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Special Issue: *The Arts in the classroom: Advocacy, theory and practice*

Editorial

Millie Locke, Robyn Ewing and Terry Locke

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EDITORIAL

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Despite longstanding intuitive knowledge and unequivocal international research that the Arts should play a central role in our lives and learning, many western education systems continue to undervalue their importance in the classroom. Arts education includes learning about, in and through the Arts. Classrooms can and should be sites of focus on one particular art-form, a number of art-forms contributing their own affordances to arts appreciation and arts-making, or arts-rich processes contributing to cross-disciplinary learning.

We think of “the Arts” as a collective term, embracing discrete but interrelated creative disciplines including dance, drama, film and digital media, literature, music, and visual arts (Gibson & Ewing, 2020). Boyd (2009) reminds us that the Arts can be seen as a kind of cognitive play for the mind. Each artform is distinctive with particular knowledges, language and skills. Yet all involve the processes of play, experimentation, exploration, provocation, expression and the aesthetic shaping of the body or other media to bring together emotions with personal, sensory and intellectual experiences (Ewing, 2010).

This special issue focuses on the literary and performing arts across classrooms at all levels of education in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australian contexts.

Five articles explore the role of creative drama processes in the classroom. Olivia Karaolis’ research examines the concept of inclusion through vignettes of two children and two puppets. These stories clearly illustrate how the perspectives of their early childhood teachers shifted to create places of learning that welcomed all learners. Grounding her work in the affordances of drama-rich pedagogies (Ewing, 2019) and drawing on the work of Maxine Greene (1995), Alison Grove O’Grady argues that assembling a coherent and empathic classroom requires a *habit* of imagination. Learning English for adults with refugee or migrant backgrounds can be enriched through playful, drama-rich pedagogy with traditional cultural stories as Zoe Hogan and Victoria Campbell articulate. Similarly, Natasha Beaumont’s phenomenological study highlights a primary teacher’s use of drama processes within her literacy practice in a high-diversity school in Sydney, Australia to aid learners’ oracy and meaning-making. The improvement of inferential comprehension using drama-rich pedagogies with quality literary texts in primary classrooms is also highlighted by John Nicholas Saunders’ doctoral case study.

Terry Locke’s article on *Te Reo Pohewa* investigates six teachers’ reflections a year down the track on the impact of four, two-hour, online professional development sessions conducted during the first Covid-19 lockdown on their beliefs and practices. In particular it focuses on the importance of peer response, the teacher modelling of writer identity, and the importance of a metalanguage in providing young writers with authentic and effective formative assessment. Drawing on the work of Gail Loane, and her own experience as a teacher and teacher developer, Verity Short shares a range of insights on the conditions and practices required to foster creative authorship in primary pupils. In doing so, she argues a case that inquiry-driven, arts-rich invitations to write with an emphasis on how the writing will function with respect to an intended audience and purpose, foster a sense of connection and respect for the views of others.

We are happy to be able to offer readers five articles on music education in the classroom, with a focus on both primary and secondary contexts. Drawing on decades of practice as both classroom teacher and primary music specialist in the Aotearoa context, Robyn McQueen explores the relationship between student agency and culturally responsive practice and offers classroom teachers examples of ways in

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which music teachers can enhance student agency while focusing on cultural competencies. Sarah Dunn and Millie's Locke's article is focused on the former's journey as a Pākehā teacher seeking to implement creative music-making in the primary music classroom that draws on Mātauranga Māori content and inquiry approaches to learning. With its focus on *ako* (reciprocal learning) and te ao Māori, and its use of the whakapapa of Māori music as a conceptual framework for inspiring a sound palette of the natural world in children, this article has much to offer those teachers seeking to develop a bicultural vision of music education in Aotearoa. In a comparable way, Millie Locke's article on Manaakitia Papatūānuku offers teachers a vision of music education that is responsive to the challenge of the climate crisis. The article both theorises "eco-literate music pedagogy" and offers a framework and examples of classroom practice that illustrate innovative ways of teaching "sound arts" in the music education classroom and across the curriculum.

We are pleased to share two complementary offerings that focus on music technology pedagogy, both of which challenge current thinking in the music teaching profession, especially in the secondary-school context. Fabio Morreale challenges the current domination of digital audio workstations (DAWs) as tools in modern music production, on the one hand drawing attention to their limitations for electronic musicians and music students, and on the other hand identifying alternative approaches to composition based on principles of inclusion, collaboration and creative exploration. In contrast, Tom Pierard's article with David Lines, which also focused on DAWs, is based on classroom-based, doctoral research. The article reports on an intervention based on the dual concepts of *identity in music* and *music in identity*, where music preference (in both listening and creating) was framed individually and then expanded through student-centred group learning moving towards more effective student engagement.

The subtitle of this special issue clearly reminds us that the need for arts education advocacy never goes away, but that the most powerful argument for the Arts lies in beacons of good practice. We offer these articles as examples of successful arts education in our countries' classrooms.

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