collaborated with professional musicians to perform, record, and make a video of the song *Ancient and Forever.* Nova Scotia musical artist JP Cormier wrote the song as a celebration of First Nation culture and perseverance on Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island). You can watch the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WsTp2PUTEo

Performing and creating a video of the song *Ancient and Forever* provided students and teachers a significant opportunity to work with community outside their school. Together with local professional musicians they took action to address the social challenge of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The video juxtaposes Indigenous and settler cultural expressions, illuminating differences and similarities. It displays Indigenous drumming, dancing, singing, regalia, and domicile construction alongside Cape Breton stepdance, Scottish highland dancing, and traditional instruments of the British Isles and maritime provinces, such as the fiddle, banjo, tin whistle, and bagpipes. The musicians sing in English, French, Gaelic and Mi'kmaq.
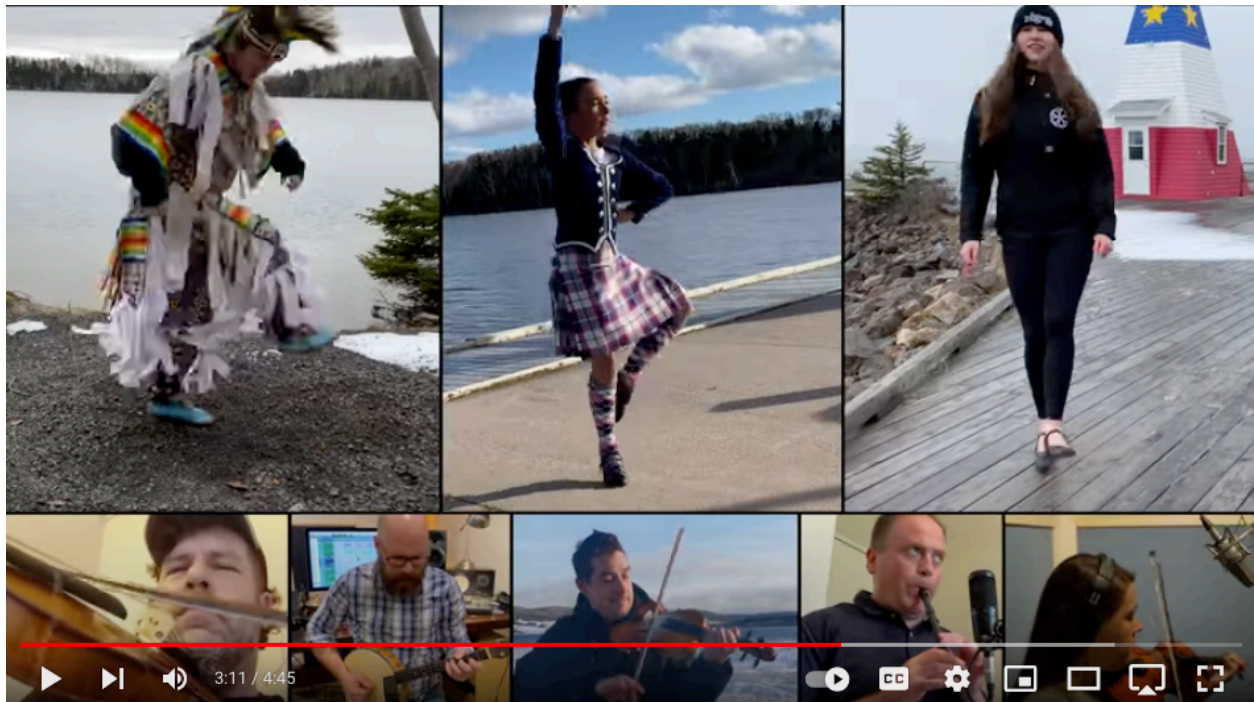
The physical landscape of the island where these peoples have come together plays a key role in the video narrative, as the performers sing, play instruments, and dance to the backdrop of ocean views, wetlands, forests, farms, and snow-covered hills, fields and shrubland.

A particularly powerful moment in the video focuses on an Indigenous youth singing in front of a residential school memorial, representing the crucial importance of acknowledging the widespread abuse of Indigenous children as part of efforts by authorities to systematically erase Indigenous cultures and languages in Canada.

This project demonstrates how arts learning can open up powerful opportunities for students to explore who they are, who they want to be, and how they want to relate to the world around them. Through this song and video the students, teachers, and community members express individual identities and resilient connections to cultural heritage. Collectively, they synthesize diverse cultural references to communicate a complex representation of the island where they live, its history, and its people.

Learning Context

This learning experience included diverse performers from a variety of cultural backgrounds and of different ages in an intercultural and intergenerational collaborative learning environment. Notably, teachers and local artists made music *alongside* the students, enhancing the tight-knit sense of community. The project emphasized artistic professionalism, with students supported by professional recording equipment, technical expertise, and musicians. Nevertheless, the project clearly prioritized learner contributions and expressions, as represented by the inclusion in the video of the students' individual artistic and cultural offerings as well as the physical places where they chose to be filmed. The learning experience did not appear to take place in a school building at all, but rather in alternative cultural, community, and outdoor spaces.

Learning Relevance

The learning experience appeared highly relevant to students. The focus of the performance was the place the students called home, the people who lived there, and their interwoven stories. In addition, students had the chance to meaningfully engage with their local arts community. Further, thanks to the polished video production, the project offered students a brilliant opportunity to be seen, acknowledged, and to publicly shine.

Learning Outcomes

The performance aspects of this experience provided opportunities for students to develop collaboration and communication skills. Meanwhile, the content focus supported intercultural understanding and enhanced appreciation of diversity and heritage. The most relevant learning outcome of this experience was that students had the chance to develop intimate knowledge of taking action to address a social challenge—specifically, reconciliation between Canada's Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Reflective Questions

1. What are some of the artistic expressions connected to cultural heritage that your students might enjoy sharing in a performance or art exhibit?

2. What social issues that are salient in your context could students address through artistic work?
3. Are there local artists and/or culture bearers who would be willing to collaborate with your students? What kind of artistic projects would work well in your community?

Indonesia: Trash Hack Project – *Let's Change for the World*

Arts Asset
- *Arts learning can provide a brave space[1] for students to challenge systems and enact change*
- *Arts learning can invite and celebrate learners' unique interests and abilities*

Learning Actions

Five students from SMP Labschool Kebayoran (Indonesia) collaborated to write, record, and make a video of their original song, *Let's Change for the World*. The song has the following dedication: "*This song is dedicated to you all for our better future, composed with love.*" You can watch the video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Clr_srVpEU4

The performance features three students who are singing, rapping, and playing hand percussion. Two other students are playing keyboard and guitar. The music was composed and mixed by Dityo, and the lyrics were written by the whole group. The students identified a meaningful problem (environmental degradation) and expressed their feelings about it through music. Editing and refining provided the students with the opportunity to make informed judgements as their creative process unfolded.

The video switches between performance footage and footage of the students as they create a dramatic narrative. Through performance, dramatic sequences, and protest-style signage the students connect to each other and their viewers. These tools allow their storytelling to invite emotional responses from viewers, and raise awareness of important issues.

---

[1]Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. Landreman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation: Reflections from social justice educators* (pp. 135–150). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

This project illustrates immediate learning at the individual and school level, and the YouTube video opens up the learning to the global community. At the individual level, students experimented, rehearsed, took risks, and learned from mistakes, as reflected in the refinement of their respective musical parts, and through the purposeful and effective visual aspects of the presentation. Through the dramatic elements of the video (protest signs, demonstrating a water bottle filling station, recycling), the students explored and modelled ways to be in and with the world.[2]

Posting the video brings the learning to a global level. The students are cultivating a brave space through their music—a space where people are supported in acting and interacting authentically in difficult circumstances and conversations. The students challenge norms and raise awareness about the importance of taking care of the planet. They demonstrate actionable ways for young people to counter environmental degradation, for example, by repurposing single-use items to give them a second life.

Learning Context
The video shows the students performing in their classroom and moving through the school in a way that suggests a sense of comfort and belonging and ownership over their school spaces. The learning experience was well resourced with instruments, microphones, and likely a digital video and audio workstation.

The credits at the end of the video identify that this project was completely learner-led. All students had the opportunity to contribute to this piece in multiple rich and meaningful ways, and to showcase their skills. Each contributed unique artistic expressions through singing, playing, rapping, acting, and audio mixing. The breadth and confidence of these student contributions suggest they were working and learning in a safe space where trusting relationships with teachers, peers, and self were supported.
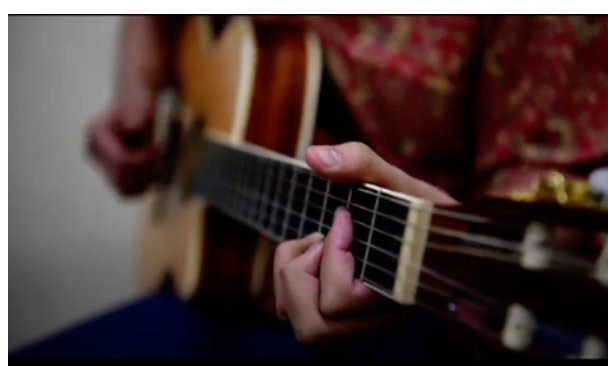
Learning Relevance
The learning experience offered relevance to the students because it provided an opportunity to channel their efforts towards a meaningful goal: influencing others to help make the world a better place. The process of collaborating on a song that speaks to issues students care about has powerful relevance. The experience likely had further relevance because it helped the students to build relationships and community with like-minded peers. In addition, the experience had relevance for

---

[2] Biesta, G. (2022). *World-centred education: A view for the present.* London: Routledge.

the students because it allowed them to be seen and to shine in front of teachers, peers, and whoever else watches the video.

Learning Outcomes
The development of the students' communication and self-expression skills is evident in the songwriting and video staging and narrative. The collaborative nature of this project suggests the development of interpersonal and relationship skills. The refined and sophisticated vocal and instrumental arrangement indicates the development of self-regulation skills and self-discipline, as well as constructive self-criticism and self-assessment. This creative learning experience also demonstrates the students' deepening understanding of environment and community activism, and how these issues relate to their own lives.

Reflective Questions
1. If you were teaching an art form other than music, can you think of a student-led project that combines creativity and Education for Sustainable Development?
2. Thinking back on your own teaching, which prompts, provocations, and/or physical configurations have provided students with rich opportunities for social-emotional development in a collaborative setting?
3. The concept of a "brave space" is associated with learning that not only involves risk, but the discomfort of giving up old ways of doing and seeing things to adopt new ways. What arts learning prompts, provocations, or projects might propel this kind of learning?
4. Transgressive Education for Sustainable Development (also called "T-learning" is about empowering students to dismantle "lock-ins" in order to influence broader social change.[3] For example, students might work to replace a school's decorative gardens with gardens featuring native plant species. What might T-learning look like in an arts context?

---

[3] https://transgressivelearning.org

Armenia: Singing Online During COVID Confinement

Arts Asset
- *Arts learning can connect people in shared experiences and expressions*

Learning Actions
In the height of the COVID-19 pandemic six students from Yerevan "Heratsi" High School in Armenia collaborated virtually to create and post online a video of a musical performance. All videoed themselves performing alone in their own homes. Five of the students sang in 2-part harmony and created rhythmic accompaniment with clapping and cup tapping. One played piano chordal accompaniment. They performed *The Cup Song (When I'm Gone)* made famous in the 2012 Hollywood film *Pitch Perfect.*

The students creatively adapted the song in a few ways to make it their own. They modified the lyrics after *"I sure would like some sweet company"* with the words *"but it's better to stay six feet away."* They also inserted an excerpt of an Armenian song—with rhythmic clapping accompaniment— right in the middle of *The Cup Song,* to create a mash-up.

This learning experience involved actions at individual, community, and global levels. At the individual level, students rehearsed their parts and performed the songs, experimenting and risk-taking with their own interpretations and modifications. In doing so, they explored and expressed personal understandings and feelings related to *The Cup Song's* theme of 'being apart.'

At the community level, the students connected to each other as they planned and realized the musical performance, collaborating to identify and solve the problem of how to make the performance uniquely their own. Through posting the video, the students connected to a larger community of friends and family. Exploring the lyrics and expressive musical gestures within the songs also provided the students the opportunity to connect to the songwriters and others who have sung and listened to the songs.

The students acted at a global level by posting the video online, using their music to communicate and raise awareness about the need to limit social contact during the pandemic, and also to express some of the loss they felt as a result.

Within this learning experience the students made informed decisions in direct response to health-related local and global challenges caused by the pandemic. While remaining socially distanced to preserve their own physical health, the students nevertheless found a way to meaningfully connect and work together towards a shared goal, thus benefitting their own mental health by making music together.

Learning Context

The learning environment and pedagogical approach supported the experience in various ways. First, the project structure supported inclusion of all the students as active and valued members of the collaborative learning community. Their voices were heard, literally! All had opportunities to contribute to the performance, and to contribute unique musical expressions. Second, the experience was learner-centred, with students active and at the forefront of the exploratory development of the performance throughout. The students appeared to have input into the songs they chose, in how they sang and played, in contributing original lyrics, and in the decision to combine the songs into a mash-up. Third, the learning happened outside a traditional school context—in students' homes and in a virtual learning space—in order to support students' physical health by maintaining social distancing during the pandemic. Finally, even though the students were physically apart, the learning experience was nurtured within a powerful sense of community.

Learning Relevance

The learning materials in this experience were meaningful to the students' lives. *The Cup Song (When I'm Gone),* with lyrics about missing loved ones, resonated powerfully with the students' experience of missing social contact within the COVID context. The learning materials also included an Armenian song, relating to the students' cultural lives. Posting the performance online

provided the students the opportunity to be seen, to publicly shine, and to draw family, community, and others into their experiences. The learning experience offered strong coherence between the world in and outside school.

Learning Outcomes
As a result of this experience, the students had the opportunity to learn self-regulation and discipline by practicing their performance until it was ready to be recorded and shared with the team. They had the chance to learn collaboration skills by working together towards a meaningful goal. The students had opportunities to develop creative and problem-solving skills as they grappled with challenges such as how to musically combine the two songs, and how to sync the individual videos together. They had the chance to learn about the interconnectedness of different countries and populations as they, living in Armenia, resonated with the sentiments expressed in the American *Cup Song*. The students developed communication and expressive skills, evidenced in their poignant modification of the lyrics, sharing their sense of the loss of personal contact necessitated by the pandemic. They had the opportunity to learn about their own emotions by making art about them. They had the chance to learn how to use music to explore shared experiences and expressions and to connect to self, to others, and to the world.

Reflective Questions
1. The students' singing addressed their experiences of missing social contact with friends and loved ones. What shared experiences would be meaningful for your students to address alone or collaboratively through art?
2. The students shaped this performance to make it uniquely their own. If you were to support your students in preparing artwork for sharing with others, how might you help or encourage them to make it uniquely their own?
3. This arts learning experience addressed the sustainability focus of health and well-being. What sustainability focus would be meaningful for your students to address?
4. The students shared their performance by posting a video online. What other ways of publicly sharing artworks would make sense for your students?

Uganda: From Broken Glass to Ceramics Glaze

Arts Asset
- *Arts learning can invite and develop problem-solving*
- *Arts learning can support exploration of and relationship with physical environments*

Learning Actions

In this project a fine arts teacher at Immaculate Heart School in Uganda worked with his secondary students to create a glaze for ceramics from locally abundant discarded glass. Together they took action to address the problem of potentially dangerous broken glass littered throughout their community and degrading the local environment. They made the decision to collect the glass and re-purpose it. They accessed knowledge about making ceramics and safety considerations when working with glass. They experimented to find safe and effective processes for crushing the glass into powder, appropriate temperatures for melting the glass, and how to manage colour transfer from the glass to the ceramic artworks. Working with clay, the students created diverse ceramic pieces, ultimately coating and protecting them with the glaze they had made from recycled glass.

Learning Context

In this learning context, physical safety was a key consideration. Working with crushed glass is dangerous. The teacher ensured that, when working with the powdered glass, the students wore personal protective equipment – gloves to protect their hands, and nose and mouth coverings to reduce the risk of breathing in the glass particles. The learning environment and pedagogy also emphasized exploration and risk-taking as the students experimented and refined their glaze-making techniques. The pedagogical approach ensured art-making materials were in place by empowering students to produce the materials *themselves*.

Learning Relevance

Making the glaze had evident relevance to the students' lives. The initiative directly addressed the problem of broken glass in their community. It also provided students with an experiential understanding of how discarded materials can be recycled and re-purposed in valuable ways.

Learning Outcomes

The experience powerfully supported important learning outcomes. The activity provided students with direct experience of problem-solving. The initiative involved solving the larger problems of broken glass littered throughout the community and how to make a ceramics glaze, but also associated sub-problems, such as how to work with the glass safely, and how to effectively work with the glaze they had created. The students had the opportunity to develop collaboration skills as they worked with each other and their teacher to solve these problems. And, of course, working on and producing the ceramic pieces gave students rich opportunities to exercise and develop imagination, creativity, and associated technical arts skills.
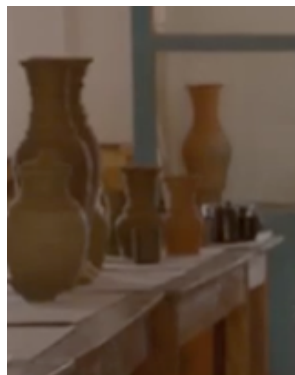
Reflective Questions

1. How might your students make use of recycled or re-purposed materials in their artworks?
2. What problems do your students find and work to solve as they engage with art? As their teacher, how do you help them find meaningful problems?
3. What safety considerations are significant in the art learning experiences you support?
4. In what ways does or might your students' art-making interact with their local physical environment?

Mexico: I Am Art

Arts Asset
- *Arts learning can nurture empathy and appreciation of diverse abilities*

Learning Actions

Pre-primary students at the Jardín De Niños of the Ignacio Manuel Altamirano in Mexico engaged in two empathy-developing painting tasks. The first involved students holding paint brushes in their mouths and making paint marks on a large paper. A roll of brown paper was taped around overturned tables, creating an upright painting surface that students could stand in front of and paint on using their mouths. Students routinely bent down to dip their brushes in shared paint palettes laid out on chairs, then moved to the collective paper to create their marks. Many of the students experimented with lines, dots, colours, and other expressive marks.

The second painting activity involved students working in pairs. The partners were seated across from each other at small tables, with one partner blindfolded (see image below). Each table had a piece of paper, a water cup, a paintbrush, and a paint palette. The blindfolded partner was tasked with creating a painting on paper, while the other partner observed. In both activities, the teacher circulated around the room and asked the students questions to prompt reflection on their work as they painted.

During the painting activities, students acted in ways that contributed to the safety, happiness, and wellbeing of everyone in the class. While painting with their mouths on a shared surface, the students appeared calm and respectful of each other's space. They dipped their brushes in paint and painted within their respective areas on the paper without dispute. Many were smiling and giggling as they moved back and forth between the paint palettes and paper. Although the process of painting with one's mouth might have been frustrating for some, the young children demonstrated exceptional emotional regulation throughout the activity.

In the other painting activity, several non-blindfolded students assisted their blindfolded partners by guiding their hands or holding up the paint palettes. Recognizing the challenges associated with

vision loss, the students were compelled to ease and assist their partners' painting processes, demonstrating empathy and understanding for others' experiences.

Learning Context
The classroom set-up and access to materials contributed to the students' engagement and ability to participate. Colourful furniture, shelves stocked with various materials, and organizing bins could be seen around the classroom. The room also had ample floor space for rearranging the furniture to suit the activity at hand. For the painting activities, there were enough paints, brushes, and palettes for the students to share, as well as access to water for cleaning up.

The calm and joyful demeanor of the children suggested the positive social atmosphere. The children seemed willing to take risks and exhibit vulnerability in front of each other, suggesting a high level of trust among the students and teacher. The teacher consistently engaged the students in conversation during the activities without getting in the way of their work or directing it. The thoughtful set-up of the materials and open-ended structure for each activity further suggested the effectiveness of the environment for children's art making.

Learning Relevance
Through this experience, students had the chance to develop understanding and appreciation of diverse abilities and experiences of those within and beyond their own communities. On an individual level, they had the opportunity to connect with their emotions, as they encountered the frustrations of painting without the use of their hands and eyes, and the positive feelings associated with helping others.

Learning Outcomes
Several learning outcomes may have resulted from this learning experience. Working with different coloured paints and brushes in different ways can develop students' artistic technical skills and knowledge (e.g., colour mixing, paint application). As students explored using different senses (e.g., sight, touch, sound) and body parts (e.g., mouths, hands) to create paintings, they were invited to develop an appreciation of diverse abilities, including their own. The children's collective experience of painting with their mouths, while sharing paint materials and surfaces, likely fostered collaboration skills, as well as a sense of social solidarity and understanding of each other's needs, helping them become more empathetic global citizens.

Reflective Questions
1. What prompting questions might you ask students before, during, and after these activities to encourage reflection associated with concepts of empathy, respect, and diversity?
2. Can you think of any other classroom materials (e.g., storybooks, toys, visuals) or guests (e.g., artists, health practitioners, family or community members) you might bring into the classroom to support young students' understanding of these concepts?
3. What other art forms and art-making activities might be used to explore these themes?
4. How might you support the full participation of students with diverse abilities (e.g., visual and/or physical impairments) in visual art activities?

Germany: A Picture a Day Keeps COVID-19 Away!

Arts Asset
- *Arts learning can enable complex communication*

Learning Actions
Students at Heinrich-Hertz School in Hamburg, Germany, created mixed media visual artworks in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic (see images below).

Learning Actions
In this learning experience, the students at Heinrich-Hertz School expressed personal responses to the pandemic by creating visual artworks infused with discernible symbolism and meaning. The artworks above all contain images of viral particles, which became symbolic of the coronavirus across news media worldwide. The position of the particles within the different compositions is suggestive of the message the artworks are meant to convey. The artworks on the right, for

example, place the particles in a looming position. In one image, the earth is surrounded by particles that cast a dark shadow on its surface, suggesting that the virus is encroaching on human life. The other image features the particles in the top portion of an hourglass, threatening to fall on a family's home at any moment.

The images on the left convey a more confrontational message, depending on the viewer's interpretation. The top-left artwork contains the German words *Der Kampf hat begonnen*, meaning *the fight has begun*. The "fight" in question could signify a number of things, such as the human fight against the virus itself or fights developing among people, fuelled by messages in the media (as suggested by the news images in the artwork). The bottom-left artwork depicts a healthcare worker, hands on hips, facing an enlarged viral particle head on. The figure does not appear frightened, but rather empowered, much like the famous *Fearless Girl* statue by Kristen Visbal, depicting a small girl with hands on her hips and chin up facing the *Charging Bull* statue (by Arturo Di Modica).

In all the examples mentioned above, the students made informed decisions about the direction of their work. They engaged in critical thinking about circumstances influenced by COVID-19, and then drew upon existing media images and artworks (e.g., Michelangelo's *David* and Banksy's *Girl with Balloon*) to communicate their intended messages to viewers.

Learning Context
The COVID-19 coronavirus threatened the health and well-being of people all over the world, both physically and mentally, as countless individuals were hospitalized, forced into isolation, and separated from their friends and loved ones for extended periods of time. In many countries and jurisdictions, schools were closed intermittently for nearly two years. Even with vaccine and masking recommendations in place, many people remained concerned for their health and safety.

Although it is unclear whether these images were made at home or in school, the students were given the opportunity by their teachers to voice their ideas and navigate their feelings about the pandemic through art. In that sense, the learning environment was open to and supportive of students' diverse perspectives, expressions, and contributions.

Learning Relevance
This project allowed students to explore and communicate their perspectives on a theme that was relevant to their personal lived experiences and to the global community. At the individual level, each person has been affected by the pandemic in different ways. The messages conveyed through the students' art are reflective of things they have seen, felt, thought about, and/or experienced. The pandemic is also a global phenomenon, touching people in all corners of the world. Many people, regardless of geographic location, could now examine these artworks and find something of relevance to their own knowledge and experience. The students, therefore, were connecting via their art, to people everywhere.

Learning Outcomes
With this work, the students had the opportunity to develop and demonstrate complex communication and critical thinking skills. These artworks are also exemplary in their application of artistic knowledge and skills. Learning outcomes demonstrated include the ability to appropriate existing imagery effectively (i.e., apply existing imagery to a different context to give it new meaning) and to apply the elements and principles of design (e.g., colour, value, balance,

proportion, etc.) using a variety of media (e.g., painting, drawing, collage) and tools (e.g., pencils, paintbrushes, pens). On a more emotional level, the students had the chance to develop a sense of belonging and responsibility to a global community by addressing a worldwide concern through art.

Reflective Questions

1. The students in this project communicated messages related to the shared global experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. Is there another issue of shared importance (global, national, or local) that you might explore with your students through art?
2. These students demonstrated the ability to think symbolically and apply technical skills in painting and drawing. For what age group(s) might this project be appropriate? Can you think of ways to adapt this type of project to different age groups and/or art forms?
3. Students appropriated recognizable imagery from the media and existing artworks to help communicate their messages. How might you support students in appropriating existing imagery in such a way that it respects the cultural, intellectual, and financial rights of the original creators?
4. What common symbols or imagery exist in your context that might be leveraged to communicate meaning in visual artworks?

Kenya and Finland: International Art Collaboration

Arts Assets
- *Arts learning can connect people through shared experiences and expressions*
- *Arts learning can enable action NOW—learners can apply learning and take action through artistic work*

Learning Actions

Students and teachers at Rusinga Schools, Nairobi and Viikki Teacher Training School, University of Helsinki, Finland collaborated across continents on an art project inspired by the number of plastic cups, plates, and containers being thrown away at their schools.

Twenty students in Kenya and twenty-four students in Finland, all aged 10-11 years, connected via the online platform Jamboard to brainstorm ideas and find meaningful problems to solve. The children defined and set the goal of creating art projects based on the materials that they had at hand. They worked together to discover what could be done with the plastic waste generated in their schools, thus addressing the environmental challenge of sustainable consumption. They developed questions such as, *What art has been made from trash previously? What areas of the school need beautification?* In group meetings – with each group including students from both Kenya and Finland – the students shared and critiqued ideas and artwork, offering feedback to each other.

The students in Finland used plastic cups to create decorative flower pots and installation pieces suspended from the ceiling. The students in Kenya painted a mural in a school common area, using plastic food containers to hold paint and brushes and to serve as colour mixing palettes.

Learning Context
Environmental factors figured prominently in this learning experience. The students focused their art making with the goal of beautifying their school spaces. Also, the art making was driven by a problem they identified within their school environments – all the plastic cups, plates, and containers being thrown away. The learning context in fact included both schools, as the students together explored art making possibilities within both spaces.

The teachers supported the learning experience by setting up and facilitating the virtual collaboration between the schools, thus broadening the learning community. The teachers invited learner contributions and perspectives by encouraging students to share ideas and offer feedback to their peers. The teachers guided the project with a learner-led approach, encouraging the students to define goals and identify ways to achieve them. The teachers promoted exploratory learning, urging the students to ask questions, to inquire, innovate, create, evaluate, collaborate, and discuss. They supported the students' art making by putting resources in place such as paint and brushes. The teachers invited student expressions and imagination through the artworks the students created.

Learning Relevance
The learning experience had strong potential to be meaningful to students because they set their own goals. Also, it involved beautifying their own schools and addressing the plastic waste issue within them that the students themselves had recognized as problematic. The experience also had powerful potential for relevance because it connected the students to interactions, relationships, and the sharing of their own ideas and art with people their own age but outside their school – in fact, in a different country and continent entirely.

Learning Outcomes

The students had the opportunity to apply and develop collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills as they determined together how to make art while simultaneously addressing the issue of plastic waste. Students learned about the responsible use of materials, and about minimizing waste. Teachers reported that they learned to look at trash differently. They learned to find possibilities for making their physical environment more beautiful. They also had the chance to develop digital literacy skills, and to apply and develop imagination and creative skills in the artworks that they produced.

Further, students had the opportunity to develop intercultural understanding by engaging and working with students from another culture. Teachers observed that the students learned about similarities between their different cultures. The classroom connection brought home the interconnectedness of diverse countries and cultures facing similar issues. The students had the opportunity to acquire a sense of belonging and responsibility to the global community.

Reflective Questions

1. What meaningful collaboration opportunities beyond the classroom could you set up for your students? (E.g., with students and/or artists in other schools, communities, regions, countries.)
2. How could you help your students and their collaborators focus their artwork on a topic that is mutually meaningful and relevant to their lives?
3. What can be exchanged in artistic collaborations? In this example, ideas and feedback were shared back and forth. How might you take collaboration further? How might the collaborators actually co-produce or co-create artworks?

Lebanon: My Childhood, a Stolen Right

Arts Assets

- *Arts learning can support intimate exploration of complex topics*
- *Arts learning can enable exploration and empowerment of diverse identities and possible selves*
- *Arts learning can raise awareness*

Learning Actions

Sixth grade students at Makassed ABS Cambridge International School in Lebanon worked together, under the supervision of their drama coach and language teachers, to create and perform a play entitled *My Childhood, a Stolen Right*. The play shed light on the misery of children who are deprived of basic rights such as the right to play, to good medical support, to proper education, and to live in a safe country. The play ended with the school choir singing a song about hope, diversity, and equity.

With this learning experience the students addressed the social challenge of ensuring basic human rights for all. As the students prepared and rehearsed the performance, they accessed knowledge of how children experience the loss of basic rights and applied that knowledge in the creation of the play and the characters within it.

Working together with their peers and teachers, the students had many opportunities to connect to each other. But the young actors also had the chance to connect to children they did not know, as they imagined what it was like to be the children they portrayed in the drama. The students experimented and took risks as they explored their characters and how to embody them within the situations depicted on stage. In doing so, they had the chance to vicariously explore others' experiences and ways of being in the world, but also to explore different aspects of themselves.

The students prepared and rehearsed for a sustained period of three months. With the performance, they expressed their own feelings and invited emotional responses from audiences. They represented ideas symbolically, for example by wearing chains to signify their lack of freedom. Through creating, rehearsing, and performing the drama focused on this topic, the students had the opportunity to better understand and to communicate their understanding of what it means and how it feels to have and to not have basic human rights.
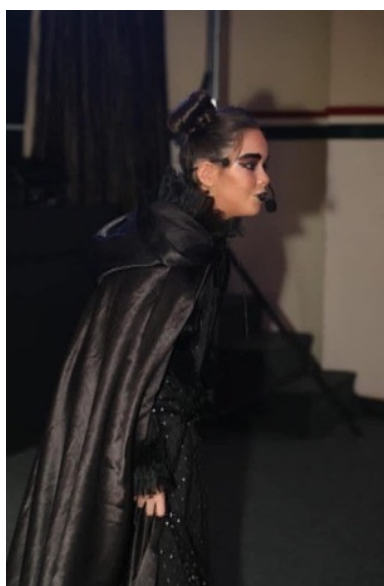
Learning Context

In this learning experience the teachers described centering the students by encouraging them to lead the creation of the characters and the play. Learner contributions, perspectives, and expressions were invited in the development of the play content, characters, costumes, movements, and staging. Opportunities within the learning experience were differentiated; students took on different roles within and in support of the performance. Enabling students to take on these unique roles, all contributing meaningfully to the production, encourages student ownership and responsibility.

This action-oriented learning experience focused on raising awareness about human rights through artistic representation and performance. It was highly collaborative, with students and teachers working together on the production, and likely developing a strong sense of community through the long hours of preparation and rehearsal.

The attention to detail in the costumes, acting, and staging suggests the teachers emphasized professionalism and art making as serious work. The experience was supported with resources to help the students achieve that sense of professionalism, including a quality performance space, lighting, make up, and sound equipment. This artistic work had everything necessary to enable aesthetic (heightened sensory) experiences both for the students involved in the production *and* for the audiences.

Learning Relevance

The learning experience was meaningful to students' lives because the topic addressed, children's rights, was close to their own experiences. Working with others on a shared task for an extended period of time often supports the development of meaningful relationships; students had the opportunity to make and extend friendships. The performance of the play offered a chance to draw in and connect with family and community. Students had the chance to be seen, to be acknowledged for their contributions, and to publicly shine.

Learning Outcomes

Thanks to this experience, students had the chance to change and to make change happen. They could change themselves by engaging with and learning about children's rights, and perhaps change others by expressively sharing what they had learned. The students had powerful opportunities to develop empathy and knowledge of emotions as they considered the nuances of the characters and their experiences, and to develop communication skills as they shared the stories and underlying messages with audiences. Moreover, they had the chance to develop imagination and creative skills as they re-created the characters on stage; self-regulation and self-discipline skills as they engaged in preparation and rehearsals; and technical arts skills related to performing on stage.

Reflective Questions

1. What topics would be meaningful for your students to address in drama activities?
2. What individual abilities, interests, and identities do your students have that they could explore in a dramatic production?
3. What are some different roles that your students might take on to contribute to a drama production?
4. Who would it be valuable for your students to think, learn, and develop empathy about?

Japan: Haiku in Koto City, Haiku in Yanagawa

Arts Assets
- *Arts learning can help people explore ways of being in and with the world[4]*
- *Arts learning can connect people to cultural heritage*

Learning Actions

At the The Yanagawa Elementary School school in Koto City, Japan, teachers dedicate time every week for composing haiku poems. The haiku is a short, 3-line poetic form that originated in Japan.

Students engage in reflecting, process, and presenting actions as they read, write, and recite haiku poems. The students engage in reflecting actions through contemplating existing haiku poems during regular poetry meetings and through observing and reflecting deeply in order to create their own. Working with haiku poetry offers the opportunity to explore feelings and to work out ways of being in and with the world. Process actions involve students writing haiku poems based on close observation of their world, and making judgments about how to express their feelings in poetic ways. Presenting actions include publicly displaying student haiku poems, posted throughout the school and local area in beautiful calligraphy, where they can be celebrated by friends, family, and community. Students also enter haiku competitions, publish collections of haiku poems, and recite their haiku poems.

Learning Context

---

[4] Biesta, G. (2022). *World-centred education: a view for the present.* London: Routledge.

The Yanagawa Elementary School area is historically associated with Matsuo Basho, a famous 17th century poet in Japan and haiku master. The school takes advantage of this cultural connection to promote and celebrate haiku composition within the school.

The teachers support the students by encouraging their engagement with aesthetic and heightened sensory experiences. They motivate students' work by proudly displaying their poetry around the school and larger community, by hosting and encouraging students to enter haiku competitions, and by framing haiku as important.

Learning Relevance
Engaging with haiku poetry has potential for relevance to students because it provides them an opportunity to reflect on and express feelings about aspects of their lives that are significant to them. Further, when students enter Haiku competitions or have their work published, it allows them to be celebrated in their school and local community.

Learning Outcomes
Through study of haiku masters, students have the opportunity to appreciate the tradition of haiku and its importance to their community and to Japanese culture more broadly. They also have the chance to learn how haiku has influenced other poetry forms across the world.

Through the regular practice of haiku composition, students have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills. Students are invited to think deeply about the environment, their lived experiences, and how they impact the world around them in their daily lives. The minimalist nature of haiku gives students the chance to distill their thoughts into evocative and powerful poetry.

The presentation of the students' haiku poems at Yanagawa Elementary School has the potential to increase their sense of belonging within the school community. Competitions and public displays also allow them to receive recognition for their work. Students are introduced to the value of writing haiku poems as a practice in daily life, and its potential for helping them explore and express emotions.

Reflective Questions
1. How can you bring student art into your own community? Who and where are your partners?
2. In what ways can you nurture regular arts practice with your students? (Are there ways to make it accessible and easy to jump in and out of mindfulness?)
3. What, if any, value does competition offer your learning environment?
4. Reflection and observation are important elements of Haiku poetry. How do these elements exist in your learning environment?
5. Are there particular local or global issues that you can target for Haiku (or other artform) composition?

Learning Experience Snapshots

In 2022 the research team surveyed and interviewed teachers across the globe about their experiences of teaching the arts. Teachers were asked to provide specific examples of arts learning structures or projects that they used to support transformative education. A few 'snapshots' of these learning experiences are provided here.

> **Teachers say:** "Arts education is a powerful vessel for social commentary and social change."

The oceans scream for help! Students at a seaside school in **Portugal** explored human impacts on marine species and promoted the protection of marine life through an elaborate puppet performance. The students created puppets representing endangered marine species. They wrote dramatic monologues explaining threats to the species' survival and encouraging audiences to take action to prevent their extinction. The students created the puppets and sets with reusable materials. They published a video of the performance here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O8B-I_xX74 The teacher reported that through this work the children learned creative thinking and problem-solving skills as they identified novel ways to create puppets and sets for the drama, and used their artistic abilities to bring their puppets to life as recognizable ocean animals. The project invited the students to think critically about issues related to ocean pollution and marine habitats. By taking the viewpoint of ocean animals, students had the opportunity to develop empathy for non-human life. Performing the monologues and expressing imagined emotions from the animals supported students in *feeling* the impact of human-caused environmental damage. They were also given the chance to learn how to communicate effectively through drama, and intimately experience how art can be used to advocate for societal issues.

World Food Day. A school in **Bhutan** marked the occasion of World Food Day by staging a short student-made play on the importance of food. They also hosted an inter-class poster competition based on the UN theme for that year. Students made pledges on how they would mitigate environmental effects from food production and recognized how they, as students, play a role in sustainable food consumption. The posters were displayed in a gallery format so that all students were able to appreciate the artwork made by other classes. Students offered feedback on each other's poster designs based on the knowledge gained in their lessons (e.g., colour theory).

Sculptures to Raise Awareness of the Climate Emergency. Students in **Canada** created *in situ* sculptures in response to the climate emergency. First, they informed themselves about the various associated issues (pollution, overconsumption, melting ice, deforestation, etc.). Next, each student chose an issue that was personally meaningful and created a sculpture to address it. Finally, students identified a fictitious space in which they would exhibit their work *in situ*, so as to reach as many viewers as possible. They considered the people who were affected by the climate issue and those who were causing the problem. Students learned that there are multiple climate issues. They explored the potential of art to leverage visual codes to communicate, engage viewers, and above all raise awareness.

Peacemaker Songs. At a time of armed conflict in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** students and educators formed a choir to promote peace. The choir addressed political actors through a program of song and dance entitled, "*Heureux les artisans et Princes de la paix.*" The choir performed at the seat of the National Assembly in Kinshasa and at a variety of peace-building events. The

students worked as a tight-knit community of musicians, drawn together by their mutual commitment to the work. The teacher reported that through the rehearsal process the students developed self-regulation along with an attitude of respect for professionalism. The teacher observed that collaborating for this cause developed within the students a powerful sense of togetherness and solidarity. Further, the learning experience enabled the students to see the potential of artistic work for drawing and focusing attention on crucial societal issues.

Developing Empathy through Podcast Creation. A teacher in **Costa Rica** worked with students to produce podcasts. Students chose one problematic global issue (e.g., war, climate change, violent extremism, racism, migration) then created a story with characters that they interpreted in the podcast with their voices. As a result of investigating true stories of people suffering, the teacher observed the students developing empathy and the capacity to connect with people that experience realities different from their own.

Peace Trees. Students in the **United Kingdom** engaged in a collaboration of five schools on a "Cities of Peace" project. Students took part in a series of interrelated activities that enabled them to explore emotive issues through artistic processes. They learned about the history of their own city and of Hiroshima. They wrote poems that were displayed on "peace trees." They explored the themes of conflict and reconciliation through the medium of Noh Theatre. Finally, they designed and created a Japanese peace garden. The teacher reported that through these activities the students learned to work collaboratively. The work gave them a sense of achievement and pride, and increased their intercultural understanding and empathy.

A Concert of Peace, Love, and Joy. Eighty primary and secondary students in **Mexico** prepared a free concert to commemorate International UN Day 2019. The concert was presented to promote music as the international language of peace, inspiration, and creativity; raise awareness of sustainability and care for the environment; and advocate for the acceptance of differences among cultures and traditions.

A Certain Dandelion. Students in **Poland** created and performed a drama called *"The Sad and at the Same Time Cheerful Story of a Certain Dandelion (Taraxacum Pieninicum)."* The performance featured a local plant species in danger of extinction. Students learned about protecting this plant, and created the script, set design, and music. The show was performed with various casts across the country between 2010 and 2019. The teacher reported that students learned of the importance of taking care of the natural environment. Students learned to write a script, to create music and multimedia scenography, and to use theatrical lighting. The teacher highlighted that students learned to work collaboratively, to take responsibility for a common project, and how to cooperate with institutions.

Building Belonging through Drama Performance. At a primary school in **Costa Rica**, fifth-grade students wrote their own short stories and poems as part of the Spanish language program, which they then transformed into theatrical performances. Students had the choice to either make puppets for their characters or act out the characters themselves. They created sets and rehearsed. They then performed their plays for an audience of younger children transitioning between preschool and primary school. After the performance, they shared more about their process with the young audience and received feedback from the preschool teachers. The performance day was very special for all students, as they ate snacks together, shared ideas about the characters and plays, and developed friendships. The teacher explained that this activity served to break down age

barriers and reduce bullying, and to cultivate empathy among older students for their younger counterparts. The teacher reported that when the young children entered primary school the following year, they were less afraid because they already had "veteran" friends in the school. The older students helped the young ones locate different resources (e.g., offices, bathrooms, library) and protected them at recess time. The teacher explained that this activity has resulted in a sense of belonging in the school through a network of relationships among older and younger students.

No Poverty. Seventh-grade students in **Austria** began a visual arts project by realizing they wanted to identify problems occurring *outside* of their school that they could transform from *inside* the school. They discussed which SDG seemed the most important for them, their school, and their community, and targeted the 'no poverty' goal. Working together, they created four boxes made of clay, plastic, and upcycling to collect coins from other students at school. One was a globe, positioned in the school library. Another was an abstract form. The students went through the classrooms, collecting coins in the boxes they made. The idea was to destroy them afterwards, to get the money out. Then they donated the money to a non-government organization that supported refugee teenagers. The project gave students the experience of taking direct action on a Sustainable Development Goal.

Rumba. After the recognition by UNESCO of the Rumba as an example of intangible cultural heritage (traditions or living expressions passed on from ancestors), students in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** appeared on national television to promote the Rumba dance. The teacher explained that as dancing was among the most practiced cultural activities of the students, they gained a sense of pride and a sense of belonging to the international community.

Addressing Social Issues with Drama. Students in **Greece** created short films with themes addressing the environment, school bullying, justice, and world peace. They also produced and uploaded videos of ancient and contemporary plays related to current events. The teacher reported that students benefited by learning to collaborate, exchange ideas, and support each other. Further, the teacher explained that relations between the students and their teachers improved, and problems of misbehavior at school became minimal.

Guidelines for Teachers

The *Arts for Transformative Education* model provides you, the teacher, with a thinking tool for understanding, designing, and supporting transformative arts learning experiences. Whether you engage students with the arts in dedicated arts learning contexts or in support of other curricula, the following guidelines suggest how you can work with the model to plan, activate, and enrich learning.

In laying out these guidelines, each learning dimension is considered from the perspective of both (a) transformative education and (b) arts learning. The understanding of transformative education is informed by UNESCO policy documents[xxxiii]. The understanding of arts learning is informed by a broad range of arts education literature and by the research team's analysis of teacher-contributed arts learning project descriptions, teacher survey responses, and teacher interviews. Positioning the transformative education and arts learning perspectives side by side reveals that there is considerable overlap between them; they are complementary.

Note: You can begin your planning with consideration of *any* of the dimensions (actions, context, relevance, outcomes). You do not have to follow the order of dimensions proposed here, and it is quite likely that you will move back and forth between them.

> ***Teachers Say:*** "My planning tends to be a little messy. Ideas come at different times, from all over the place! There is a lot of shaping and changing and throwing things out before I come up with a plan that feels right."

1. Identify the **actions** students will take.
   - *What will learners be doing?*
   - Consider actions associated with (a) transformative education and (b) arts learning.

Teachers Say: "To talk, to think about things, to maybe see something new. Those three things are very important in art teaching."
Teachers Say: "I keep on giving them that possibility to express themselves."

Table 2
Learning Actions Checklist

Learning Actions *(opportunities to develop and apply knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes)*	
Transformative Education	*Arts Learning*
making informed decisions accessing & critiquing knowledge/information producing & applying knowledge/information connecting to others working with others connecting to nature acting at individual, community, and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world addressing social, economic & environmental challenges, e.g., conflicts poverty eradication gender inequality violent extremism climate change environmental degradation equitable natural resource management biodiversity protection disaster risk reduction sustainable consumption health and well-being	*Process Actions* imagining creating finding meaningful problems practicing/rehearsing experimenting/risk-taking observing closely working for sustained periods persevering collaborating working with community outside school *Reflective Actions* appreciating existing artworks *(listening to music, looking at art, watching drama/dance, etc.)* analyzing, responding to art making art *about* something to understand it & yourself better exploring/ working out ways of being in & with the world exploring multiple perspectives exploring feelings defining & setting goals learning from mistakes/failing reflecting on process making informed judgments *Presenting/Sharing Actions* performing/ presenting making special: using arts to make events special, heightened communicating/ storytelling representing symbolically celebrating heritage/ culture expressing feelings expressing identity/self *(e.g., synthesizing diverse cultural references into personal expression)* raising awareness inviting emotional responses

Teachers Say: "Often kids are terrified to be vulnerable and creative. So that's something that I carefully try to give everyone – all my students. The chance to dip their toes in."

Survey Results
- **Presenting/sharing actions** rated by teachers as most meaningful to students' learning and development:
    1. *communicating/ story-telling*
    2. *expressing feelings*
    3. *raising awareness*
- **Reflective actions** rated as most meaningful:
    1. *appreciating existing artworks*
    2. *making art about something to understand it and yourself better*
    3. *exploring/ working out ways of being in and with the world*
- **Process actions** rated as most meaningful:
    1. *creating*
    2. *imagining*
    3. *collaborating*

Authors' note re: publication layout: The 'Survey Results' statements are to be positioned within text boxes separated from the main body text, like the 'Teachers' Say' text boxes. BB

2. Identify the **context** that you, as teacher, will strive to put in place.
    - *How will learners and learning be supported?*
    - Consider environmental factors and teaching orientations associated with (a) transformative education and (b) arts learning.

Teachers say: "The development of a climate of cooperation and communication between teachers and students inspires us, heals us, calms us and unites us."

Teachers say: "I try to create a safe atmosphere for risk taking and sharing. Up front, I state that there is no such thing as a bad idea."

Table 3
Learning Context Checklist

Learning Context *(environmental factors & teaching orientations)*	
Transformative Education	***Arts Learning***

learners are included as active & valued members of the learning community
learners' political, social, and cultural rights are supported
learners feel safe
inclusion, equity, diversity and well-being are supported
resources are available
learning sites (natural, built, virtual) suit contexts
learning occurs throughout life
learning occurs in varied cultural & social spaces
assessment reflects learning goals
assessment promotes growth
• learning is…
      learner-centred/ learner-led
      exploratory
      action-oriented
      collaborative
      accessible
	learners' interests, perspectives & expressions are centred
	learners experience arts spaces as special sites of safety, comfort, & belonging
	learners experience a sense of community
	learners develop trusting relationships with teachers & peers
	resources/ materials are available
	differentiation supports accessibility
	learners have independence and agency
	learners have responsibility
	learners are experts *(not just the teacher)*
	teacher makes art alongside learners
	teacher models arts enthusiasm
	art making is understood as serious work
	aesthetic *(heightened sensory)* experiences are featured
	inter-generational engagement is welcomed
	playfulness is welcomed
	risk-taking is encouraged; it's OK to fail

Teachers say: "Let them take the reins. Hold their hands but let them take the reins."

Survey Results
- **Contextual factors** rated by teachers as most meaningful to students' learning and development:
    1. *trusting relationships with teachers and peers*
    2. *student interests are centred*
    3. *student contributions, perspectives, and expressions are invited*

3. Identify how the learning will have **relevance** to learners' out-of-school lives.
    - What topics, themes, or experiences will the arts learning address, and how are those things meaningful to your students?
    - *How will the learning connect to students' lives?*
    - Consider relevance as it is associated with (a) transformative education and (b) arts learning.

Teachers Say: "The topic of poverty was kind of close to their own experience, because a lot of them have refugee backgrounds, or diasporic, poverty experiences."

Table 4
Learning Relevance Checklist

Learning Relevance *(meaningfulness to learners' lives)*	
Transformative Education	*Arts Learning*
there is coherence between the world in school and out • learning is relevant in terms of… 　　curriculum 　　pedagogy 　　learning materials 　　environment • learning is relevant to learners'… 　　ecological contexts 　　political contexts 　　economic contexts 　　cultural contexts	meaningful relationships develop well-being & mental health are supported intrinsic motivation arts draw in family & community opportunities to publicly shine opportunities to be seen/ acknowledged opportunities to engage with arts community outside school learners see the arts as connected to who they are & how they want to be learners see the arts as a meaningful lifelong pursuit as or alongside paid work

Teachers Say: "The pupils learn to know and to know each other."

Survey Results
- **Relevance** rated by teachers as most meaningful to students' learning and development:
    1. *arts activity supports well-being & mental health*
    2. *students see the arts as connected to who they are & how they want to be*
    3. *students see arts engagement as a valued lifelong pursuit*

4. Identify targeted learning **outcomes**.
   - *How will the learning be focused to develop specific knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes?*
   - Consider outcomes associated with (a) transformative education and (b) arts learning.

Teachers say: "It puts their knowledge into action."

Table 6
Learning Relevance Checklist

Learning Outcomes *(knowledge, skills, values, & attitudes)*	
Transformative Education	*Arts Learning*

the capacity to change and make change happen …
    for a more peaceful and inclusive world -*GCED*
    for environmental integrity, economic viability, just society -*ESD*
problem solving skills
critical thinking skills
collaboration skills
communication skills
empathy
self-awareness
intercultural understanding
understanding interconnectedness of different countries & populations
sense of belonging & responsibility to global community
respect for human rights, democracy, diversity
inclusion attitude
scientific, digital, humanistic literacies
sustainability knowledge related to…
    climate change action
    biodiversity protection
    disaster risk reduction
    sustainable consumption
    poverty eradication
    health & well-being
	imagination & creative skills
	critical thinking & problem-solving skills
	self-regulation & self-discipline skills (self-criticism, self-assessment)
	knowledge of self/ identity
	self-belief, confidence & resilience
	collaboration & relationship skills
	communication skills
	increased understanding of something through making or appreciating art about it
	appreciation of diversity/ multiple perspectives
	knowledge of emotions (empathy)
	technical arts skills
	knowledge & appreciation of art & artists
	knowledge & appreciation of heritage/culture
	(long term) arts participation
	arts entrepreneurship

Teachers say: "A lot of kids are scared to do things that are hard. And learning to play a musical instrument is not an easy thing. No matter who you are it's going to take some work, right? And in the structure of my classes they're kind of forced to put the time in, and a lot of them come away seeing the benefit of that."

Survey Results
- **Outcomes** rated by teachers as most meaningful to students' learning and development:
   1. *imagination & creative skills*
   2. *critical thinking & problem solving skills*
   3. *appreciation of diversity/ multiple perspectives*

5. Identify any **arts assets** that could be activated or emphasized to enhance the learning or make it special and significant for learners.
    - Often arts assets are *not* planned, but emerge as significant when learners engage in arts activities. Remain observant so you can support and celebrate arts assets as you and your learners become aware of them.
    - *What can you do in your planning and facilitating of arts learning to help students experience the power and potential of arts assets?*
    - Consider *how* you and your learners might activate particular arts assets.

Table 7
Arts Assets Checklist

Sample Arts Assets
Arts learning can enable exploration and empowerment of diverse identities and possible selves
Arts learning can help people process emotion
Arts learning can help people say what they want or need to say and cannot say with words alone
Arts learning can provide opportunities for learners' thoughts, voices, expressions, and selves to be seen, acknowledged, and valued
Arts learning can enable multi-faceted communicating and storytelling
Arts learning can offer different entry points and ways of communicating in difficult conversations
Arts learning can nurture intrinsic motivation
Arts learning can support emotional regulation
Arts learning can connect people through shared experiences and expressions
Arts learning can connect people to community and cultural heritage
Arts learning can nurture inclusion by recognizing and valuing cultures and identities
Arts learning can enable embodied exploration of abstract concepts
Arts learning can support intimate exploration of complex topics
Arts learning can integrate the head, hand, and heart
Arts learning can open minds
Arts learning can invite new ways of seeing
Arts learning can help people explore ways of being in and with the world
Arts learning can help people imagine new possibilities
Arts learning can result in artistic products and practices that have real value outside the learning context
Arts learning can provide a brave space for people to challenge systems and enact change
Note: This is only a partial list of arts assets. There are many, many more…

Teachers say: "It allows kids to express themselves in a new way that other subjects don't allow."

Teachers say: "Children's art holds the potential to open hearts and shift thinking."

6. Assess the learning experience at various points as it unfolds, with the following **checklist**.

Table 8
Progress Checklist

Actions	Learners are taking or working towards actions associated with transformative education
	Learners are taking or working towards actions associated with arts learning:
	process actions
	reflection actions
	presenting actions
Context	Learners are supported by environmental factors and pedagogical orientations associated with transformative education
	Learners are supported by environmental factors and pedagogical orientations associated with arts learning
Relevance	Learning is contextualized by relevance associated with transformative education
	Learning is contextualized by relevance associated with arts learning
Outcomes	Learning outcomes associated with transformative education are achieved
	Learning outcomes associated with arts learning are achieved
Arts Assets	Targeted arts assets are activated
	Emergent arts assets are identified, supported, and celebrated
Note: It is highly valuable to actively include learners in this assessment process!	

Teachers say: "I believe students who engage in art making learn to *value beauty in the world around them*, and that helps them develop a sense of inner peace and wellness. Not only will they recognize beauty going forward, I believe most students will actively seek it."

Closing Words

This guide presents and unpacks the *Arts for Transformative Education* model – a thinking tool for understanding, planning, and supporting transformative arts learning experiences. It also describes a curated collection of arts learning activities and projects from across the globe that may serve as inspiration for arts learning experiences suited to your own context.

The next steps are yours. What arts actions are best suited to your students? How will you shape the learning context to help them thrive? How will you ensure the learning experiences are relevant to students' lives? What learning outcomes will you target? What *arts assets* will emerge?

The arts hold tremendous power and potential. Arts learning can help students acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to understand and take action for better lives, better communities, and a better world. This guide invites you, the teacher, to harness that power and realize that potential through transformative arts learning experiences.

---

[i] Countries represented: Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Congo, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Democratic

Republic of Congo, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kenya, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America

ii UNESCO (2022). *Draft Recommendation concerning Education for Global Citizenship, Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.* Paris: UNESCO, p. 5.

iii TakingITGlobal (2021). *The Futures of Education: Perspectives and insights from the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).* Paper commissioned for the UNESCO Futures of Education report, *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education.*

iv International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education.* Paris: UNESCO

v UNESCO (2022). *Draft Recommendation concerning Education for Global Citizenship, Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.* Paris: UNESCO.

vi UNESCO (2022). *The concept of sustainability and its contribution towards quality transformative education.* Paris: UNESCO.

vii International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education.* Paris: UNESCO.

viii UNESCO (2022). *The relevance and contributions of education for health and well-being to the advancement of human rights, sustainable development & peace.* Paris: UNESCO.

ix UNESCO (2023). *Report on the 2022 Transforming Education Summit.* Paris: UNESCO.

x UNESCO (2022). *The concept of sustainability and its contribution towards quality transformative education.* Paris: UNESCO.

xi Gustavo, R. A. J., & Barth, M. (2020). Transformative learning in the field of sustainability: A systematic literature review (1999-2019). *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 21*(5), 993-1013.

xii O'Sullivan, E (2003). Bringing a perspective of transformative learning to globalized consumption. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *27*(4): 326-330. p. 327.

xiii Kunej, D., & Turk, I. (2000). New perspectives on the beginning of music: Archaeological and musicological analysis of a middle palaeolithic bone flute. In: Wallin, N.L., Merker, B., Brown, S. (eds.), *The origins of music.* Cambridge University Press. (pp. 235-268).

xiv O'Farrell, L., & Bolden, B. (2020). Toward a vision for the future of arts education. In UNESCO (Ed.), *Humanistic futures of learning: Perspectives from UNESCO chairs and UNITWIN networks* (pp. 75-77). Paris: UNESCO.

xv UNESCO (2016). *Global Citizens for Sustainable Development: A guide for teachers.* Paris: UNESCO

xvi Fancourt, D., & Finn, S. (2019). *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review.* (Health Evidence Network (HEN) synthesis report 67). Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe.

xvii UNESCO (2010). *The Seoul agenda: Goals for the development of arts education.* Paris: UNESCO.

xviii Bowen, D. H., & Kisida, B. (2019). *Investigating causal effects of arts education experiences: Experimental evidence from Houston's Arts Access initiative.* Research Report for the Houston Independent School District.

xix Shank, M., & Schirch, L. (2008). Strategic arts-based peacebuilding. *Peace & Change*, *33*(2), 217-242.

xx Bruner, J. (1979). *On knowing: Essays for the left hand.* Harvard University Press.

xxi Bolden, B., & O'Farrell, L. (2020). Exploring the impact of a culture bearer on intercultural understanding within a community choir. In R. Heydon & A. Cohen (Eds.), *Routledge companion to interdisciplinary studies in singing, volume 3: Well-being (pp. 250-261).* Routledge.

xxii Lampert, N. (2006). Critical thinking dispositions as an outcome of art education. *Studies in Art Education*, *47*(3), 215–228.

xxiii Farrington, C. A., Maurer, J., McBride, M. R. A., Nagaoka, J., Puller, J. S., Shewfelt, S., et al. (2019). *Arts education and social-emotional learning outcomes among K–12 students: Developing a theory of action.* Chicago, IL: Ingenuity and the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research.

xxiv Isabirye, J. (2021). Indigenous music learning in contemporary contexts: Nurturing learner identity, agency, and passion. *Research Studies in Music Education, 43*(2), 239–258.

xxv Goldstein, T. R., & Winner, E. (2012). Enhancing empathy and theory of mind. *Journal of Cognition and Development, 13*(1), 19–37.

xxvi Ferrer-Fons, M., Rovira-Martínez, M., & Soler-i-Martí, R. (2022). Youth empowerment through arts education: A case study of a non-formal education arts centre in Barcelona. *Social Inclusion, 10*(2), 85-94.

xxvii UNESCO (2023). *Draft UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) Strategy 2022-2030.* Paris: UNESCO.

xxviii Barron, B. (2006). Interest and self-sustained learning as catalysts of development: A learning ecology perspective. *Human development*, *49*(4), 193-224.

xxix Damşa, C., Nerland, M. and Andreadakis, Z.E. (2019), An ecological perspective on learner-constructed learning spaces. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 50*: 2075-2089.

xxx Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Seabury Press.

xxxi Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Seabury Press.

xxxii Schonmann, S. (2023). Aesthetics of transformation: Questions to ask, ideas to contemplate. In B. Jörissen, L. Unterberg & T. Klepacki (Eds.) *Cultural sustainability and arts education. International perspectives on the aesthetics of transformation. UNTWIN 2ed Yearbook.* (pp. 227-234). Springer.

xxxiii See, for example, International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education.* Paris: UNESCO; UNESCO (2016). *Global Citizens for Sustainable Development: A guide for teachers.* Paris: UNESCO; UNESCO (2022). *Draft Recommendation concerning Education for Global Citizenship, Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.* Paris: UNESCO; UNESCO (2022). *The concept of sustainability and its contribution towards quality transformative education.* Paris: UNESCO; UNESCO (2021). *Teaching and learning with living heritage.* Paris: UNESCO; *The concept of sustainability and its contribution towards quality transformative education.* Paris: UNESCO; The International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (2017.) *Transformative pedagogy for peace-building.* Addis Ababa: UNESCO-IICBA.

Art for Transformative Education Back Cover

Title of Publication: Arts for Transformative Education:

Subtitle: A Guide for Teachers Informed by Learning Experiences from the UNESCO Associated Schools Network

UNESCO's vision of transformative education involves building learners' capacities and empowering them to take action for a more peaceful and sustainable world. The arts offer tremendous potential for supporting learning that transforms individuals and communities. To fully realize that potential, teachers need to structure and support educational experiences that optimize what students will take away from them.

This guide presents the research-informed *Arts for Transformative Education* model, a pioneering approach and thinking tool for teachers. The model was developed from data provided by over 600 teachers of the UNESCO Associated Schools network from 39 countries. The model identifies four dimensions of arts learning: learning actions, learning context, learning relevance, and learning outcomes. The model also recognizes distinctive affordances associated with the arts that can *enhance* learning. "Arts assets" are situated within or transcend the learning dimensions. Arts assets hold the power to provoke transformation.

Twelve *Learning Experience Descriptions* illustrate in detail how the *Arts for Transformative Education* model functions in real-world learning projects from around the world. Twelve *Learning Experience Snapshots* provide additional project examples. *Guidelines for Teachers* outline a step-by-step process for activating arts learning to empower transformative education.