

NEW MOVES

**UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS OF
THE SONG ROOM
PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS**

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Engaging Young People
Through Creativity

Macquarie Group
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DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGY

REFUGEE

Article 1 of the 1951 UNHCR Convention on the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a 'person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality; membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution' (UNHCR 2007).

REFUGEE BACKGROUND YOUNG PEOPLE

The state of being a refugee is not permanent and should not be used to define a person's identity. Accordingly, the terms 'refugee background young person' and 'refugee background young people' are used in this report to refer to people aged between 10 and 18 years who share at least some common features of refugee experiences, regardless of their visa classification or status upon entry into Australia.

REFUGEE EXPERIENCE/S

We use the term 'refugee experience/experiences' to encompass the following: exposure to political, religious or intercultural violence, persecution or oppression, armed conflict or civil discord that incorporates the following basic elements: a state of fearfulness for self and family members, leaving the country of origin at short notice, inability to return to the country of origin, and uncertainty about the possibility of maintaining links with family and home (Coventry et al. 2002).

YOUNG PERSON

'Youth' is frequently defined by age in the Australian youth policy arena as comprising young people 10–25 years of age. We use the term 'young person/young people' as a variation of 'youth'.

AT RISK

We draw on Donelan and O'Brien's (2008) definition of 'at risk' in relation to young people to indicate any or a combination of the following: disconnection from family, school and community; poverty; exposure to violence; homelessness; histories of offence; drug use; teenage parenting; mental health issues; refugee or Indigenous status.

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

We use this in preference to the term 'host country' in order to move away from implied host–guest relations when discussing refugee experiences and issues.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CAPE	Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education
CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
CMYI	Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
Coord.	Coordinator
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELS	English Language School
ESL	English as a second language
HELS	Haversea English Language School
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
NELS	National Educational Longitudinal Survey
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NFER	National Foundation for Education Research
NYARS	National Youth Affairs Research Scheme
P	Principal
Pa	Parent
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
PS	Primary school

RCOA	Refugee Council of Australia
RELS	Randall English Language School
RRAC	Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council
SCRAYP	Schools Community Regional Arts Youth Projects
SELS	Sarawood English Language School
SES	Socio-economic status
St Belv.	Saint Belvedere
T	Teacher
TA	Teaching artist
Tal. East PS	Taloon East Primary School
TELS	Telbridge English Language School
TPV	Temporary protection visa
TSR	The Song Room
TV	Temporary visa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USCRI	US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
VELS	Victorian Essential Learning Standards
VFST	Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

NEW MOVES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Project context

New Moves: Understanding the impacts of The Song Room programs for young people from refugee backgrounds is a research study commissioned by The Song Room (TSR) and conducted independently by Victoria University (VU).

TSR is a national not-for-profit organisation that provides learning opportunities to disadvantaged children through music and the creative arts. TSR offers weekly in-school workshop programs that include a range of creative and performing arts, run for a minimum of six months and are complemented by other programs, including performances, holiday programs and professional development. The in-school workshops are tailored to meet the diverse needs of each school community, which may involve, for example, the formation of a choir or percussion group, classroom music programs, drama or creative movement programs. Program planning is based on local need, demographics and evidence-based exemplary practice. Support materials and activities, advice and professional development are provided to enhance the impact of the program and chances of its sustainability.

1.2 Project background

TSR has previously drawn on international research providing strong evidence that arts-based education improves children's learning and social development. Through a philanthropic research grant from the Macquarie Group Foundation, TSR aimed to develop a robust evidence base regarding the efficacy of its music and arts interventions specifically for improving the social and educational outcomes of children in a range of disadvantaged and high-need communities around Australia.

TSR is working with several research partners to investigate the impact of their programs with specific target groups within Australia to identify broad learning, social and personal outcomes for participants of music and arts-based programs.

In 2009, VU successfully tendered to undertake a one year study of one of these key target groups: refugee youth in their settlement phase. The study was conducted by an interdisciplinary research team with demonstrated expertise in refugee settlement research, arts-based education theory and practice and research involving young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

1.3 Project description

The New Moves study sought to examine the impacts and meanings of TSR programs for refugee background young people in relation to three overarching domains:

- Sense of wellbeing
- Sense of belonging and social inclusion
- Engagement with learning.

These domains were contextualised in relation to the experience and demands of early phase settlement experience for these young people. The research questions focused on what young

people affected by past trauma, the challenge of settling in a new country and disrupted education, experience in arts-based learning and how this relates to their sense of wellbeing, sense of social belonging and engagement with learning.

1.4 Methodology and participants

New Moves used a qualitative multiple-case study design informed by community-based participatory research (CBPR) frameworks and supplemented by photo-elicitation and archival content analysis of TSR program planning and evaluation materials. Based on DIAC data on refugee humanitarian intakes in 2008–09, the decision to limit the study to Victoria, and more specifically to Melbourne, reflected both the density of programs offered by TSR within Victoria compared to other states, and also the high proportion of refugee background migration and settlement patterns in metropolitan Melbourne.

In total, 55 children aged 10 to 18 across six different schools offering TSR programs in metropolitan Melbourne were involved in the study. Children were sampled purposively, based on their membership in one of the four largest language groups of refugee background children in Victorian schools: Arabic, Dinka, Karen and Chin and Dari. These corresponded to refugee communities from Sudan, Iran and Iraq, Burma and Afghanistan. Interviews were conducted in English or, where appropriate, in participants' language of choice using accredited translators and interpreters.

The schools selected for participation ranged across state, independent Catholic and English language primary and secondary education settings in different parts of Melbourne. As part of the case study methodology, classroom teachers, school principals, TSR teaching artists, parents of participating children and community leaders from relevant refugee background communities were also interviewed. An additional focus group was conducted with participating TSR teaching artists to explore specific issues related to arts-based teaching and learning in work with refugee background young people in schools. Interview and focus group data were collected during Term 2 from June to July 2010. Ethics approval was received from Victoria University and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

1.5 The research team

The research team consisted of two chief investigators with senior research expertise in refugee settlement research and community psychology; six research associates who conducted individual interviews, case studies and the teaching artist focus group; and a project officer responsible for managing the administration and coordination of the project, including liaison with TSR and schools. All members of the research team were based at VU.

1.6 Project aims

New Moves set out specifically to investigate:

1. The experiences of young refugee background students engaging in programs and activities offered by TSR in the early phase of settlement
2. The influence of TSR programs on personal and social wellbeing, sense of school belonging, and engagement with learning and community for this target group
3. Any best practice models that may emerge through identifying effective TSR school programs
4. Any implications for future policy and practice.

A key aim of the study was to contribute direct evidence of the voices and views of young refugee background people themselves about their experience of participating in TSR programs, and especially how they felt TSR affected, enhanced or inhibited their sense of wellbeing, sense of belonging and engagement with learning. This was important because while TSR had a range of anecdotal evidence and feedback from teachers, principals and teaching artists about what children had to say of their involvement in TSR-led creative arts programs, no systematic collection or analysis of children's voices had previously been undertaken to validate these perceptions, or develop an evidence-based set of understandings of TSR impacts from the viewpoint of children themselves that might inform changes or improvements to program delivery.

The inclusion of educator, parent and community leader voices in the study was intended to help contextualise and triangulate the data collected from children, and also to highlight the ways in which children involved in TSR programs are already part of multiple communities in their daily lives through schools, families, friends and other cultural, social and learning environments.

1.7 Key research findings: overview

Key findings from the study relating to the experience of young refugee background students involved in TSR programs show that TSR programs have clear positive impacts for this group of young people related to fostering sense of wellbeing, promoting sense of belonging and social inclusion and enhancing engagement with learning, as a result of participating in TSR programs.

Students reported overwhelmingly positive experiences of their TSR participation. While some of these impacts were not always clearly distinguished from the more general experience of school, the young people themselves did identify some best practice elements of arts-based learning and teaching models as having positive impacts on their sense of wellbeing, sense of belonging and engagement with learning, in a number of interrelated contexts.

A significant outcome for all those with refugee backgrounds involved in TSR arts-based programs was the extent to which forms of transculturation took place. Transculturation, which involves the mutual transformative effects of 'giving and taking' across cultures for both new arrivals and the community of destination, was identified by the researchers as occurring at many levels within the TSR environment at the six case study schools. Not only were refugee background students provided with the chance to broaden their own cultural and knowledge horizons by being introduced to and becoming skilled at new art forms, but teachers, teaching artists and parents also learnt new things from refugee background students about cultural traditions, values, knowledge and capital.

New social realities are created by transcultural practices in which different cultural understandings and ways of being that occupy shared social spaces are fused into a new whole.

New social realities (Ortiz 1995) are created by transcultural practices in which elements of different cultural understandings and ways of being that occupy shared social spaces are fused into a new whole. TSR has the potential to be a major vehicle for enhancing the development of such a new social reality in Australia through its emphasis on cross-cultural learning and sharing as a fundamental tenet of TSR activity, and its commitment to public arts performances by refugee

background children so that the outcomes of transcultural arts-based learning are disseminated for the benefit of the broader community.

Fun, pleasure, friendships, creative play and self-expression are not always popular indicators of engagement with learning, personal development and academic achievement in an outcome-oriented, evidence-based educational policy and funding environment. Yet the findings in this study suggest that they are perhaps the most crucial elements identified by refugee background young people themselves. That is, they are what they experience as the benefits of arts-based learning for their own sense of wellbeing, belonging and engagement with education and learning, in both arts and non-arts general academic contexts. New Moves highlights the continuing need to find ways to validate and reinforce the importance of providing learning environments through the arts such as those fostered by TSR in which these precious, life-affirming qualities, and the tangible and intangible benefits they confer on refugee background young people, are made readily available, explicitly valued and continuously strengthened. They may be seen as fundamental tools for refugee background young people who face many challenges and struggles as they undergo resettlement in Australia, and who cherish and grow from the opportunity to experience fun, pleasure and meaningful friendships and relationships with their peers, teachers and mentors through arts-based skills and knowledge.

New Moves highlights the need to reinforce the importance of providing learning environments through the arts such as those fostered by TSR in which these precious, life-affirming qualities and the benefits they confer on refugee background young people are made readily available, highly valued and continuously strengthened.

1.8 Key impacts of TSR for refugee background young people: student voices

1.8.1 Sense of wellbeing

Sense of wellbeing for this group of refugee background students centred overwhelmingly on two key areas: social relationships and the confidence and self-esteem acquired through learning new skills. Participation specifically in TSR was linked for these children to sense of identity; strengthening social relationships; sharing their culture with peers; and sense of individual and cultural pride.

1.8.1.1 Friendships and social relationships

In the area of social relationships, making new friends; having fun with friends; and learning new social skills were commonly cited. Students reported feeling less shy, more confident and developing greater self-esteem in learning new skills through TSR, particularly once they discover they can master a particular skill or art form that can be shared with others, such as peers, teachers and parents.

1.8.1.2 Self-expression, creativity, and the arts as social currency

Students also cited the importance of self-expression of ideas and emotions through TSR classes; the pleasure of being creative; the opportunity to maintain their own sense of cultural connection and identity through the arts; the chance to learn about the cultures of other students and to teach others about their own culture; and the ways in which some students used their newly acquired arts skills in genres such as dance, drumming and music to forge new or stronger friendships, 'trading' these new-found skills on the open market of peer and community relationships as a form of social currency or capital.

1.8.1.3 The role of the arts in strengthening refugee students' 'whole self'

The finding above is important because it demonstrates the relationship of arts-focused learning to wellbeing in the realms of affect (self-expression, pride), self-perception (cultural identity, being creative), and sense of connection with others through the arts (learning about others' cultures and sharing one's own culture with others), as well as the importance of the arts to developing and strengthening social relationships, particularly with peers. It shows the ways in which students perceive their participation in the arts through TSR as nourishing aspects of a student's 'whole self', not merely the parts of the self specifically related to new knowledge and mastery of skills, as suggested by the emphases in their comments in relation to wellbeing in the general school environment.

1.8.2 Sense of belonging

1.8.2.1 Being with friends and feeling well looked after

The main factors contributing to these young people's sense of belonging at school involved: being with friends; feeling well looked after by peers and school staff; and being known and feeling supported by teachers and peers. These factors all speak of the way in which the school as a whole is experienced as a micro-community and the importance of students feeling a sense of belonging to the school community.

Students did not report making significant numbers of new friends through TSR; their experience of making and sustaining friendships was more focused on the whole of school experience, especially as students shared many if not all their classes, including TSR classes, across the curriculum with the same group of peers.

However, they did report the consolidation and deepening of existing friendships as an element of the TSR experience, for example by learning new things about friends they already had through arts participation. Students also reported feeling more positive about existing friends when they discovered friends' previously unsuspected talents or abilities through seeing them perform in various arts genres, such as dance or singing.

Participants reported the consolidation and deepening of existing friendships as an element of the TSR experience.

1.8.2.2 Being in groups, helping and being helped by others

Helping others and being helped by others, and working together collaboratively in groups or teams, were also cited as key elements in experiencing a sense of belonging. The importance of being in groups and feeling part of a larger interconnected group of students and teachers working towards common goals, such as performance in TSR programs, was significant for many

of these children, possibly reflecting the strong sense of group identity that informs the cultural backgrounds of some refugee background students.

1.8.2.3 Communicating well

Language and communication were also important factors related to sense of belonging: students said it was important to them not only to be able to communicate in English together but also to have peers with whom they could talk in a shared 'home' language other than English. TSR helped enhance their ability to use English language skills without explicitly being about 'language learning'.

1.8.2.4 Belonging through learning

Students also reported that they felt a sense of belonging through greater connection with the broader world of the arts through teaching artists. It was important to many children that they were learning about art forms beyond their own immediate experience or knowledge base.

1.8.3 Engagement with learning

1.8.3.1 English language learning

English language learning played a vital role for these students in relation to their engagement with learning more broadly. Students, in particular students in the English language schools involved in the study, said that talking to friends in English and learning more English and communicating better with friends and teachers were critical for their own sense of engagement with education, across the curriculum. Young people also cited the importance of role models, such as specific teachers and teaching artists, who inspired them to stay engaged with particular areas of learning.

Other key factors identified by children about how TSR programs enhanced their enjoyment of and desire to continue learning focused on the key areas of: alternative ways of learning; novelty and new horizons; non-language dependent learning; participation; links between home and school; and inspiration.

1.8.3.2 Alternative ways of learning

Alternative ways of learning for these children involved their experience of TSR classes as a pleasurable alternative learning environment distinct from more regimented modes of learning and skills acquisition (Waldorf 2002). They emphasised the fact that TSR classes were 'fun' and a chance to learn 'new moves' in different arts genres. Pleasure in acquiring new skills was a strong theme across all schools, and some children were eager to demonstrate their new-found skills in arts through impromptu performances for the researchers.

1.8.3.3 Learning new things and broadening horizons

Children also said they relished the chance to learn new things and broaden their horizons through what they learned in TSR classes, especially new arts-based experiences not available in other contexts, either inside or outside school. The chance to learn new things was enhanced by their enjoyment of and sense of confidence in TSR learning environments that are often not language dependent (i.e. do not require good knowledge of English) through activities such as physical movement or singing simple songs in different languages guided by the teaching artist. This finding was strongly supported by data from teachers, teaching artists and school principals.

1.8.3.4 Individual and group participation

Individual and group participation was a further key factor for these students, who placed high value on opportunities for direct student participation in TSR classes. Students appreciated the ways in which TSR classes supported not only individual student development but also the development of shyer or less confident children who preferred to participate as part of a group. The ability to participate in an atmosphere of trust and support was seen as especially valuable for those children experiencing a sense of disengagement or social alienation because of their past refugee experiences or current demands of early phase resettlement.

1.8.3.5 Inspiration

Related to this, inspiration was a key component of students' experience of TSR participation. Many children spoke of feeling inspired by both the challenge of preparing for public performance and the talents of peers and teaching artists.

Many children spoke of feeling inspired by both the challenge of preparing for public performance and the talents of peers and teaching artists.

1.8.3.6 Connecting home, school and culture

Finally, connecting across home, school and cultures through TSR participation emerged as a theme for a number of students who experienced a link between what they were doing in TSR classes and their own cultural community practices. This was based, in particular, on their perception of the opportunities afforded by TSR to engage in sharing cross-cultural knowledge around art forms and practices with peers and teaching artists. Again, teachers and teaching artists confirmed this finding, emphasising the importance of encouraging refugee background students to bring their own traditions and art forms into TSR classes in order to enhance transcultural learning for all TSR participants.

1.9 Key impacts of TSR for refugee background young people: educator voices

Classroom teachers, TSR teaching artists and school principals all fall under the general category of 'educators' – those responsible for designing, conducting and managing the teaching and learning activities and environment in which refugee background students participate in TSR programs and school life more generally.

Key findings from the data suggest that several salient factors and themes inform participating educators' understandings of how TSR programs impact upon students from refugee backgrounds.

1.9.1 TSR as a learning environment for refugee background students

Educators focused strongly on how TSR programs provide a safe learning environment for refugee background young people who may be socially and educationally vulnerable or who may be struggling with traditional learning models, for a variety of interrelated reasons, as discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2). The key ways in which TSR promotes a safe learning environment follow.

1.9.1.1 Respite from trauma and pressure

Arts activities offered through TSR were perceived by the educators as central to helping refugee background students cope with resettlement and transition stressors. In particular, TSR programs were identified by virtually all the educators as a key mechanism for providing respite from the trauma and pressures associated with refugee and settlement experiences – what one principal called a ‘safe haven’ in which refugee background children ‘can just be’ themselves while experiencing the capacity to re-connect with pleasure, fun, creativity and self-expression.

Educators said arts activities offered through TSR were central to helping refugee background students cope with resettlement and transition stressors.

1.9.1.2 Cultural safety

TSR was identified as a setting that makes children from different cultures feel safe about their backgrounds through its validation of students’ cultural traditions and sensitivity to gender issues across cultures. Helping students to feel good about what they bring with them into the learning environment, and showing that these offerings are valued and respected by teachers, teaching artists and other students, was seen as a vital element of the safe learning environment promoted by TSR programs.

1.9.1.3 A ‘caring learning space’

Overall, TSR was perceived by educators as fostering what one teacher called ‘a caring learning space’ through providing fun and structured activity; valuing and respecting everyone; practising non-judgemental approaches to learning and skills development; setting clear goals and working towards them consistently; and being patient with students’ different skill levels and progress.

1.9.1.4 Transforming student-teacher relationships and perceptions

TSR provides opportunities to draw on students’ strengths, interests and talents through arts-based learning. This was seen by educators as crucial in fostering greater appreciation and encouragement of students who might be struggling in traditional learning areas like literacy and numeracy, but who shine when engaged in various arts-focused learning activities. TSR was seen by educators as offering classroom teachers a chance to become involved in more positive relationships with students as participation often alters teachers’ negative perceptions of students as struggling learners. TSR also provides opportunities for enhanced mentoring and support for teachers to focus on student interests, talents and potential.

1.9.2 Individual-level impacts of TSR for refugee background students

1.9.2.1 Personal development

Personal development opportunities were seen by educators to lead to a range of important individual-level benefits for refugee-background students. These benefits included greater capacity for self-expression; improved self-confidence and self-esteem; increased opportunities for connection to and validation of own students’ own cultures and histories; and the new opportunities provided for self-knowledge and self-discovery of students’ interests, talents and skills.

1.9.2.2 Learning

TSR programs were reported as fostering enhanced engagement with skills development; new or stronger language acquisition skills; improved comprehension and concentration skills; improved concentration and 'tuning in'; and greater enthusiasm about being at school in general because of students' enjoyment of TSR learning environments.

1.9.2.3 Socialisation

TSR was also perceived to foster a set of socialisation skills and benefits, such as greater engagement with other students; increased social skills for 'shy' students; and enhanced student leadership capacities, the latter an important element of transition into new social spaces for recently arrived refugee background children.

1.9.3 Interpersonal impacts of TSR for refugee background students

1.9.3.1 Sense of belonging across cultures

Various interpersonal benefits flow from TSR programs, including teaching artists' ability to negotiate activities so that students from different cultural backgrounds feel and are included. TSR's emphasis on cultural exchange helps sustain a sense of connectedness with others through arts-based learning, while the focus on group work in arts helps build on existing sense of group identity and community for refugee background students and promotes teamwork and mutual responsibility.

TSR was particularly valued for the respite it offers refugee background students struggling to fit in with traditional school subjects and learning expectations.

1.9.3.2 Relationship building

New or strengthened relationships between student to student, students and teachers, and teaching artist and teachers were evident, particularly when teachers were involved alongside students in TSR classes and where strong mentoring and collaborative relationships existed between teachers and teaching artists. Closer bonding between students, teachers and teaching artists was effected through the focus on group performance and the sharing of common goals and achievements.

1.9.4 Institutional-level impacts of TSR for schools with refugee background students

1.9.4.1 Variety of and respite from conventional school curriculum

TSR was seen by educators as an adjunct to more formal learning expectations and environments in the way it balances freedom of expression against routine and structure. TSR was particularly valued for the respite it offers students from the school-based pressures and demands that often characterise the day-to-day experience of refugee background students struggling to fit in with traditional school subjects and learning expectations.

Educators also valued TSR's capacity to model different teaching and learning modalities and emphasised the ways in which these programs broaden pedagogical options and avenues for both teachers and students.

1.9.4.2 Using creativity to explore the transitional refugee settlement experience

Educators commented on the ways in which TSR assisted both students and teaching staff manage transitional settlement experiences more effectively by providing a structure and framework in which such experiences can be explored through art forms such as drama, dance, singing, etc.

1.9.4.3 New knowledge and participation opportunities for classroom teachers

Through observing students in TSR arts programs teachers were given the opportunity to learn new things about student capacities, skills and interests, which in turn promoted new teacher relationships with and perspectives on refugee background students. The benefits of this were perceived by educators to flow to classes outside TSR environment, as teachers tried to connect the arts-based learning experience of students in TSR to other subjects such as English and maths.

1.9.4.4 New techniques for engaging refugee background children in learning

Educators felt that TSR programs sometimes offered new knowledge and techniques, both for arts-based and non-TSR classes, for engaging children shy or ill at ease in more formal educational settings. TSR uses novel strategies to get students talking and participating.

1.9.4.5 Promoting teacher empathy for refugee background student learning challenges

A key insight from educators was the perception that teachers can become more attuned to their own vulnerability (e.g. by risking looking 'silly' or being inexperienced in an arts form) through participating in arts-based activities alongside their students. This was seen by educators to enhance empathy for student experiences and anxieties about learning new things, and to help demystify teachers as authority figures for students, especially those from cultural backgrounds where the teacher is a highly authoritarian and potentially frightening part of the school experience.

1.9.4.6 Increased opportunities to validate and learn from cultural experiences of students

Educators spoke positively about the ways in which TSR embraced the cultural backgrounds and offerings of children from different communities by viewing these as forms of capital to be built on, rather than focusing children's attention exclusively on learning about Australian or Western arts. They also commented on the benefits of learning more about children's own traditions and cultural practices through teachers' and principals' participation in classes run by TSR teaching artists.

Educators were passionate about the increased opportunities to connect with parents and families and with local communities through their schools' involvement in TSR.

1.9.4.7 Connecting with families and communities

Educators were passionate about the increased opportunities to connect with parents and families, the wider school community and the community in general afforded by their schools' involvement in TSR. TSR classes were perceived by educators to offer excellent opportunities for children to perform at local and general community festivals and events. This was seen as a good way of increasing awareness and acceptance of refugee background children and their cultures within the broader community.

They saw TSR as valuable in giving children new arts-based skills and knowledge to take home

with them and share with friends and community members outside school. They emphasised the positive impacts of engaging refugee background parents with the school community through their children's learning in the arts, although it was not always easy to get parents to come along to performances, especially families with working parents for performances held during the day.

1.9.4.8 Barriers to refugee background parent participation

Other barriers to connecting with refugee background parents noted by educators included limited access to transport for some families, and language barriers. Educators also reported that while TSR offers a great chance for parents to learn more about and feel encouraged to embrace their children's aspirations and talents in the arts, not all parents see the arts as a legitimate part of the school curriculum, especially compared to English, maths and science.

1.9.4.9 Managing behavioural issues through TSR arts-based learning

Educators noted that TSR classes can have positive impacts in helping reduce the incidence of and manage more effectively some behavioural issues associated with a proportion of refugee background children. TSR classes were seen as providing a constructive outlet for children's energy through their emphasis on freedom of expression, creative physical movement and creating something new.

1.9.4.10 Professional artists and arts expertise

Of great importance to educators was the way TSR allows schools to draw on and learn from professional artists and arts expertise. Many teachers spoke of the positive impact of having experienced artists delivering these classes to students, and of their own learning from teaching artists around particular arts-based skills that may be transferable by teachers to other classroom settings. The professional expertise provided by TSR artists, and the inspiration to engage with arts-based learning in an ongoing way that this fosters among students, was seen by educators as a key asset of TSR program delivery.

1.9.4.11 Professional development and sustainability of arts-based learning

The chance to engage in ongoing professional development for teachers through collaborative and mentoring relationships with TSR teaching artists was seen by educators as a crucial positive impact of TSR for the whole school, and a key component of the sustainability of arts-based learning for the school once TSR programs ceased.

The main positive impacts identified by educators were the enhanced pedagogical repertoires developed by teachers that could be transferred beyond the TSR setting; teachers' increased confidence in offering basic arts learning as part of their curriculum; new teaching and learning strategies that could be incorporated into aspects of non-arts curriculum; and greater appreciation of and respect for the role that the arts can play as part of an overall approach to education and curriculum development.

1.9.4.12 Barriers to teacher professional development in arts-based learning

However, educators also identified some barriers to professional development for teachers through TSR program involvement. The main barriers were teachers' lack of time for professional development activities with TSR artists; lack of teacher confidence in building their arts-based skills; poor matching of TSR teaching artist mentors with mentee teachers; and, as perceived by

TSR teaching artists, some teachers' lack of receptivity to using arts-based teaching in their practice because it is not a 'legitimate' form of academic learning.

1.9.4.13 Differences between teachers and teaching artists

TSR teaching artists are both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the school contexts in which TSR programs are delivered. The findings of New Moves emphasise that the ways in which TSR teaching artists don't 'belong' to the schools in which they operate are as important and valuable as the ways in which they do 'belong' to these schools, during the period of delivery of TSR programs and their work with refugee background students. Nevertheless, teaching artists stressed throughout the study that being – and being seen as – as an 'artist' rather than as a 'teacher' brought with it both positives and negatives.

Teaching artists stressed that being – and being seen as – as an 'artist' rather than as a 'teacher' brought with it both positives and negatives.

On the positive side, teaching artists felt they had significant freedom to act in relation to the design and delivery of TSR classes. They valued this flexibility and the opportunities it gave them to explore different teaching and learning styles that were responsive to the particular needs of refugee background students. Teaching artists articulated clearly the importance of feeling that they were 'artists' first, and the value of this to both students and the schools in which they work. Crucially, they valued their ability to bring their students into new worlds and new domains of knowledge through their professional experience, knowledge and status. This sense of bringing 'new worlds' and new horizons to others through the arts extended also to teachers, whom teaching artists felt they were helping to move beyond teachers' typical 'comfort zone' in classroom knowledge and practice, especially in relation to working with refugee background students.

On the negative side, teaching artists expressed their need to work more closely with teachers on how to translate arts practice into viable pedagogy. While they felt confident in their expertise as arts professionals, they lacked some of the pedagogical training that would help them feel equally confident as teachers of the arts.

Some teaching artists also reported feeling insufficiently prepared or lacking in confidence and skills to manage the range of learning and behavioural management issues that can arise with a group of vulnerable students who are dealing with a variety of stressors and pressures in their school and home lives.

Overall, the teaching artists indicated their sense that a major factor in TSR programs for refugee background students was teaching artists' ability to engage non-traditional learners in feeling more confident about their learning and more trusting of the educational environment in general through positive experiences in TSR classes.

Teaching artists themselves need the freedom to use their arts-based experience and knowledge in innovative ways within the TSR curriculum, but they also need stronger support, training and development to advance and consolidate their pedagogical skills. The emphasis of TSR on supporting not just academic and skills-based development for students, but 'whole-of-student' development across an interlocking matrix of social, cultural, interpersonal, settlement and other needs, suggests that TSR teaching artists are more than just 'artists-in-residence' and are

significantly different from standard classroom teachers. They straddle the worlds of teaching expertise and professional artistic accomplishment in the same way that they are both insiders and outsiders within the school environments in which TSR programs are embedded. It is the balance between maintaining and promoting the benefits of insider/outsider status and teacher/artist knowledge and skills that characterises one of TSR's most unique and innovative program features, and which may be built on further through enhanced professional development for teaching artists.

1.9.4.14 Challenges identified by teaching artists

Teaching artists identified the following challenges in achieving positive impacts for refugee background students: combating the perception that arts-based learning is not 'legitimate' in the eyes of some student, education and community stakeholders; dealing with 'time-poor' teachers who may not be able to support or engage fully with TSR teaching artists; and feeling under-prepared in dealing with a range of behavioural management issues. Teaching artists felt they would benefit from more extended, in-depth training and preparation before beginning TSR program delivery with refugee background students.

1.10 Key impacts of TSR for refugee background young people: community voices

Community representatives from refugee background communities participating in the study identified similar themes to those mentioned by students and educators. Key additional themes from this group of participants included the role of arts in ensuring cultural continuity and in helping to remember and preserve valued aspects of students' home country's culture and traditions. Community representatives also discussed the restorative potential of arts practices and the role that arts can play in helping with settlement processes. Access to and affordability of the arts for these community members and issues associated with not knowing how the system works were highlighted as challenges.

Access to and affordability of the arts for refugee community members combined with not knowing how the system works were highlighted as challenges.

However, there was overall consensus about the positive roles of arts in the lives of the young people and their communities, both as part of and beyond the transitional settlement experience.

1.11 Sustainability and knowledge transfer

Sustainability and knowledge transfer are fundamental to the ethos and practice of TSR as an organisation. Some teachers and teaching artists spoke of the success of TSR sustainability in relation to ongoing relationships that continued even after a teacher had changed schools or a TSR program had ceased operating. An example of positive sustainability and knowledge transfer was the significant resources made available through the TSR website for continuing professional development and training in arts-based teaching and learning, considered a major asset by educators in the study and linked strongly to the success of schools' efforts to embed arts across the curriculum.

However, teaching artists themselves were ambivalent about the amount of time they were able to spend with a school before they commenced TSR delivery. They wanted more extended contact

with schools and more information from schools before commencing classes about the students they would be working with.

1.11.1 Key factors for promoting TSR sustainability and knowledge transfer

All the educators emphasised the importance of the following factors for helping to embed sustainability and knowledge transfer as an outcome of TSR involvement in schools. Although these comments were made about TSR specifically in relation to refugee background students, they are applicable to other TSR-school relationships and settings. Key factors were:

- Developing collaborative partnerships between teaching artists and teachers, including both formal and informal mentoring relationships
- Building teachers' confidence in their own capacity to offer arts-based learning
- Sharing professional development resources and knowledge freely
- Explicitly acknowledging the different but complementary strengths that TSR teaching artists and classroom teachers can learn from each other in relation to arts-based outcomes for students
- Understanding that teacher receptiveness to using arts-based learning is best approached through a series of 'small steps' rather than expecting teachers to absorb arts-based learning techniques and models all at once
- Developing co-learning strategies that allow teachers to feel they are not only learning from but offering new knowledge to teaching artists
- Maintaining respect for each others' pedagogies and practices.

Practical mechanisms for achieving these sustainability goals suggested by educators included:

- Routinely involving teachers in weekly class activities with students and teaching artists
- Meeting with teachers at the beginning and end of each TSR semester to prepare adaptive materials for non-TSR subjects that incorporate arts-based learning techniques
- Minimising the risk of teachers feeling intimidated by the professionalism of teaching artists, (which can lead to teachers feeling unable to risk trying out an arts-based activity with students) by ensuring that robust co-learning mechanisms are in place and are regularly practised throughout the semester
- Emphasising continuously the benefits of arts-based pedagogies for students in relation to sense of agency, engagement with learning and self-confidence in developing new skills through the arts that are transferable to non-TSR teaching and learning domains and outcomes
- Ensuring that the whole school, backed by the principal, is committed to developing sustainability mechanisms and knowledge transfer between teaching artists and teachers.

1.12 Best practice models

In many respects, our research supports the finding that TSR's current program design and delivery offers a successful best practice model for embedding arts-based learning in the school curriculum as a means of promoting positive impacts and outcomes for refugee background children in relation to sense of wellbeing, sense of belonging and, critically, engagement with learning of both arts and general academic knowledge and skills. Best practice in this context must specifically address a range of social, educational and settlement needs for refugee background children as they transition into new environments and communities.

The study found a positive correlation between the analysis of TSR program objectives, individual TSR teaching artists' program planning and evaluation, and student reports and feedback on their experiences of TSR programs. In assessing the impacts and outcomes of TSR's current programs through our multiple case study data and analysis, we have found that these programs align well with those features identified as best practice when considering the role of arts and culture in social change (Gould 2005). TSR programs have also been found to produce outcomes and impacts that accord well with best practice benchmarks identified in the research literature on the benefits of arts-based learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.

Our own research suggests that the refugee background students participating in New Moves need a balance of structure and freedom, challenge and support, and engagement of both new horizons and familiar forms of cultural practice, which are essential for successful settlement and adaptation in a new social and cultural environment. TSR's model of arts-based learning successfully provides these key elements. We believe these models and approaches can be further developed to translate the positive benefits for refugee background learners identified in this study into additional concrete initiatives, policies and programs that can enhance cross-cultural harmony, sense of social inclusion and broader community engagement of and by refugee background students and communities through the arts.

The study found a positive correlation between the analysis of TSR program objectives, individual teaching artists' program planning and evaluation, and student reports and feedback on their experiences of TSR programs.

1.13 Recommendations and future directions

1. This study provides the basis for further research into the impacts of TSR programs and activities for refugees and new arrivals across Australia. While New Moves has yielded valuable knowledge and insights and has offered a vehicle for hearing the voices of refugee background children themselves as one of the primary target groups for these programs, its focus and scope has necessarily been limited in providing an in-depth qualitative cross-case analysis in a bounded metropolitan location. More knowledge about comparative experiences of refugee background children in non-metropolitan settings, in other Australian states and of additional ethnic and language groups to those included in New Moves would be useful for confirming or challenging the findings presented here. Importantly, this will also mean giving attention to the kinds of processes and outcomes that refugee background young people value in their own lives, not only those dictated in education policy documents.
2. TSR program design and delivery offer a successful model for embedding arts-based learning within school curriculum as a means of promoting positive impacts and outcomes for refugee background children in relation to sense of wellbeing, sense of belonging and, critically, engagement with learning of both arts and general academic knowledge and skills. This group of students requires the balance of structure and freedom, challenge and support, and engagement of both new horizons and familiar forms of cultural practice that is essential for successful settlement and adaptation in a new social and cultural environment. TSR's model

of arts-based learning successfully provides these key elements. We recommend that TSR seeks funding to translate the positive benefits for refugee background learners identified in this study into further concrete initiatives and programs that our research shows can enhance cross-cultural harmony, sense of social inclusion and broader community engagement of and by refugee background students and communities through the arts.

3. Key elements of best practice models in arts-based learning that both supplement and align with broader school curriculum, aims and objectives are evident in the design and delivery of existing TSR programs. These elements of best practice are primarily found at the level of successfully engaging in learning refugee background children at risk of educational and social disengagement. This is achieved through arts-based learning environments and activities that emphasise fun, creativity, artistic discipline and professionalism, collaboration, teamwork, personal development, respect for individual student needs and interests, respect for and inclusion of diverse cultural traditions and knowledge, and mutual co-learning models between students and teachers.
4. This study's outcomes support existing research on the benefits of arts-based learning, and specifically link this to positive educational and social impacts for refugee background children in the early stages of settlement. In particular, the elements of best practice in TSR programs relating to refugee background students identified above are potentially transferable both to other refugee-background cohorts and to other groups of socially disadvantaged and at risk students. The transferable nature of best practice elements in the TSR arts-based teaching and learning model should be further researched in order to develop sustainable arts-based programs for schools that locate the arts as a central, rather than peripheral, component of the overall curriculum.
5. Related to this, the benefits of TSR programs for the whole-of-school community at the institutional level have emerged as a key component of the study's findings. Consequently, systematic feedback and evaluation by school principals to supplement existing feedback from classroom teachers should form part of TSR's regular review and evaluation processes so as to further strengthen and provide insight into the institutional benefits of TSR arts-based learning programs. This should include consideration of whether the benefits of TSR programs for groups such as refugee background children flow into more general benefits for school communities in which refugee background children are a proportion rather than the totality of the student cohort.
6. The voices of refugee-background children are sometimes marginalised or simply not heard in research exploring their experience. Mechanisms for systematically collecting and analysing the experiences of refugee background students participating in TSR programs, and the incorporation of refugee background student voices and perspectives into the regular assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of TSR programs, should be implemented. This could include strategies such as drawing and photography that would enable students to capture their experiences in ways that are not dependent on English language skills. Including the systematic collection of student data in TSR's quality control and assessment processes would help further develop and refine the effectiveness of TSR programs for this target group of young people.

7. Our findings suggest that the unique 'insider/outsider' status of TSR teaching artists in school settings is highly valued by students, teachers and principals; extremely effective in promoting high-quality arts-based teaching and skills development; and critically important for teaching artists' own sense of professional wellbeing and worth. This status should be preserved, as our findings suggest its benefits are both clear and far-reaching.

Teaching artists need the freedom to use their arts-based experience and knowledge in innovative ways within the TSR curriculum and to have this recognised and valued. However, they and we have also identified a need for stronger support, training and development to advance and consolidate their pedagogical and student development skills base. The emphasis of TSR on supporting not just skills-based arts but 'whole-of-student' development across an interlocking matrix of social, cultural, interpersonal, settlement and educational needs suggests that the role of TSR teaching artists is significantly more than that of 'artists-in-residence' on the one hand, while also differing significantly from standard classroom teaching practice on the other.

Teaching artists straddle the worlds of teaching expertise and professional artistic accomplishment in important ways related to their status as both insiders and outsiders within the school environments in which TSR programs are embedded. The balance between maintaining and promoting the benefits of both insider/outsider status and teacher/artist knowledge and skills is one of TSR's most unique and innovative program features, and this dynamic combination should be built on further through structured professional development for teaching artists that leads to clear outcomes in enhanced pedagogical expertise.

8. In this context, teaching artists themselves have identified a series of factors that would further support professional delivery of TSR programs in relation to the cohort of students considered in this study. These needs and the strategies to address them identified by the study's findings should be considered by TSR to further strengthen the effectiveness of TSR artists within schools with refugee background children. Chief amongst these are:
 - a. Better resourcing of teaching artist training and development around critical factors and contexts related to the history, experience and needs of refugee background children
 - b. Further pedagogical training, support and resources to enhance the capacity of teaching artists to pursue valuable alternative arts-based learning and teaching models and techniques
 - c. Additional pre-service training for teaching artists around behavioural issues and management for students who have experienced significant trauma, dislocation and educational disruption, such as refugee background students
 - d. More targeted matching of teaching artist mentors with mentee teachers to avoid teaching artists feeling they are working with unresponsive/unprepared teachers who will not significantly benefit from such mentoring
 - e. More extended in-depth contact with teachers and schools where refugee background children are taught prior to the commencement of TSR programs.
9. Barriers to refugee-background parent and family involvement with TSR programs and performances were highlighted by a number of research participants. These included language barriers, limited access to transport to attend performances, and scheduling of

public performances during the day when working parents and families are unable to attend. TSR should consider scheduling at least some of their annual public performances involving refugee background students and schools in the evening, when availability to attend will increase for many refugee background parents.

10. Consideration should be given to further extending and resourcing existing community liaison relationships between TSR and community representatives from refugee background communities. The benefits include greater access to and understanding of specific refugee background community perspectives on the arts and how more robust links between schools and communities might be established using the arts as a vehicle for sustainable relationship building and participation.
11. A critical factor in ensuring sustainability and knowledge transfer involves a whole-of-school commitment to including arts-based learning as part of the general curriculum. Mechanisms and incentives that enhance whole-of-school involvement in the arts-based learning models promoted by TSR, and which ensure that teachers are provided with adequate time and resources for professional development to sustain arts-based learning once formal TSR program delivery ceases, should be developed in partnership with one or more 'flagship' schools as a pilot. Such a pilot could then be extended further to other schools.
12. There are clear benefits in collecting longitudinal data to further inform research into the impact and effectiveness of TSR programs for refugee background students. As a qualitative study, the impacts and outcomes dealt with in New Moves are those perceived 'in the moment' by students and with varying degrees of retrospectivity and reflection by educators. However, a number of educators described longer term impacts for refugee background students who had left the case-study schools in question but continued to use the arts-based learning and skills they acquired in TSR in new educational and community settings. TSR is well placed to track and monitor student development between English language schools and mainstream primary and secondary schools, for example, to better identify not only the short-term but also the medium- and long-term impacts of TSR program delivery and participation on sense of belonging and social inclusion, career development and pathways, engagement with learning, and cultural identity and connectedness.
13. Of the three domains explored in New Moves, the positive impacts of TSR for engagement with learning was the strongest domain reported by student participants from refugee background students, while the strongest domain for educators involved the institutional-level benefits of TSR programs for refugee background young people and also the educators who teach and work with them. The researchers recommend that these findings in particular be used to strengthen the case for increased funding from state and federal agencies on the basis that one of the highest risk factors for young people, including those from refugee backgrounds, relates to disengagement with learning and the accompanying social isolation and limited economic and employment opportunities such disengagement can generate. As noted in the key findings above, engagement with learning is itself inextricably bound up with a sense of wellbeing, a sense of belonging and thriving social relationships. This in turn impacts on whole-of-school and community wellbeing. TSR's role in promoting these intersections should be strongly supported.

NEW MOVES

LITERATURE REVIEW



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

*Arts are a way that people can find a way in Australia. We have been in a stormy sea,
but there is an anchor and that anchor is art.*

Refugee background participant, Horn of Africa Arts Project,
Melbourne, Gilmore and Clark 2009, p. 27

2.1 Introduction

There is a persuasive and growing body of international literature exploring the links between participation in school-based and community arts programs and the wellbeing of young people. Influential studies from North America and the United Kingdom (UK), and an increasing body of Australian research, are providing evidence of the positive social impacts of young people's participation in arts programs.

- A range of research has suggested that there is a relationship between school-based arts programs and improved cognitive, emotional and social learning outcomes for students (Stone et al. 1997; Deasy 2002; Fiske 1999; Brice Heath & Wolf 2004, 2005; Hunter 2005).
- There is enhanced motivation, engagement and agency for young people at risk who participate in arts programs (Brice Heath & Roach 1999; Marsden & Thiele 2000; Mills & Brown 2004; Donelan & O'Brien 2008; O'Brien & Donelan 2005, 2007).
- Benefits to the community of increased cohesiveness, tolerance and social and cultural connectedness are attributed to successful school and community arts partnerships (Robinson 1999; Dreeszen, April & Deasy 1999; Bamford 2006).

This body of research has shown that participating in arts and cultural projects can launch a dynamic and progressive process of personal development that can lead to multiple positive outcomes. These are related to developing confidence, generating new opportunities, enhanced learning and social achievements (Gould 2005; Matarasso 1997).

In the last decade there has been a proliferation of research on programs in Australia (Krensky 2001; Thiele & Marsden 2003; Bamford et al. 2004; Tait 2004; Bryce et al. 2004; Kelman, O'Brien & Donelan 2005; Donelan & O'Brien 2008; DEECD 2009; Gilmore & Clark 2009) and internationally (Brice Heath & Roach 1999; Waldorf 2002; Hirst & Robertshaw 2003; Bahri 2006; Eames et al. 2006; Sheerman 2007; Galton 2008; Bambridge, Gray & Thorne 2010; Risner & Stinson 2010; Altman & De 2010) which have focused specifically on the efficacy of the arts as a modality for engaging 'at risk' young people in both school and community contexts. There is also a growing body of work on the benefits of artist-led programs in schools (Remmer 1996; Sharp & Dust 1997; Krensky 2001; Waldorf 2002; Uptis 2005; Catterall 2006; Mackey & Ullman 2006; Hall, Thompson & Russel 2007; Burnaford et al. 2007; Galton 2008; O'Brien & Donelan 2005; Bambridge, Gray & Thorne 2010).

Following the extensive literature review completed by the University of Melbourne for The Song Room (TSR) in 2008 (Donelan & Jeanneret 2008), which focuses broadly on arts education and the impact of participation for 'at risk' young people, this literature review focuses more specifically on refugee background young people. There is very little research on the consequences of artist-

led programs in schools that specifically relates to students from refugee backgrounds. The present study contributes to addressing that gap. This literature review draws on a range of research from education, health, community cultural development and refugee-specific youth work sectors to build a nuanced picture of the benefits allied with improved wellbeing, sense of belonging and acquisition of transferable skills that such programs may have for this group.

2.2 Who is a 'refugee'?

According to Article 1 of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is defined as someone who has left their country of origin and cannot return to it, 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion' (UNHCR 2010). The government of the country of origin may be the persecutor or may be unable to protect its citizens. Developed just after World War II, the Convention's definition was focused on Europe and excluded a number of additional circumstances that force people to leave their home country. The definition of who is considered a refugee has been broadened by other conventions and declarations since 1951 to include more generalised experiences of conflict, violence and human rights violations in regions such as Africa (OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa 1969) and in Latin America (Cartagena Declaration on Refugees 1984). Nevertheless, while the definitions of who counts as a refugee have been progressively expanded over time, the interpretation of these definitions has in some instances become very restrictive when applied in policy settings to identify people deserving of humanitarian consideration and resettlement assistance, particularly in countries experiencing a backlash, for a variety of reasons, against refugee and migrant intake.

In Australia's migration schemes, the term 'refugee' refers to a specific category of humanitarian entrants granted residency which includes five visa subclasses (Table 1). The lived distinctions between 'migrants' and 'refugees' may be blurred at times, as many migrants have had experiences similar to those of refugees. However, the UNHCR, among others, is adamant that migrants differ from refugees because migrants choose to move to another country and are able to return to their country of origin if they wish, and they usually have access to other migration processes such as the Skilled Stream or Family Stream migration (CMYI 2006). The term 'asylum seeker', on the other hand, is used to describe people who enter Australia without visas or with temporary entrance visas, and who have made claims to be refugees but whose claims have not yet been accepted. If asylum seekers are found to be refugees, they are usually granted Permanent Protection Visas. Australia provides humanitarian resettlement for refugees under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program and has both an offshore and onshore program for processing humanitarian entrants.

Although refugee status has been used to describe individuals entering Australia on humanitarian grounds (Commonwealth of Australia 2009), the term 'refugee' itself is highly contested. Some have argued that the term is a mere administrative label that has been used to replace an identity lost (Rajaram 2002), while others have suggested that the term is devised by countries of resettlement in order to distance and contain those defined by this title (Grove & Zwi 2006). Moloney (2010) also explores social representations, particularly through media discourse, which play important roles in informing the perceptions that people hold of others and in imposing identities. Thus, it is important to be mindful when using the term 'refugee' that it can

be imposed or created by others (the media, bureaucratic or government policies and frameworks) and can be highly political and contested as it may require people to conform to certain stereotypes implicit in the label and be required by policy definitions. Individuals who are described as refugees may not define themselves in this way, or may stop defining themselves as refugees long before others do.

In line with previous studies (Yuval Davis 2006; Kidd, Zahir & Hubrid 2008; Schweitzer & Steel 2008), it is important to recognise that being a refugee is a transitional process, not a lifelong identity. It is also important to acknowledge that considerable differences exist within and between refugee communities and that refugee individuals and communities are heterogeneous.

The term 'refugee background young people' will be used in this study more broadly and includes those who may not have arrived in Australia as refugees. As in previous research, the term refers to young people aged 10 to 25 who share experiences commonly associated with being refugees such as trauma, displacement, and disruption to health, education and wellbeing, regardless of their visa classification and status upon entry to Australia (Coventry et al. 2002; Gifford, Correa-Velez & Sampson 2009). It is important to note, nevertheless, that official definitions carry significant implications for resource allocation (NYARS 2003). That is, the migration category under which young people with refugee-like experiences are allowed to stay in Australia will influence their eligibility for government services, assistance, and even public support and understanding. These in turn affect their settlement outcomes.

The following table shows the various types of Australian refugee and humanitarian entrant visas currently granted by the Australian government.

Table 1: Australian refugee and humanitarian visas by subclass type

<p>Refugee Visa (Subclass 200)</p> <p>This visa is for people who are subject to persecution in their home country and are in need of resettlement. The majority of applicants who are considered under this category are identified by the UNHCR and referred to the Australian government by the UNHCR.</p>
<p>In-country Special Humanitarian Program Visa (Subclass 201)</p> <p>This visa offers resettlement to people who have suffered persecution in their country of nationality or usual residence and who have not been able to leave that country to seek refuge elsewhere. It is for those living in their home country and subject to persecution in their home country.</p>
<p>Global Special Humanitarian Program Visa (Subclass 202)</p> <p>The Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visa is for people who, while not being refugees, are subject to substantial discrimination and human rights abuses in their home country. People who wish to be considered for a SHP visa must be proposed for entry by an Australian citizen or permanent resident over the age of 18, an eligible New Zealand citizen or an organisation operating in Australia.</p>
<p>Emergency Rescue Visa (Subclass 203)</p> <p>This visa offers an accelerated processing arrangement for people who satisfy refugee criteria and whose lives or freedom depend on urgent resettlement. It is for those subject to persecution in their home country and assessed to be in a situation such that delays due to normal processing could put their life or freedom in danger.</p>

Woman at Risk Visa (Subclass 204)

This visa is for female applicants, and their dependants, who are subject to persecution or are of concern to the UNHCR, are living outside their home country without the protection of a male relative and are in danger of victimisation, harassment or serious abuse because of their gender. The majority of applicants who are considered under this category are identified and referred to the Australian government by the UNHCR.

Source: 'Visas, Immigration and Refugees', Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2010a).

2.3 Recent Humanitarian Program intakes in Australia

In 2008–09 a total of 13,507 refugee humanitarian visas were granted, of which 11,010 fell under the offshore component and 2497 under the onshore component. In the offshore visa component, 33.24 per cent were granted to people from Africa; 33.46 per cent to people from the Middle East and South West Asia; and 33.09 per cent to people from Asia and the Pacific.

A significant proportion of those arriving in Australia as refugees and humanitarian entrants are young. Of the recent humanitarian intake 2006–2007, 68 per cent were under the age of 26 and around 45 per cent were under the age of 16. Victoria, specifically, resettles approximately one-third of Australia's humanitarian entrants each year and of these, approximately 1000 are aged 10 to 19. Moreover, there has been an increase in the settlement of young people from Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, 70.2 per cent of young refugee entrants in Victoria were from Africa, with the largest proportion of (50 per cent) from Sudan, while 20.3 per cent were from the Middle East. Many young refugees arrive in Australia with their immediate or extended family, but others came as unaccompanied minors or with their siblings (O'Sullivan & Olliff 2006).

Table 2: Humanitarian Program grants by category, 2008–09

Category	2008–09
Refugee	6499
Special Humanitarian	4625
Onshore Protection	2378
Temporary (Humanitarian Concern)	5
Total	13507

Source: 'Fact Sheet 60 – Australia's refugee and humanitarian program', Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2010b).

Table 3: Offshore visa grants by top ten countries of birth, 2008–09

Countries	Number of visas granted
Iraq	2874
Burma/Myanmar	2412
Afghanistan	847
Sudan	631
Bhutan	616
Ethiopia	478
Congo (DRC)	463
Somalia	456
Liberia	387
Sierra Leone	363

Source: 'Fact Sheet 60 – Australia's refugee and humanitarian program', Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2010b).

2.4 Unpacking the 'refugee experience'

The experiences of refugees are dependent on a wide range of personal, economic, social and political circumstances. While there is no standard 'refugee experience' there are nevertheless common experiences and issues faced by refugees that may impact upon their settlement and wellbeing (CMYI 2006; USCR 2010). For example, both adult refugees and young refugees have experienced some form of displacement, deprivation, disruption and loss (UNHCR 2010). Researchers have suggested there are three main phases in refugee flight and resettlement (Babacan, cited in SCOA 2009; Hodgetts et al. 2010):

1. *Pre-migration and departure*: circumstances in home country and circumstances of departure
2. *Transition*: leaving country of origin and periods of transition and passage
3. *Settlement/resettlement*: arriving in new country and adapting to a new culture.

For many refugees, research has shown that the resettlement process of relocation to a new country often involves stressful and traumatic pre-departure, transition, and resettlement experiences (Pine & Drachman 2005). However, it is also important to acknowledge that although many refugees may have suffered a traumatic past and can experience multiple challenges when attempting to resettle in a new country, a significant number have also demonstrated a strong capacity to adapt and thrive (Keyes & Kane 2004). Moreover, some refugee families have been found to develop stronger functioning as a result of enhanced spirituality and/or religious beliefs, social support and future-mindedness, as well as individual personal characteristics in the aftermath of their trauma (McMichael 2002; Weine et al. 2004; Schweitzer, Greenslade & Kagee 2007). There is also research suggesting that young refugees in particular remain optimistic, are active in shaping their identities and futures (O'Sullivan & Olliff 2006; Maegusuku-Hewett et al. 2007) and eventually are able to lead a meaningful and good life (Beiser 2005).

2.4.1 Refugee experiences: pre-migration

Both adults and young people from refugee backgrounds have commonly been exposed to traumatic experiences before leaving their home country. These include rape and/or sexual abuse, death or killing of family members and friends, torture, suicide attempts, being in concentration camps, poverty, starvation (inadequate food and water), and displacement (Berk 1998). Additionally, people with refugee experiences may also have been subjected to or have witnessed events such as war, bombing or shelling, destruction of homes and schools, physical injury and limited medical attention, fear of discovery or arrest, arrest, and forced conscription into armies.¹ Regardless of their background or country of origin, refugees settling in Australia frequently report having experienced or witnessed human rights violations, extreme deprivation and separation from or loss of family and friends (Allotey 1998), home, place, and culture (Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture 2004). Most refugee background children and young people have also experienced a combination of some if not all of the following: limited or disrupted schooling or education, malnutrition, feelings of insecurity, extreme life changes and/or witnessing of parental distress (Fazel & Stein 2002; Joshi & O'Donnell 2003). The process of decision making in relation to leaving their country of origin is a significant source of stress in itself as for some individuals it may involve choosing who will leave and who will stay. Although

¹ See The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture report *School's in for Refugees* (2004), esp. pp. 29–33.

many refugees have chosen to leave and have been proactive in seeking resettlement, some have been forced to leave or flee abruptly without being financially and psychologically prepared (Pine & Drachman 2005).

2.4.2 Refugee experiences: transition

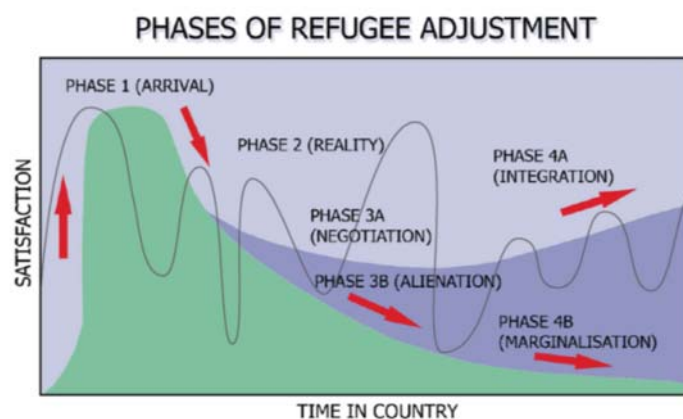
Although for some the transition process from country of origin to a country of destination is brief, for other adult and young refugees the process can be long and full of risks (Pine & Drachman 2005). There have been instances where children and young refugees have been separated from their families, either by accident or as a safety measure, or because they are given to people smugglers to guarantee their escape (Fazel & Stein 2002). Many refugees spend years in a country of first asylum, which is usually another developing country (e.g. Kenya or Thailand). Some refugees may have spent certain periods in refugee camps or detention centres. For some young people, the majority of their lives may have been spent in transition countries and because many individuals or families can be in refugee camps for up to ten or more years, a number of refugee background young people have been born in camps. Different transition experiences profoundly affect these young people's identities and resettlement experiences in Australia (CMYI 2006) and the transition can be experienced and manifest in different ways once they arrive and begin living within a new environment.

2.4.3 Refugee experiences: resettlement

There is a long and unresolved debate on whether settlement should be defined by the length of an individual's residency or by achievement of certain outcomes (DIMA 2003). The National Population Council (cited in DIMA 2006) defines settlement as 'the process by which an immigrant establishes economic viability and social networks following immigration in order to contribute to, and make full use of, the receiving society' (DIMA 2006, p. 1). In general, settlement policies in Australia have aimed to integrate refugees into mainstream society as soon as possible: 'The most critical factors in successful settlement are learning English, getting a job, committing to Australian values and participating in mainstream activities' (DIMA 2006, p. 3). Alternatively, settlement can be viewed as a complex process of adjustment, impacts and processes that can last a lifetime (Berger 2005, in SCOA 2009).

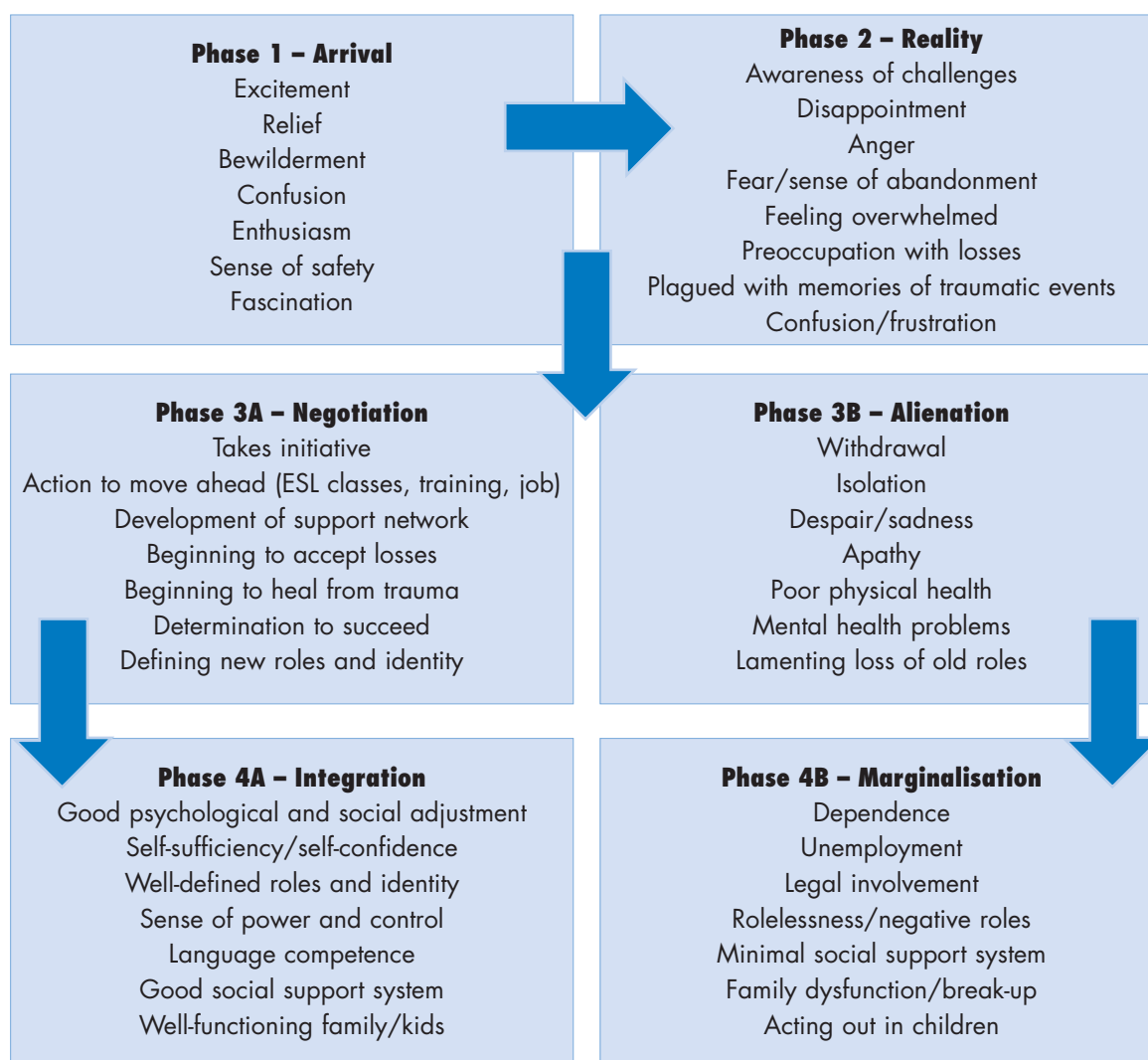
Settlement can be viewed as a complex process of adjustment, impacts and processes that can last a lifetime.

Pre-migration and transition experiences invariably have significant impacts on the settlement experiences of refugees. The settlement process is undeniably complex and multifaceted, and while we noted above that there is no definitive 'refugee experience', there are common phases of refugee settlement that are widely accepted. According to the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), refugees usually go through specific adjustment phases upon their arrival in their country of destination and, as time goes by, each person, for a variety of reasons, often takes one of two tracks (see Phase 3 A and B, Phase 4 A and B), as depicted in figures 1 and 2 below.



Source: Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (2006 p. 3), originally from Minnesota Centre for Victims of Torture.

Figure 1: Phases of refugee adjustment



Source: text only, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (2010 pp. 2–3).

Figure 2: Phases of refugee adjustment in detail

2.5 The resettlement experience of refugee background young people

The experience of refugees is often characterised by loss and displacement, and what can be described as a type of psychological and emotional homelessness (CMYI 2006). Adolescence is widely recognised as a time of transition and a consolidation of identity and as such can be stressful as a matter of course. The potential stresses and challenges of adolescence are compounded when a young person is making both the transition to a new culture and system and also dealing with the upheaval and trauma of the past (RRAC 2002; O'Sullivan & Olliff 2006; Mitchell 2007; VFST 2007; RCOA 2009). The fact that between 1996 and 2006 about 75 per cent of recent new arrivals to Australia under the Humanitarian Program have been refugee background young people under the age of 30 (Olliff & Mohammed 2007) means these compounded stressors are of particular relevance when thinking about how to design effective and appropriate services, educational opportunities and mechanisms for social inclusion for young people from refugee backgrounds.

The potential stresses and challenges of adolescence are compounded when a young person is making both the transition to a new culture and system and also dealing with the upheaval and trauma of the past.

The needs of young refugees are likely to be different from the needs of their parents or adult refugees. Older refugees usually grew up in their country of origin or other countries and brought with them a range of education, employment and life experiences to Australia. Many were skilled professionals, or community or political leaders in their home countries (RCOA 2009). In contrast, many young people who come to Australia have only lived a short period of their lives in their home country, may have been born and raised in camps or transition countries, and spent most of their lives as refugees moving from one place to another. Many young people from refugee backgrounds therefore have only had limited educational or working experiences (RCOA 2009). It is apparent that these factors will influence young refugees' identity and resettlement experiences in Australia.

Arriving in Australia, young people from refugee backgrounds are not only faced with the traumatic nature of the refugee experience, cultural dislocation, loss of established social networks and the practical demands of resettlement but also a range of developmental challenges (RRAC 2002). They are expected to negotiate education and subsequently employment pathways, a new language and culture, and to make new friends and navigate unfamiliar and complex social systems (such as Centrelink, Australian laws, public transport), as well as navigating individual, family and community expectations (O'Sullivan 2006). There has been extensive research undertaken to explore refugee young people's experiences settling in Australia (e.g. Coventry et al. 2002; Brough et al. 2003; O'Sullivan & Olliff 2006; O'Sullivan 2006; Cornfoot & Francis 2007a, 2007b; MYSA 2009). The Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (2002) in its strategy for refugee young people highlighted both the protective and risk factors that can affect refugee young people's emotional wellbeing during their settlement phase (see Figure 3).

Protective factors	Risk factors
Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Academic and sporting achievements • Connectedness • Religious faith • Coping skills Social and environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to educational training and employment activities • Social advantage • Developed social networks and community participation • Freedom from discrimination • Feelings of safety, participation and support in school 	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem and poor self-concept • Isolation, anomie • Exposure to adverse events Social and environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment and lack of access to education • Social disadvantage • Limited networks • Racism and discrimination • Disrupted education

Source: text only, Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, Strategy for Refugee Young People (2002 p. 7).

Figure 3: Risk and protective factors affecting emotional wellbeing during adolescence

Yet recognising the considerable strengths and personal resources that young people from refugee backgrounds bring with them is equally important and has become the focus of more recent research. For example, it is acknowledged that young people with refugee experiences bring qualities such as resilience and resourcefulness; adaptability; broad international knowledge; multilingual skills and awareness of many cultures and communities; strong commitment to the family and the value of community; and a strong desire to achieve educationally (CMYI 2006). Other research also suggests that children and adolescents tend to acculturate to a country of destination faster than their parents (Bevan 2000). There is widespread agreement in the literature that many young refugees often acquire English, recover and adapt to life in Australia more quickly than their adult counterparts, and have learned skills such as being adaptable, resourceful and communicating cross-culturally, thus allowing them to better navigate their new life in Australia (RCOA 2009).

2.6 Integration and acculturation

Studies investigating the resettlement or post-migration experiences of refugees who make a new home in Australia have found that refugees from all backgrounds identify acculturation as one of their most common and greatest challenges (Chung, Bemak & Wong 2000). Acculturation refers to the process that a person or group goes through when adjusting to a foreign culture and often involves changes in identity, values, behaviour, thoughts, attitudes and feelings as the person or group transitions from the values and life skills acquired in their country of origin to lifestyles in the foreign or new country (Selvamanickam, Zgryza & Gorman 2001). Acculturation may include keeping the old ways and rejecting the new, vice versa or blending the two (Berry 1990).

However, the extent and the forms of acculturation are not static or fixed in time, and for young people these may vary across their developmental stage, and are dependent on their ethnic and cultural identities (Chung, Bemak & Wong 2000). Berry (1990, 1997), a prominent researcher in acculturation, has conceptualised four possible outcomes of acculturation, namely:

- *assimilation* (fully adopting the new culture and rejecting one's own culture)
- *separation* (distancing from the new culture and strongly emphasising the culture of origin)
- *marginalisation* (rejecting and/or being excluded from both the original and the destination cultures)
- *bicultural integration* (blending or balancing both culture of destination country and culture of origin).

The concept of integration has frequently been used in defining the goal of a well-settled person or community, and is preferred as a strategy for acculturation (e.g. Murray 2010; Yagmurlu & Sanson 2009). In one study of refugee young people in Australia, those who integrated well into mainstream society – that is, those with the most positive attitudes towards both their culture of origin and Australian culture – had the highest ratings of self-worth and peer social acceptance (Kovacev & Rosalyn 2004). The term 'integration' is useful, but problematic in its association with the assimilationist policies of previous eras in Australia. Before the 1960s and 1970s, migrants and refugees in Australia were expected to assimilate and blend into the population as quickly as possible, with little recognition that adjusting to a new way of life might not be easy for everyone and that new arrivals may not want to lose their cultural identity (Spinks 2009).

However, the term can be useful if used in the context of the pluralist model of integration, which recognises diversity while encouraging equal participation. In this pluralist framework, integration refers to the full participation of new arrivals without having to relinquish their identity and culture or simply be absorbed into the mainstream (O'Sullivan & Olliff 2006). Furthermore, integration is seen as a two-way, multi-dimensional and long-term process that calls for adjustments by both the migrant and the destination community. This process does not imply the loss of cultural heritage from either side, but is a process of change through which both communities learn to understand each other's culture (Gould 2005). As Kathleen Valtonen puts it, integration is defined as:

In the process of people becoming part of the fabric of the destination society, that society itself undergoes transformation and renewal, which can 'unsettle' established cultural and social norms and understandings.

The ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural and political activities without having to relinquish one's own distinct ethnocultural identity and culture. It is at the same time a process by which settling persons become part of the social, institutional and cultural fabric of a society. (Valtonen 2004, p. 74, in O'Sullivan and Olliff 2006, p. 11)

We would add to this, in line with Gould (2005), that in the process of settling, people becoming part of the fabric of the destination society, that society itself undergoes transformation and renewal, which may or may not 'unsettle' established cultural and social norms, values and understandings. This understanding of acculturation and integration is more in line with a view

that recognises the contextual and transactional nature of settlement and adaptation, which is consistent with a broader and more dynamic conceptualisation of the processes reflected in what is referred to as transculturation. Pratt (1991), following the work of Ortiz (1995 [1940]), defines transculturation as a phenomenon of the contact zone that entails more than just culture learning or culture shedding. Transculturation pertains to the dynamics of identity and community construction within the context of power relations in a society and relates to the creative construction of new social and cultural meanings and resources as part of the process of intercultural relations (Ortiz 1995 [1940]; Pratt 1991; Bhatia & Ram 2001; Sonn 2002). The key distinguishing feature of transculturation is the emphasis on cultures' reciprocal flows and the transformative effects it has on constructions and understandings of self and others. Transculturation can occur at the micro-level, for example, within a family, school or local community; at the macro-level, for example, in relation to national policy and practice around multiculturalism; or globally, in terms of the identity formations of ethnically based diaspora communities dispersed across many countries and locations.

2.7 Social impacts of arts and culture participation for refugees

Recent research in the UK into the impact of arts and culture on the integration of refugees and asylum seekers has found that the process of integration is closely linked to inclusion in social structures and developing strong relationships with others in the community. Creative Exchange is a UK-based international network which specialises in public education on the role of arts and culture in social change. In 2005, they produced a report on arts, culture and refugees (Gould 2005), the findings of which are based on an outline analysis of 76 projects and more detailed analysis of 33 projects. The report suggests that human relationships are integral to the process of being well settled and that refugee commonly feel integrated when they:

- Feel safe from threats from other people
- Experience tolerance
- Feel welcome and experience friendliness
- Have a sense of belonging and feel part of the community
- Have friends.

Culture and the arts play an important role in helping initiate and sustain such relationships and experiences. Gould's (2005) research posits four main strands to the cultural dimension of integration:

- Being able to maintain cultural practise and identity
- Developing an understanding of the cultural values of the destination society
- Having access to participation in the cultural life of the destination society
- Destination communities gaining an understanding and appreciation of the culture and values of refugees/asylum seekers.

The arts and arts participation thus offer an important conduit for developing understanding, tolerance and participation in shared cultural spaces both for newly arrived refugees and country of destination communities to which they now belong.

2.8 Refugee experiences, mental health and psychological wellbeing

There is extensive research dedicated to examining the link between refugee experiences and psychological wellbeing. This may be because there is growing evidence to suggest that mental health problems among refugee populations are common (e.g. Burnett & Peel 2001; Petric 2001), although mental health problems are found to drop significantly over the course of resettlement (Lie 2002; Steel et al. 2002). This particular strand in the refugee literature has long focused on various factors relating to individual and group differences that influence refugees' mental health status in the resettlement process (Murray, Davidson & Schweitzer 2008).

Studies on refugees' pre-migration experiences have found that there is a clear and strong correlation between pre-migration trauma and mental health in resettlement (Silove et al. 1997; Smith et al. 2001; Terheggen, Stroebe & Kleber 2001; Steel et al. 2002). It is argued that there is a dose-response association where the severity of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms increases as refugees' exposure to traumatic experiences increases (Kinzie et al. 1990; Carlson & Rosser-Hogan 1991; Fawzi et al. 1997), while different types of traumatic experience (e.g. threats to life and/or traumatic loss) have been found to have differential impacts on symptom severity and disability (Momartin et al. 2006). Similarly, research into the relationship between pre-displacement factors and mental health status in resettlement has also found that female refugees are more susceptible to depression (Schweitzer et al. 2006), and older refugees in Australia, especially those coming from south-eastern Europe, North Africa, other parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, are more likely to experience psychological distress than other migrants (Chou 2007).

Experiences during transition have also been linked to mental health status. Previous studies suggest that adults and children from refugee backgrounds who have detention and refugee camp experiences are likely to have higher levels of trauma compared to those who have not had detention experiences (Procter 2005). The detrimental effects of detention centres on children's psychological wellbeing have been demonstrated particularly for children who have had traumatic experiences immediately prior to displacement, and children without parents or who have a parent or parents who are not coping well (Ajdukovic & Ajdukovic 1998). Specific to asylum seekers, Marston (2003) suggested that immigrants holding temporary protection visas (TPVs) in Australia experienced ongoing and often chronic mental health problems due to continuing despair, depression and deep uncertainty. Steel et al. (2006) similarly found that being previously detained or being under temporary protection increases the risk of suffering from ongoing PTSD, depression or other mental health-related disability. (Although mandatory detentions are still in place to date, TPVs were abolished from Australia's Humanitarian Program by the Rudd government in mid-2008.)

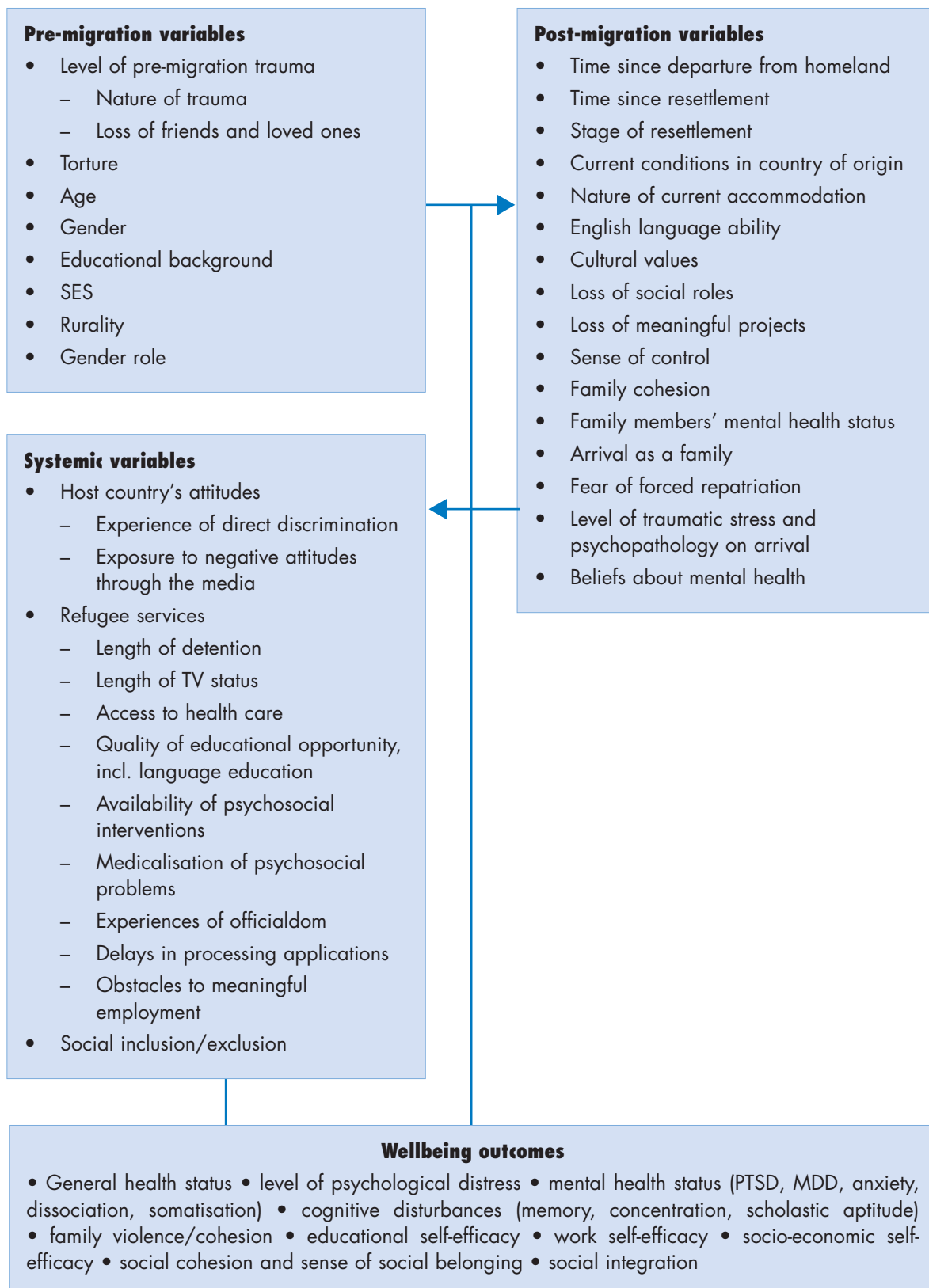
There is evidence to suggest that in comparison to pre-migration factors, post-migration factors can have a stronger impact on refugees' mental health and settlement outcomes (Porter & Haslam 2005). Thus there is a shift away in more recent research from the earlier focus on pre-displacement or displacement trauma to a focus on post-displacement and resettlement stressors. The acculturation process has been associated with acculturative stress and accompanying emotional and behavioural problems such as depression and anxiety, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, low self-esteem and identity confusion (Williams & Berry 1991), and will often be associated with feelings of loss, sadness, grief, guilt and

ambivalence (Bevan 2000). Refugees with severe pre-migration experiences such as life-threatening trauma who also experience post-migration unemployment and the absence of social supports are considered to be an at-risk group particularly vulnerable to continuing mental health issues (Lie 2002). For some refugees, mental health issues do not appear until post-migration or resettlement difficulties emerge, such as unemployment and boredom, cultural clashes, language difficulties and discrimination (Gray & Elliot 2001). Figure 4 identifies other post-migration factors that may influence refugees' psychological wellbeing.

In addition to individual, family and group factors that influence refugees' displacement and resettlement experiences, community or systemic factors surrounding refugee resettlement should be taken into account. By examining and understanding the social and cultural environment (i.e. macro-level factors), a better picture of the dynamic and multi-level nature of refugee resettlement can be captured. These systemic factors include a destination country's attitudes towards refugees that may lead to overt and covert systemic prejudice and discrimination; services for refugees (e.g. opportunity and quality of education); and social inclusion/exclusion (Murray, Davidson & Schweitzer 2008).

Despite the usefulness of the trauma model with refugee groups, this approach to understanding refugee experiences has several limitations. Firstly, a trauma-based epidemiological approach relies heavily upon standardised instruments that are based on a priori assumptions about the range of relevant variables to be investigated. Reliance on psychiatric constructs developed in culturally distinct contexts when relevant variables are not well understood (through fieldwork, community consultation or long-term association) (Millbank, Phillips & Bohm 2006) may neglect more localised conceptions and variations in the expression of psychological and community distress and in the broader socio-cultural understanding of trauma (Bracken, Giller & Summerfield 1995; Breslau 2004). Recent research has also revealed that current quantitative research on refugees commonly lacks culturally sensitive understandings and diagnostic measures (Keyes 2000). Behaviours that were actually 'neutral or are positive expressions of resilience and adaptation' were mistaken as maladaptive behaviours by Western researchers. Moreover, research findings on the mental health status of refugees also need to be considered with caution.

By over-focusing on refugees' mental health there is also a danger of inappropriately medicalising their experiences. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) argue that when refugees' experiences in Australia are medicalised, refugees may be encouraged to take passive ('endurer' or 'victim') approaches to resettlement rather than taking an active ('achiever') approach. More importantly, as Schweitzer and Steel (2008) state, becoming or being a refugee 'is not at essence a psychological phenomenon, but rather results from socio-political circumstances that may have psychological implications' (p. 8).



Source: Murray, Davidson & Schweitzer (2008, p. 28).

Figure 4: Path representation of pre- and post-migration factors impacting on refugee psychological wellbeing

2.9 Indicators of 'good settlement' for refugee background young people

To gain more insight into what 'good settlement' is for young people and to identify its key aspects, O'Sullivan and Olliff (2006, pp 15-16) reviewed the literature on settlement and young people, and consulted with service providers and young people. They concluded that good settlement should include the following elements:

- Stable housing
- Access to appropriate health services
- Stable income or appropriate education and training
- Living in an environment free from discrimination
- A sense of hope for the future and solid support networks
- A positive sense of self and identity
- Feeling a capacity to shape one's future
- Confidence accessing and navigating available services.

As described above, most young refugees come to Australia with a set of resources, strengths and capacity to successfully negotiate settlement challenges. However, the responsibility for positive settlement outcomes also lies in the environment/context of the destination country. It is only when these refugee young people are well supported in the transition to life in Australia that they are more able to rebuild their lives, achieve their goals and contribute dynamically to the broader community. Therefore, as much as it is important to study the impact of pre-migration experiences and factors such as past trauma on young refugees' wellbeing and settlement, it is equally, if not more important, to examine what post-migration factors are helpful for young refugees resettling in Australia (Porter & Haslam 2005; Watters 2007).

A recent attempt to identify the social determinants of wellbeing and to inform policy and practice about how to support good settlement outcomes for young refugees in Australia has been made through the Good Starts study (Gifford, Correa-Velez & Sampson 2009). This longitudinal study followed a group of 120 refugee young people aged 11 to 19 for five years and employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather information about settlement and wellbeing. The young people were born in Sudan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Liberia, Uganda, Burundi, Iran, Iraq, Burma, Croatia and Bosnia, and participated in the study in the early phase of their arrival in Australia.

Gifford, Correa-Velez and Sampson (2009) reported that the single most important goal for young refugees in their early settlement years is to get a good education. Although teasing and bullying exist in English language schools (ELS), the overall experience in English language schools during young refugees' first year is positive. Transition to mainstream school experiences, however, is less positive, as these young people feel their English is still inadequate, are less supported by school staff, have lower perceived achievement, sense of belonging and safety, and lower levels of engagement. Discrimination is also a salient issue in mainstream schools. Keys to good settlement and an important resource for wellbeing include support of the young people's family, connection to one's own ethnic community and feeling valued by the wider Australian community. In many instances, the supportive context of the family weakens over time as families come to be burdened with many resettlement challenges. Experiences of discrimination within the wider community are also significant, not only prior to arriving in Australia but also in Australia,

and increase over time (e.g. one-third of participants experienced discrimination in their third year in Australia). Discrimination by the destination country community can become a significant source of social exclusion. Another challenge for these young people is ongoing experiences of conflict and verbal and physical violence, as well as sexual and reproductive health concerns.

As part of the larger Good Starts project Correa-Velez, Gifford and Barnett (2010) examined the psychosocial factors associated with young refugees' subjective health and wellbeing outcomes during their first three years in Melbourne. Their findings indicate that subjective social status in the broader Australian community and perceived discrimination and bullying are key factors strongly associated with wellbeing. This study suggests that in order for young people to belong to their family, community and destination country, these young people need social climates and structures that are openly inclusive instead of ones that exclude. Policies and programs that foster such social climates and structures are therefore warranted.

In order for refugee young people to feel 'at home', they need to be able to demonstrate their agency and become active in making use of the resettlement context to create therapeutic landscapes (Sampson & Gifford 2010). Sampson and Gifford (2010) used photo-novellas and neighbourhood drawings to investigate the importance of place and place-making for young refugees during their initial period of settlement. The findings suggest that places that contribute to experiences of restoration and recovery are meaningful resources for coping with the difficulties refugee background young people face during resettlement. The research identifies young people as tending to seek out and build connections with places of opportunity, restoration, sociality and safety (see Figure 5). It also shows that everyday mundane places – in particular, those close to where they live and go to school, such as home, school, local parks and libraries – are important places for newly arrived young people.

As school was identified as a place of significance by recently arrived refugee young people (Gifford, Correa-Velez & Sampson 2009), the researchers also examined more closely what factors in the school environment impact on or facilitate learning and school engagement. Identified school context factors include the following:

- Provision of a safe and trusted environment for learning and socialising and the development of future aspirations
- Supportive and attentive teachers who develop strong relationships with students and notice their progress and individual needs
- Proactive, consistent and fair responses by schools to discrimination, bullying and fighting
- Programs that help students develop English literacy while engaging with mainstream subject content
- Programs that enable students to participate in classes where they are likely to succeed and form connections with peers (e.g. music, art, sport, drama)
- School-based after school homework programs that provide additional individual academic support in a familiar environment
- Consideration of pre-arrival schooling experiences that are markedly different in terms of academic, structural and social factors
- Flexibility to attend ELS for longer than twelve months where required
- A well-supported transition to mainstream schools with good follow-up
- Curriculum adapted to the learning needs of students with disrupted schooling.

Type of place	Key qualities	Contribution to wellbeing
Places of opportunity	Meaningful activity Recreational activity	Promotes meaning and purpose in life
Places of restoration	Experiences of pleasure Dealing with emotions	Reduces fear and anxiety Promotes dignity and value
Places of sociality	Building bridging and bonding relationships	Promotes attachment and connection to others
Places of safety	Safe from conflict and danger	Promotes sense of security

Source: Sampson & Gifford (2010 p. 128), adapted from Kaplan 1998.

Figure 5: Place-making and its contribution to wellbeing during settlement

2.10 Arts programs as a protective factor

Several best practice reviews around services and support for refugees and asylum seekers point to cultural participation as an important dimension of the social and psychological welfare of refugees and asylum seekers, and of the settlement process.

Look, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2003) have suggested how the art-making process may lead to initial relief from past trauma, particularly for young people. They found that art processes facilitated empowerment over stress-evoking events and aided in mental wellbeing. In particular, these processes provide opportunities for sharing experiences in an empathic environment through symbolic expression of emotions in a concrete way. However, Jabry (2005) has stressed that the arts process in disaster interventions must consider the whole child, and Seng (1997) reiterates that one of the protective factors defined by the International Resilience Project is support structures in schools and the community. Designing curricula that incorporate arts-based processing of traumatic events can provide such protection. Furthermore, a multi-modal, arts-based framework can become a foundation for regular curriculum for all children to develop stronger empathy for those affected by trauma and greater resilience when dealing with their own traumatic experiences or those of others.

A multi-modal arts-based framework in schools can help all children develop stronger empathy for those affected by trauma and also greater resilience when dealing with their own or others' traumatic experiences.

Protective factors associated with the wellbeing of young people include their sense of belonging, positive school climate, opportunities for success and recognition of achievement (Mitchell 2007). In a report on how young refugee people from African countries are negotiating new learning challenges in western Sydney schools, Cassity and Gow found that the biggest challenge for

students was to 'seek out a community to which they could safely belong' (2006, p. 44). In line with this, a sense of community and belonging in a school is seen by Burnett and Peel as the 'most therapeutic event for a refugee child' (2001, p. 547), and by Cassity and Gow as being 'crucial' for positive learning outcomes (2006, p. 48).

There is a wealth of literature on how the delivery of arts projects in both school and community contexts foster protective factors such as a strong sense of belonging and opportunities for personal expression and recognition of achievement. Brice Heath and Roach's (1999) ten year study of youth arts organisations found that young people engaged in creative 'experience and productivity' through playing many different roles, helping make rules and 'taking inspiration through unexpected sources' (Brice Heath & Roach 1999, p. 22). Pope and Doyle (2006), in an evaluation of two Community Support- funded arts programs for the Department for Victorian Communities, found that participants described a range of benefits, including enjoyment, confidence and pride, as well the development of new skills, networks and opportunities. In a study of four Australian school-based art programs involving music and drama, Bryce et al. (2004) found that involvement in arts programs had a positive impact on students' engagement with learning and, for Indigenous students at one school, led to improved attendance. In all four schools the programs increased students' self-esteem: the contributions they made to the art project helped them feel more positive about themselves as learners. Similarly, Buys and Miller (2009) found that Community Cultural Development projects offered in two socially disadvantaged Queensland schools significantly contributed to students' positive self-concept: 'as a result of their involvement over two-thirds said that they feel better about themselves, had skills they could share with others and could do things as well as others' (Buys and Miller 2009, p. 10). Similarly, Harris, in an arts-based pedagogy-focused study on the process of making collaborative films with Sudanese-Australian high school students (2009 p. 20), characterises arts-based teaching methodology as an 'alternative, safe space' which is 'fun, creative and invites mutuality and exchange'. It has been suggested that the creative manipulation of culturally significant objects is productively connected with culture and with learning (Banaji, Burn & Buckingham 2006), a view that reinforces the concept of creativity as transformative of both culture and self (Vygotsky 1978; Bruner 1990).

At the local community level, Gilmore and Clark (2009) have reported on the Horn of Africa Arts Partnership, a community cultural development program that brought together the Horn of Africa Community Network and the faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts. The aims of this project, which operated in a post-secondary context, were to contribute to resettlement through community cultural development, build capacity, enhance artistic skills and create professional development and community enterprise, and promote and celebrate the richness of each of the Horn of Africa community cultures involved (p. 15). In an evaluation of the project, Gilmore and Clark (2009, p. 28) report the following key outcomes for participants, as identified by participants and those working with them:

- Increased sense of discipline and time management
- Better sense of focus and direction and improved capacity to articulate what they need to do to get to where they want to be
- Growing sense of pride in their achievements and self-confidence in their abilities
- Sense of ownership of the project and responsibility for the outcome
- Acknowledgement of their experience as having 'universal' relevance

- Growing awareness of political and social discourse and how their experiences fit within this
- New language and literacy skills
- New performance and presentation skills
- Pathways to work opportunities and to professional artistic development.

2.11 Sense of belonging

It's not hard, wherever you look, to find children who can't connect with teachers or what is being taught or who feel like outsiders – for whatever reason.

R Klein 1999, p. ix

If the cultural, discursive and ideological apparatus of belonging in schools is framed within and by normative cultural contexts, practices and pedagogies, then within an increasingly pluralistic social context the school curriculum must become one in which all learners perceive they have a stake (Dash 2005). Recent research increasingly indicates the efficacy of instigating and centralising arts-focused education in schools in order to:

- Positively influence children and adolescents' overall development
- Contribute to personal wellbeing and potentially having a positive impact on academic achievement (Bahri 2006)
- Engage members of lower socio-economic, small minority ethnic and otherwise 'hard-to-reach' groups in ways that more conventional educational organisations and state agencies often find extremely difficult (Bambridge, Gray & Thorne 2010)
- Improve outcomes for social learning; partnerships and problem-solving in learning contexts; partnerships and resolution and personalising learning (DEECD 2009)
- Incorporate social justice learning. (Risner & Stinson 2010)

Findings about the potential of arts education in schools for engaging young people through discourses and practices of inclusion, belonging and social connectedness (Windle 2009a, 2009b) point to how situating the arts in classrooms can promote social, cultural and interpersonal relationships that individuals share or create with others. They also identify the personal, cultural and economic benefits such relationships can generate (Harland et al. 2000; Fleming 2006). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) have suggested that one of the primary purposes of arts education is to give students the opportunity to develop in-depth, meaningful self-expression through the organisation of cognition, the development of perceptual abilities and consideration of emotional capabilities, findings echoed by Grumet (2004). Kelman, O'Brien and Donelan's (2005) study on the impacts of a program of storytelling and performance for young people in schools produced evidence of 'significant personal development, communication and learning outcomes...development in self-esteem, greater sense of community and improved language use' (Kelman, O'Brien & Donelan 2005, p. ii).

A noteworthy feature of the program was the use of young teacher-artists with similar backgrounds and shared cultural contexts to the young people involved. The authors report the teacher-artists did not experience the same constraints as ordinary classroom teachers and were able to navigate difficult material often avoided by teachers. The outcomes for participating young people in the Schools Community Regional Arts Youth Projects identified by Kelman, O'Brien and Donelan (2005, pp. 2–3) were:

- Improved self-confidence and self-esteem
- Improved social health
- Development of a sense of community
- Greater connection of young people to each other and to their community
- Improved persistence when faced with complex tasks
- Improved language use for young people with limited English
- Development of vocabulary and different language registers.

The implications for schools and communities were that:

- Young people can be strongly engaged in their own learning
- Young people gain significant control over their own learning
- Young people benefit from telling their own stories
- Arts projects can generate important dialogue within the community.

In later research Donelan and O'Brien (2008) sought to investigate how arts programs can engage marginalised and at-risk young people. The four year creative arts intervention was aimed at at-risk young people aged 16 to 20 across rural and urban Victoria, Australia. Data were collected from ten cross-disciplinary arts programs. The findings reinforced the benefits arts participation has in relation to increased self-esteem, skills development, experiencing attainment and achievement, community connectedness and social inclusion (Donelan & O'Brien 2008, p. 18). The study illustrates the centrality of the arts for re-engaging marginalised youth and demonstrated how:

The arts can act as a catalyst for [at-risk young people's] voices and, in unravelling their creative abilities, in what they can and want to communicate. Expanding possibilities for under-served youth in engaging with the arts can not only broaden and enrich their learning experiences, but also give us an expanded vision to see beyond mainstream methodologies for evaluating their capabilities. (Altman & De 2010, p. 1)

These perspectives resonate with the findings of the UK's Breaking the Cycle of Failure project (Hirst & Robertshaw 2003), which presented findings from a twelve month study exploring the impact of arts activity on 'excluded' young people in Pupil Referral Units in South Yorkshire. Developing work started in Otherwise Creative – an arts program working with 14 to 16 year olds who had been permanently excluded from school because of behavioural problems, young people with mental health problems and young parents – Breaking the Cycle of Failure was initiated through a renewed focus on 'inclusion' and educational engagement in UK educational policy agendas.

Similarly, Bryce et al. (2004) found that self-esteem increased for students in school-based arts education: 'The programmes help students to feel more confident about themselves and the contribution they can make and this in turn helps them to feel more positive about themselves as learners. Students are better able to work co-operatively with others [and] learn to plan and set goals' (p. ii). The authors suggest that arts involvement for disadvantaged young people can provide:

- Learning opportunities for students who do not fit the conventional mould of institutional learning
- Tangible experiences of working in a team
- An opportunity for reflection and constructive criticism
- A 'leveling' effect whereby students who are socially ostracised can be included
- Helpful ways of expressing and exploring emotions. (Bryce et al. 2004, p. xi)

These findings have been reinforced by Australian studies such as the DEECD (2009) report, *Partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector*. In addition, the DEECD report focused on fostering trust and racial harmony through the role played by arts in helping students acknowledge expression and recognition of identity and cultural difference.

In an Arts Council research project specifically geared towards the role of the arts in meeting the needs of refugees and new arrivals in the UK, Kidd, Zahir and Hubrid (2008) found that participation in the arts can help to build confidence and develop key skills among new arrivals. This report also found that using arts-based processes provided a means of communication that overcame the language barriers present when working with refugee and asylum seekers, while at the same time helping to build participants' communication and language skills. Participatory arts not only develop the skills and confidence of young people; they can also provide them with respite from the difficulties in their lives and the chance to develop social networks. This reinforces an earlier study in which Waldorf (2002, p. 14)

'Children experienced the creative process like a wave of relief from regimented instruction.'

quotes an artist commenting that 'children experienced the creative process like a wave of relief from regimented instruction'. Many of the practitioners interviewed in the Arts Council research project emphasised that the value of their work lay not only in the skills and confidence that the young people gain, but also in giving them a space to be playful and have fun. They were able to be simply young and carefree. Arts projects are seen as an appropriate non-threatening means of working with participants.

2.12 Doing things differently: artists and non-traditional learning modes

In a report on the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), a program where artists and arts agencies work with schools to integrate one of the arts into the curriculum of schools in disadvantaged areas, Waldorf (2002, p. 14) suggests that artists are often able to reach young people who struggle in 'more traditional learning environments'. An artist is quoted as saying: 'Kids seem to intuitively feel that you are playing by different rules and maybe rules you can succeed with' (p. 14). Similarly, Bryce et al. (2004) and Krensky (2001) found that arts participation offers learning opportunities for students who do not fit the conventional model of learning. Strengths and intelligences that often do not receive a lot of emphasis in other curriculum areas are explored and highlighted through arts-based learning, for example, by providing 'opportunities for students to start to learn and enjoy learning without experiencing the initial discouragement of having to display weak reading and writing skills' (Bryce et al. 2004, p. xi).

This approach is particularly pertinent to young people from refugee backgrounds, who, in

addition to speaking English as a second or other language, may have experienced disrupted or minimal formal schooling prior to arrival in Australia. For these students, the structured learning environment of the school can be alienating. Such students may also have emotional blocks to learning, including anger, low frustration tolerance and aggressive behaviour (VFST 2007). The inclusion of arts-based approaches in the classroom such as drama and storytelling can 'allow for appropriate expression of difficulties' (VFST 2007, p. 34). Harris (2009, p. 70) further observes: 'Arts-based tools can provide simple, flexible and student centred alternatives to frustrating text-based literacy acquisition'. Similarly, Australian film-maker Khoa Do (Ahmed 2009) suggests, 'A lot of young people have trouble expressing themselves in the traditional arenas of studying English, maths or school-based music. But when they find an art-form or activity that engages them, they can have more purpose or meaning'. As Krensky (2001) puts it, artistic achievements can open up a whole new world of possibility and opportunity for students who are challenged by formal learning and educational orthodoxies.

The emphasis on self-expression and alternative learning also supplements research that demonstrates the importance of arts-based learning for generating opportunities for praise, encouragement, approval and reward from peers and teachers. Pope and Doyle (2006, p. 12) observe that a SCRAYP project in which young Sudanese refugee background men wrote and performed their own play gave participants a 'strong sense of their own potential and the opportunity to fulfil it'. Hunter (2005, p. 9), summarising the research findings of six education-arts participation projects for the Australia Council, comments that 'frequent praise in creative activity that doesn't necessarily rely on a right and a wrong way of doing things was perceived to dispel many students' fear of failure'. Praise, she notes, is particularly important for students who are at risk.

'Frequent praise in creative activity that doesn't necessarily rely on a right and a wrong way of doing things can dispel many students' fear of failure.'

2.13 Artists as mentoring adults and role models

Although artists have particular skills and attributes related to their art form, part of the positive effect of their presence in schools may also be attributed to their potential as an adult role model who offers an alternative perspective on the world. An emphasis on developing relationships is key to how artists respond to participants and students. Artist Maude Clarke (2000, cited in Thiele & Marsden 2003, p. 74), views it as a matter of equality: 'There can be no "us and them" – working creatively means really seeing and really hearing someone.' Orfali (2004, p. 17) quotes a student who says, 'If you're not keen on school and not very happy, sometimes working with someone like a friend can encourage you to come to school'. For young people from marginalised communities it may also be particularly significant if the artist comes from the same cultural background as themselves (Kelman, O'Brien & Donelan 2005). Bryce et al. (2004) note that Indigenous students in a school in the Northern Territory found the music practitioner who was also from an Indigenous background to be a particularly powerful role model.

Brice Heath and Roach (1999, pp. 25–26) observe that in contemporary society young people from all socio-economic backgrounds have few opportunities for 'sustained conversations' with

adults and few occasions to 'work in a sustained way to plan and carry out a project with an adult or guiding expert'. This means that they are likely to miss out on 'talking through future plans, developing ideas for execution or assessing next steps from a current situation' – modes of language that Brice Heath and Roach (1999) see as critical to both 'academic performance and maturation'. This view echoes Remmer's (1996, p. 318) assertion that artists bring cultural understanding to students through presenting artistic experiences that connect with their lives outside school: 'Artists represent living traditions and can raise significant questions both about the past – the roots and traditions from which they spring – and about future practices and concerns.' Building on Remmer's work, Waldorf (2002, p. 3) argues that that artists' 'personal work habits' such as discipline and tenacity and the ability to revise are particularly beneficial to young people, as these habits are also necessary in academic endeavours.

In terms of developing strong relationships between artists and students as co-learners, Galton (2008) found that artists were not afraid of showing vulnerability when engaging with students, which can be empowering for students who may themselves be feeling vulnerable but are anxious about expressing this. Galton observes that artists 'regard both teachers and pupils as co-learners, much as they view their artistic colleagues', rather than as 'teacher and taught' (2008, p. 33), and notes that feedback provided by creative practitioners 'tended to be specific...rather than making a blanket positive statement' (2008, p. 48). Thiele and Marsden (2000, pp. 75–76) also emphasise this notion of a peer-like relationship between artists and young people, observing that 'the point of contact is from one artist to another, from one human being to another, discovering shared interests through art'.

Such an authentic personal approach may also contribute to a safe space for students from refugee backgrounds to explore the links between their past, present and future, knowing that they are in an environment where vulnerability and openness about individual experience is respected and validated. It also provides the opportunity to explore individual differences between refugee background students and to validate their uniqueness regardless of shared attributes or experiences. As Harris (2009, p. 73) puts it, 'To imagine that all refugee students are the same, with the same needs, is as re-traumatising and stereotyping as ignoring them altogether.' As a refugee background participant in the Victorian College of the Arts Horn of Africa Arts Partnership (Gilmour & Clark 2009, p. 2) noted: 'In the play I would like people to see us not just as refugees, but as citizens. We are going to be great citizens. So when you look at us, don't judge us by where we are but as who we are.'

'To imagine that all refugee students are the same, with the same needs, is as re-traumatising and stereotyping as ignoring them altogether.'

2.14 Arts participation as a contributor to academic success

A number of studies have evaluated the link between arts participation and academic success. An US benchmark study by Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga (1999) analysed National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) data on a cohort of over 25,000 students from Grade 8 to Grade 12. 'High-arts' students – those involved in arts-related courses in or out of school, and those involved in extra-curricular arts activities at school – performed better than 'low-arts students' on every

measure reported, including those for mathematics, English, reading and history/geography/citizenship. Further, they used the NELS data to investigate the relationship between training in instrumental music and mathematics, and found that students with high involvement in instrumental music from middle school onwards did better than the average student in Year 12 mathematics.

Since 2002, the Creative Partnerships program in the UK has provided school children with opportunities to work in partnership with creative professionals on sustained projects. Creative Partnerships has been a major goal of school improvement programs for addressing the challenges of poverty, class, race, religion, linguistic and cultural heritage in schools. National Foundation for Education Research (Eames et al. 2006) attainment data from the partnerships measured changes in self-confidence, self-esteem and attitudes to learning in the 13,000 young people, across primary and secondary schools, who had participated in programs. The report found that there was a statistically significant positive association with academic progress in the key learning areas of English, maths and science for young people known to have attended Creative Partnerships activities compared to other young people in the same schools.

Similarly, the 2006 Ofsted report on Creative Partnerships found:

- Most Creative Partnerships programs were effective in developing in pupils some attributes of creative people: an ability to improvise, take risks, show resilience, and collaborate with others. However, pupils were often unclear about how they could apply these attributes independently to develop original ideas and outcomes.
- Good personal and social skills were developed by most pupils involved in Creative Partnerships programs; these included effective collaboration between pupils and maturity in their relationships with adults.
- For a small but significant number of pupils a Creative Partnerships program represented a fresh start. In particular, opportunities to work directly in the creative industries motivated pupils and inspired high aspirations for the future.
- Schools offered evidence of improvement in achievement in areas such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, which they associated with pupils' enjoyment in learning through Creative Partnerships programs and their aim to develop thinking skills/

In a Canadian context, Uptis et al. (2001) identified clear correlations between achievement in mathematics and language for students who were taking music lessons. In a related vein, an two year US study of 2000 pupils in grades 4 to 8 found significant relationships between rich in-school art programs and the creative, cognitive and personal competencies needed for academic success (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles 1999). Closer to home, in an Australian project in the Northern Territory that integrated music development skills across the curriculum, Anja Tait (summarised in Hunter 2005, p. 181) found that Indigenous ESL learners generally achieved statistically significant higher mathematics results in Term 4 compared with Term 1 in the year of the arts program.

While we could not locate any studies on the academic benefits of arts participation projects specific to students from refugee backgrounds, these young people have the challenge of learning specific subjects whilst learning English and coping with often low levels of literacy. As the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture puts it, they must 'acquire both basic oral communication skills, as well as the oral and written skills necessary to complete tasks required

for cognitively demanding academic study' (VFST 2007, p. 22). The review of the relationships between arts participation in schools and academic development suggests that, with its emphasis on both individual expression and collaboration between the artist and young people, as well as between the young people themselves, arts participation provides numerous structured, semi-structured and unstructured opportunities for language learning, as well as the development of key social, cognitive and affective skills and capacities.

2.15 Opportunity and possibility

According to Thiele and Marsden (2003, p. 78) a good community cultural development project will increase both 'participants' sense of connection to community and their sense of opportunity'. This may occur through young people's acquisition of transferable skills but it may also be due to a new understanding both of oneself and one's community/world through arts participation and meaningful contact with arts practitioners and other participants. The notion of 'possibility' is a significant part of Thiele and Marsden's (2003) concept of community cultural development, in which they suggest that 'the relationship between possibility and imagination is as significant to art making as it is to imagining social options' (p. 90). Through art making, participants are encouraged to become 'active, directive, self-determining and empowered'. These characteristics, argue Thiele and Marsden, can then manifest in other areas of participants' lives. Similarly, Krensky (2001, p. 427) observes that art making allows young people not only to 'portray the world as it is' but that it helps them 'envision beyond what already is and create new, freer spaces to explore what is possible'. Harris (2009, p. 114) notes that arts participation programs offer opportunities for refugee students to 'become leaders, brokers and agents of their own change'.

These opportunities are possible when young people are recognised as 'resources not problems' – an ethos that Brice Heath and Roach (1999) see as the common, guiding principle of arts organisations that work successfully with young people. This is particularly pertinent to the settlement needs of young people from refugee backgrounds. CMYI (2006, p. 2) points out that 'despite the immense difficulty of resettlement and recovery, refugee young people often make remarkable progress and bring a wealth of resources and strengths to the Australian community'. These strengths can find meaningful expression in arts programs that are a 'reversal of the deficit model' (the belief that refugee young people 'arrive with nothing to offer and everything to learn') by 'inviting young people to 'present their perspectives on film, in dance music, visual art and drama', a 'simple and effective beginning for engagement in the new world of western culture' (Harris 2009, p. 70).

Skills acquired through consistent participation in an art project have been found to be transferable to employment contexts, further study and civic life. Brice Heath and Roach (1999) identify these skills as 'the ability to collaborate, stick to pursuits, show discipline, be expressive, and sustain challenging team memberships' (1999, p. 33). This was also a key finding for Gilmore and Clark (2009), who observe that participants in the Horn of Africa Arts Partnership project commented that they understood the success of the group depended on the effort and commitment of each individual. A sense of ownership and responsibility and seeing their own experience objectively were also mentioned as key aspects of the Horn of Africa Arts Partnership, in which participants began to rethink their attitudes to education and learning. One participant commented, 'Arts are a way that people can find a way in Australia. We have been in a storm at sea, but there is an anchor and that anchor is art' (2009, p. 27).

In summary, the key challenge for educational domains is to embed learning, including arts-based

learning and participation, in meaningful contexts where students are able to use their full range of abilities, skills, potential and knowledge in creative ways. Seltzer and Bentley (1999, pp. viii–ix) identified the characteristics of learning environments that successfully encourage creativity. They include:

- **Trust:** secure, trusting relationships are essential to environments in which people are prepared to take risks and are able to learn from failure.
- **Freedom of action:** the creative application of knowledge is only possible where people are able to make real choices over what they do and how they do it.
- **Variation of contexts:** learners need experience in applying their skills in a range of contexts in order to make connections between them.
- **The right balance between skills and challenges:** creativity emerges in environments where people are engaged in challenging activities and have the right level of skill to meet them.
- **Interactive exchange of knowledge and ideas:** creativity is fostered in environments where ideas, feedback and evaluation are constantly exchanged, and where learners can draw on diverse sources of information and expertise.
- **Real-world outcomes:** creative ability and motivation are reinforced by the experience of making an impact – achieving concrete outcomes, changing the way that things are done.

2.16 The power of risk

As previously noted, young people from refugee backgrounds are likely to have been exposed to significant risk factors, as identified in the psychosocial and wellbeing literature. In contemporary education discourse they are also frequently labelled as being ‘at risk’, which can refer to factors ranging from a lack of engagement with school to unstable housing to use of drugs and alcohol – issues which may be connected to the trauma and dislocation of refugee experiences, the vulnerability engendered by adolescence and young adulthood, or a combination of these and other factors.

However, there is strong evidence that certain types of ‘risk’ contribute positively to young people’s wellbeing and development. Brice Heath and Roach (1999, p. 27) argue that participating in an arts project, particularly one with a public outcome, offers a ‘high yet predictable risk which is extremely positive’. Artists can be seen as agents of positive risk who contribute to the provision of ‘safe environments where risk taking is acceptable and everyone’s contribution is valued’ (Bryce et al. 2004, p. ii). In such an environment, students learn how to ‘solicit support, challenge themselves and others, and share work and resources’ (Brice Heath & Roach 1999, p. 26). And co-learning between students and teachers can provide the ideal framework for fostering constructive, mutual risk taking: ‘Situations where teachers also take risks allow for an open acknowledging that they are learning along with the students’ (Bryce et al. 2004, p. ii).

In a report on the pedagogies of creative practitioners in British schools, Galton (2008) observes that the approach taken by artists led to an open and exploratory environment, as opposed to a highly structured one ruled by curriculum constraints. More risks were possible in this environment because less scaffolding, corrections and directives were used, tasks were ‘high on ambiguity and pupils were given more responsibility over their own creative process’ (Galton 2008, p. 37). It was ultimately this element of risk and the lack of a prescribed outcome that led to students having more ownership of their own learning and feeling and being able to ‘make big decisions’

(p. 40) about their creative work. This resulted in increased feelings of self-worth among students. Similarly, Waldorf (2002, p. 13) in an evaluation of Chicago Art Partnerships in Education notes that 'art making does not involve looking for a single right answer' and that receiving positive support from professional artists for 'learning to take risks and make choices' builds students' 'self-confidence for continued experimentation' and 'motivation for discovery learning'.

2.17 A partnership approach

In 2005, the Australian Cultural Ministers Council and the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) released The National Education and the Arts Statement, underpinned by three key principles:

1. All children and young people should have a high quality arts education in every phase of learning.
2. Creating partnerships strengthens community identity and local cultures.
3. Connecting schools with the arts and cultural sector enriches learning outcomes.

The statement also noted:

Schools that value creativity lead the way in cultivating the well-informed and active citizens our future demands: where individuals are able to generate fresh ideas, communicate effectively, take calculated risks and imaginative leaps, adapt easily to change and work cooperatively. (Cultural Ministers Council & MCEETYA 2005)

It has been suggested that school-based arts projects empower teachers to teach through the arts – to change and develop their practice, and perhaps their thinking about how the curriculum might be delivered (Jones 2007). The 2008 Towards a Creative Australia report identified the role of artists in schools as a critical strategy and suggested that integrating artists more thoroughly in education delivery could provide a new model of teacher interaction for promoting associative learning, which connects the classroom and curriculum with students' real-world lived experiences. The presence of artists in school helps to break down traditional curriculum boundaries of what and how a student is learning and, by working in partnership with teachers, students are enabled to take a more proactive participatory role in learning.

The best projects, according to Orfali (2004, p. 9), are those that have real commitment from staff members who are *'willing to share their ideas and skills and willing to learn from the artist'*. Such projects require *'close collaboration between the artist and the school...[collaboration] is fundamental to sound partnership planning and effective communication'* (Orfali 2004, p. 4). Sharp and Dust (1997, p. 6) have suggested that artists-in-schools projects can be a good means of attracting parents' interest and participation. In the 2009 DEECD report Partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector, the impacts of creative arts partnerships on the school as a whole are identified as:

- Broadening the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Forming cross-curricular links
- Enabling the school to focus on creativity
- Improving provision for the arts
- Enhancing the school's image/profile
- Unifying the whole school in a common purpose.

2.18 Conclusion

Artist pedagogies and approaches for young people from refugee backgrounds have been identified as generating opportunities for building resilience and reducing vulnerability and for fostering school environments that promote a sense of wellbeing and belonging through personal success, collaboration, creativity, co-learning and alternative learning modes, and recognition of achievement. The literature has supported the premise that by being involved in arts programs in schools, young people can experience positive impacts in their learning. They are likely to gain positive experiences as learners, experience improvement in self-esteem and sense of self-worth, and in some cases experience improved school attendance and enthusiasm for education. Artists-in-schools programs documented in the literature have been found to bring professional arts-based skills from a world outside into the school and to offer opportunities for students who may not fit the conventional model of learning as they draw on strengths and intelligences that may not receive much emphasis in other curriculum areas. Arts-based activities can make a significant contribution to students' acquisition of transferable skills, which in turn can become a bridge for connecting to broader participation in the school curriculum and understanding between and within communities.

Arts participation can also be particularly significant for young people from refugee backgrounds in relation to helping strengthen their sense of social inclusion and belonging. It can create a climate in which transculturative exchange between students as peers and between students and teachers can occur, an exchange in which all parties learn something new about themselves and about each other through sharing cultural knowledge, identities and experiences that enrich the educational experience in the round. Increased self-confidence, tolerance of difference, capacity to develop language skills and capacity to be mentored and guided by non-authoritarian adult role models are additional benefits suggested by the literature.

Finally, a key distinguishing feature of artist pedagogies and approaches for working with refugee background young people in educational settings may be summarised as offering opportunities for taking risks in a safe environment. These positive risks can help young people from refugee backgrounds to cope and grow, and may ultimately lead to creative outputs that contribute significantly to acquiring transferable skills that are meaningful in other areas of learning and living.

NEW MOVES

METHODOLOGY



3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research questions

Anecdotal feedback from TSR internal program evaluations illustrates how TSR programs can have a positive impact on the lives of young people in refugee/new-arrival communities, schools and related contexts. This research focuses on TSR arts-based interventions and the role they can play in increasing social connectedness and cohesion, individual and cultural self-esteem, cognitive skills development and emotional and social resilience in meeting life's challenges for refugee background young people. However, it is important to develop an evidence base for theories and models informing national and international best practice approaches; in this case, illustrating how TSR programs can play a major role in fostering intricate, positive and sustainable community links between refugee background young people, TSR teaching artists, participating teachers and schools. Specifically, the *New Moves* study sets out to investigate:

1. The experiences of young refugee background students engaging in programs and activities offered by TSR in the early phase of settlement
2. The influence of TSR programs on personal and social wellbeing, sense of school belonging, and engagement with learning and community for this target group
3. Any best practice models that may emerge through identifying effective TSR school programs
4. Any implications for future policy and practice.

3.2 Overall research framework: community-based participatory research

The framework and methodology for this research is informed by community-based participatory approaches to research (CBPR) as well as a contextualist approach to knowing, which emphasises that understanding behaviour requires us to attend to varied constructions of meanings in context (Kingry-Westergard & Kelly 1990). CBPR is interchangeably used with other terms such as community action research, participatory action research and community-based action research. Minkler and Wallerstein (2003) argue that CBPR is not a method or sets of methods but is an approach to research. Minkler (in Faridi et al. 2007) describes it as 'a process that involves community members or recipients of interventions in all phases of the research process' (p. 2).

CBPR methodologies are well-documented for their success in developing and delivering ethical, high-quality research outcomes working with individuals, groups and communities disadvantaged or marginalised in relation to mainstream structures of power, access and equity (Macaulay et al. 1999; Löfman, Pelkonen & Pietilä 2004; Ellis et al. 2007). Israel et al. (2005) have developed nine principles of CBPR. These include:

- Recognising 'community' as a unit of identity
- Building on strengths and resources within the community
- Facilitating collaborative, equitable involvement of all partners in all phases of research

- Integrating knowledge and intervention for mutual benefit of all partners
- Promoting a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities
- Involving a cyclical and iterative process
- Addressing research questions from an ecological perspective, that is, people are embedded in and interdependent with social, cultural, historical and political contexts
- Disseminating findings and knowledge gained to all partners
- Involving long-term commitment by all partners.

CBPR seeks to develop positive and sustainable research relationships between academic researchers and community partners and members, in which all participants across these groups have a role and a stake in the design, implementation and outcomes of the research process.

Although CBPR models originally derive from the field of public health research and inquiry, they can be adapted to a much broader range of community-based research foci, including the nexus between the arts and individual and community wellbeing and immigrant settlement experiences. The cross-disciplinary nature of this study and of the research team brings together research paradigms, theories and techniques drawn from the fields of education research, community psychology and refugee settlement studies, and is well-suited to employing some of the principles of CBPR.

This research project draws on the principles of the CBPR framework in that it has encouraged shared decision making and mutual ownership of the research process and research outcomes with different stakeholders. This includes:

- Involving and viewing school as community
- Interviewing students, teachers, principals
- Sharing power and resources with and acknowledging and appreciating skills and knowledge of school members at the different stages of research
- Consulting with participants, including educators and community members, regarding methods of data collection (surveys or interviews), procedures (logistics related to conducting the research), and how results should be disseminated and used for action
- Providing opportunities for the target participant groups to guide aspects of the research process
- Using photo-elicitation
- Involving the general community through interviewing refugee community members (parents and community representatives)
- Involving multiple communities
- Appreciating diversity
- Using a spread of schools within the parameters of the study
- Focusing on multiple cultural backgrounds and language groups.

3.3 Implementing CBPR: school consultation and revision of project design

After obtaining approval in February 2010 to undertake the research, Victoria University began consultation with schools to seek participants for the two proposed studies. The original project design included a repeated (three times over twelve weeks) quantitative survey instrument. The instrument combined questions from the Happy with Life as a Whole and the PWI-SC scales (Cummins & Lau 2005), the Brief Sense of Community Index (Peterson, Speer & McMillan 2008), the You and Your School Australian Health and Wellbeing Survey (Bond et al. 2000) and questions adapted from the Heikkinen Social Circle (2000).

As part of consultation processes the team sent the proposed draft survey instrument to schools for input about the suitability, appropriateness and accessibility of the two indices. The team also undertook in-depth consultation with five schools, conducting face-to-face interviews with four principals and six teachers. In addition to this, Victoria University continued a review of relevant literature about refugee settlement, methodology and community engagement.

Through this consultation process and the review of literature the research team came to see that the quantitative design and instruments originally proposed, though sound in themselves, would be difficult to use with the target population in view of the language issues for early-phase refugees and the project's time and resource parameters. The project was revised to include in-depth ethnographic case studies in six Song Room schools rather than undertake quantitative surveys in 16 schools. The key challenges/concerns associated with the study as initially proposed emerged out of the scoping and consultation process that are listed below.

- Principals and teachers raised their concerns about the suitability and appropriateness of administering repeated quantitative surveys. The key concerns of the teachers and researchers were that:
 - Students, especially those who had not been in Australia for very long, would find some concepts in the survey difficult to understand, for example, 'this school helps me fulfil my needs'
 - Some questions were culturally inappropriate for some students, for example, one question related to money, and as pointed out by a principal and a teacher, Sudanese parents do not give money to their children
 - The surveys assumed students would possess a certain level of reflective thinking, which in reality was not the case, as they had experienced limited, interrupted prior schooling
 - Data would be skewed by students' willingness to please: students would want to make the teacher happy and answer very positively, especially refugee background young people who fear the consequences of saying something negative.
- It would be difficult to recruit a large enough sample because of language and other procedural challenges related to parental consent. Relatively small sample sizes and brief follow-up periods were noted as major limitations to quantitative refugee research when attempting to capture change in refugees' experiences (Correa-Velez, Gifford & Bice 2005). To undertake a robust and culturally informed quantitative study, researchers would have required a longer timeframe and the opportunity to anchor the instruments in the meaning systems of the students prior to administration.

- English language school principals indicated that given the level of language comprehension of their students, the survey could not be implemented without interpreters. The benefit of employing translators or multicultural education aides is reported in Gifford et al.'s (2007) research on the psychosocial determinants of health and wellbeing among refugee background young people in Melbourne. However, due to unique challenges (limited comprehension of English, disrupted schooling, no prior exposure to or experience of research), the process of data gathering was extremely labour intensive and time consuming. Thus the cost and logistics of repeated quantitative measures was prohibitive.
- While employing translators would address the problem of language barriers, this process does not address the basic need to culturally anchor the instruments in the meaning systems of the young people.

3.4 Case study methodology

3.4.1 Case study

Stake (1994) stated that case study is a research strategy that focuses on understanding all there is to learn from and about a particular case or cases. A case can be a policy, organisation, individual, program or community. The case study strategy is considered appropriate for this research because the research asks 'how and why' as its research questions, and because control or manipulation of relevant behaviours is restricted (Tellis 1997; Yin 2009). Case study emphasises the intrinsic value of the case while also valuing the possibility of developing theoretical knowledge that can be transferred to other settings. In this research, a TSR program is the case or unit of analysis. Specifically, a single case is represented by a series of TSR sessions (over 20 weeks) in one school.

3.4.2 Multi-case study approach

Multi-case study design was adopted in this research as the whole project covers several TSR programs (e.g. music, drama, dance, etc.) in several schools where there are larger numbers of people from CALD backgrounds who came to Australia as refugees compared to other schools with TSR program delivery. Six sites were selected because they were running programs at the time of the study (see Table 9). Miles and Huberman (1994) state that 'multiple cases not only pin down the specific conditions under which a finding will occur but also help us form the more general categories of how those conditions may be related' (p. 173). A multi-case study approach enables comparison and contrast of issues emerging from one case with issues emerging from other cases. Further, utilisation of multiple cases allows for identifying and framing what is common and consistent across cases, as well as what is unique or particular about a case (Stake 1994).

Transferability of findings from case studies serves as 'a heuristic in the form of analytical constructs or categories' that can be used by readers to reflect on their practice (Zeichner & Liston 1996, p. 30), that is, to inform readers and future policy/practice of certain previously unknown aspects of arts programs and their influence on CALD background students who came to Australia as refugees in the settlement process. This is mainly because such research focuses more on identifying themes or constructs of meanings and understandings than on discrete variables/behaviours, and also because research findings must also be interpreted within the contexts in which they are generated and will be applied (Kingry-Westergaard & Kelly 1990).

The provision of rich description about the research processes and of the case study in our research allows for transfer of insights and research processes to other settings/contexts by readers (Patton 2002).

The current case study approach combines deductive (theory-testing) and inductive (theory-generating) elements. In relation to deductive research, theory, previous literature and existing evidence on the arts and children's outcomes have led to the development of several propositions driving this research (i.e. arts programs are likely to influence children's personal and social wellbeing, sense of school belonging, and engagement with school) (Donelan & Jeanneret 2008). On the other hand, the question of how arts programs influence children's outcomes is, broadly speaking, inductive and based on the assumption that the experiences and meanings derived from participation are socially produced within specific settings nested within a broader social ecology (O'Donnell 2006; Shweder 1990; Squire 2000; Trickett 1996). An inductive approach is imperative for this research to develop insights based in the experiences and meanings participants afford their engagement.

3.4.3 Multiple researchers in multi-case studies

These multiple case studies involved multiple investigators, which is not uncommon (Rowley 2002). We implemented several procedures to maximise the potential and minimise the risk of using multiple investigators. We used uniform procedures in the form of a case study protocol for data collection and analysis. Yin (2009) strongly recommends using uniform procedures when multiple researchers and/or multiple cases are involved. The protocol helped to ensure uniformity in data gathering at different schools. Uniformity of method in the data collection enhances methodological rigour and contributes greatly to the validity of results (Miles & Huberman 1994; Rowley 2002). The case study protocol was the 'central communication document' (Rowley 2002, p. 23) for the team and was discussed at a workshop that involved the entire research team. This process was part of the effort to ensure that all researchers had an adequate level of familiarity with the case study method and design. As part of the process, researchers were involved in workshops and discussions with the research team both prior to data gathering and after data gathering to debrief and to share insights about the research and data gathering process. The debriefing session provided an opportunity to engage as a collective in the interim data analysis phase, as part of this session was focused on identifying lessons learnt (see Crawford, Leybourne & Arnott 2000).

As noted above, the research also involved the triangulation of data sources and types of data along with the use of multiple investigators which enabled the exploration of the phenomena under study from multiple researchers' perspectives (Knafl & Breitmayer 1991). For example, in the analysis phase, multiple researchers may code a set of data independently and then meet together to discuss and reach a consensus on the emerging codes and categories. This process can promote the consistency of the findings and dependability of the data. With multiple researchers, idea convergence and confirmation of results are possible (Knafl & Breitmayer 1991).

Lastly, when building or generating theory from case study research, Eisenhardt (1989) points out, multiple researchers 'often have complementary insights which add to the richness of the data, and their different perspectives increase the likelihood of capitalizing on any novel insights which may be in the data' (p. 538). He also proposes that, 'the convergence of observations

from multiple investigators enhances confidence in the findings...while conflicting perceptions keep the group from premature closure' (p. 538). The chance to develop or generate a theory becomes higher when multiple researchers are employed. Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that this is mainly because 'creative insight often arises from the juxtaposition of contradictory or paradoxical evidence', and 'this constant juxtaposition of conflicting realities (differences across cases, different types of data, and different researchers) tends to unfreeze thinking' (p. 546).

3.4.4 Six case studies of TSR programs

The six different programs selected for the research constituted the cases for study. By interviewing the young people as well as educators we were able to gain insight into the ways in which students make sense of their participation in TSR programs. These data allowed researchers to develop an understanding of experiences of engagement and participation in the words of the young people. The interviews constituted the primary data source. Interview data were supplemented with secondary data, which included observations of the program; teacher and teaching artist evaluations of students and the program already collected by TSR; parent and community member interviews; and student photo journals. These different data sources provided information about the broader context within which to understand the young people's experiences of TSR program participation, and settlement more broadly speaking.

The different case studies provided the opportunity for cross-case comparisons that have allowed for the clarification of shared theoretical, practical and methodological lessons that may inform future policy and TSR programming (see Figure 6).

3.5 Participants

TSR works with a range of schools with high refugee background student populations. The case study sites were selected according to their ability/willingness to participate and to reflect a range of TSR programs. Schools participating in the project included two primary English language schools, two secondary English language schools, one primary Catholic school and one primary school. Students involved in the project come from refugee backgrounds and were aged 10 to 18. Given the diversity of the population of people with refugee background in these schools there was potential to work with up to ten different language communities. Due to the prohibitive costs of translating information and consent documents it was necessary to limit the study to four language communities which reflected the largest populations arriving in Australia under the Humanitarian Program (see Table 4).

Table 4: Humanitarian Program figures for offshore visa grants by top ten countries of birth, 2008–2009

Countries	Number of visas granted
Iraq	2874
Burma/Myanmar	2412
Afghanistan	847
Sudan	631
Bhutan	616
Ethiopia	478
Congo (DRC)	463
Somalia	456
Liberia	387
Sierra Leone	363

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship Annual Report 2008–2009 (2009).

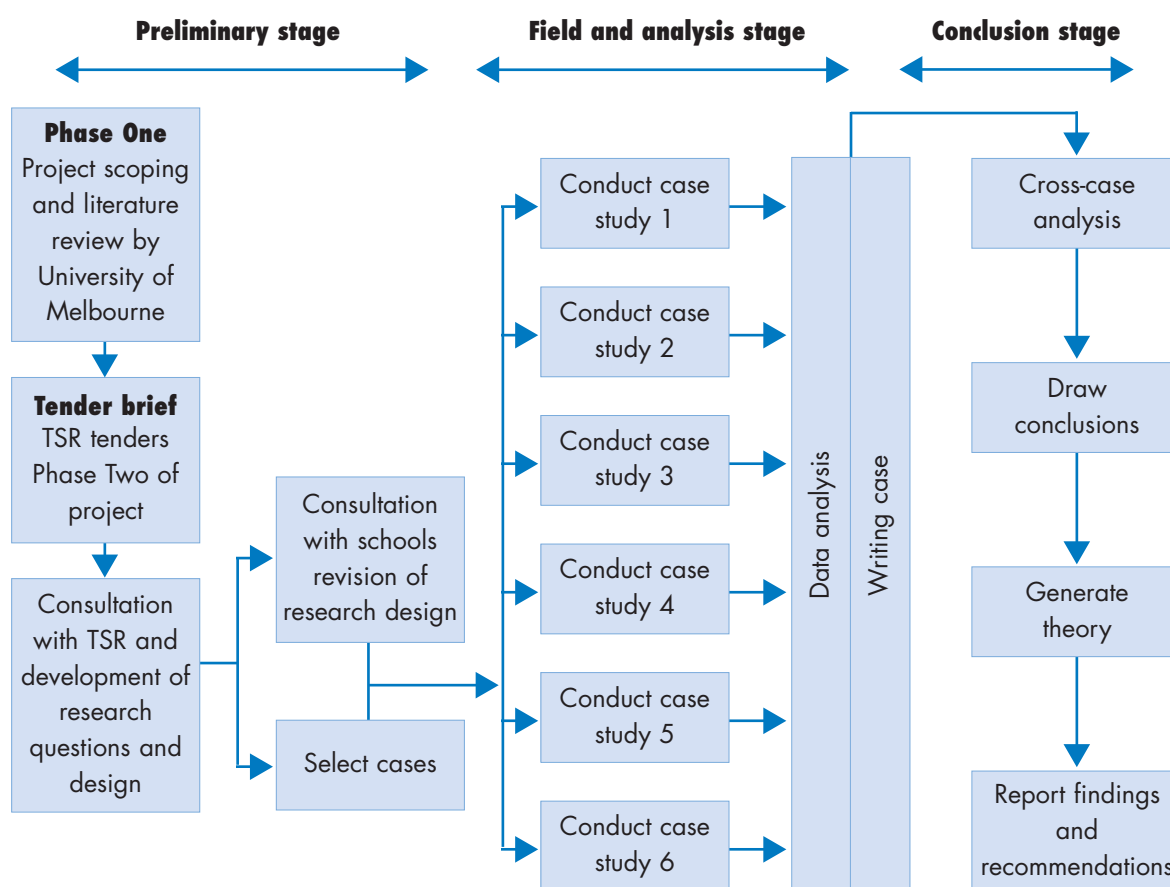


Figure 6: Stages involved in project (adapted from Yin, 1994)

This research project focuses on CALD background young people who came to Australia with refugee backgrounds. All participants were in the early phase of settlement. As evident in the literature review, settlement is a highly contested concept and there is a long and unresolved debate as to whether it should be defined by the length of an individual's residency or by achievement of certain outcomes (DIMA 2003). Alternatively, settlement can be viewed as a complex process of adjustment, impacts and processes that can last a lifetime (Berger, 2005 in SCOA 2009).

Government-provided settlement support services for CALD background young people who came to Australia refugees are available for up to five years. After a six to twelve month period of intensive settlement support, local Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) provide essential settlement support services for refugees and migrants. Eligibility criteria to access services through the MRCs require individuals to have lived in Australia for less than five years. In terms of education, refugee background young people are eligible for six to twelve months of intensive English tuition through specialised English language schools and English language 'outpost' schools attached to mainstream schools where available. Mainstream schools are also eligible for specific funding for ESL students who have lived in Australia for less than five years.

In this research, settlement is viewed as a process which can take a lifetime rather than an outcome. This project included refugee background young people who have been living in Australia for up to and just over five years (see tables 5 to 8 for demographic details).

Table 5: Summary of student participants

Type of school	Number of participating students	Number of participating classes	Ages	Country of birth	Art form
ESL for primary aged students	12	2	10–12	Burmese	Drama
ESL for primary aged students	6	1	10–12	Iraqi Iranian Turkish	Singing
ESL for secondary aged students	8	3	12–18	Burmese Sudanese	Drama
ESL for secondary aged students	9	2	12–18	Afghani Iranian Sudanese	Drumming and music/dance
Primary school	8	2	10–12	Afghani	General music
Catholic primary school	12	1	10–12	Sudanese	Dance
Total	55	11			

Table 6: Breakdown of student participants by age and sex

Age	Number	Number of males	Number of females
10	10	6	4
11	15	4	11
12	9	4	5
13	7	6	1
14	2	1	1
15	3	1	2
16	5	3	2
17	2	1	1
18	2	2	0
Total	55	28	27

Table 7: Breakdown of student participants by country of birth

Country of birth	Number of students
Afghanistan	11
Sudan	11
Burma	9
Thailand (Burmese)	10
Iraq	5
Kenya (Sudanese)	3
Iran	2
Ivory Coast (Sudanese)	1
Turkey	1
Malaysia	1
China	1

Table 8: Breakdown of student participants by length of time in Australia

Length of time in Australia	Number of students
3 months	3
6 months	21
9 months	6
1 year	5
2 years	6
3 years	3
4 years	1
5 years	10

3.6 Data collection

Collection of case study materials included both obtrusive and unobtrusive methods of data collection such as both participant and non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews with refugee students, teaching artists, teachers, principals and parents/guardians (see Table 9).

Table 9: Data collection per case study site

For students	Photo elicitation and photo journal exercise	Conducted in class by teacher and TSR teaching artist prior to interviews
	Student demographic information	Provided by school administration
	Student interviews	6–12
For programs	Student observations	2 sessions
For teachers and teaching artists	Teacher interview	1
	Teaching artist interview	1
	Principal interview	1
For community members	Parent/guardian interview	1
	Community member interviews	Approx. 1 per cultural group
Archival	TSR teacher evaluation TSR teaching artist program plan and evaluation My School website	

3.6.1 Young people

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the young people using photo-elicitation. Photographs taken by participants are a means of facilitating the interview process and provide an opportunity for speaking about things that are important to them (Clark-Ibanez 2004). A photo or series of photos was taken on disposable or digital cameras and was accompanied by a brief narrative (based on guided themes or questions) produced by participants to contextualise their pictures. This offered a means for the young people to provide different insights into issues that were meaningful to them in project, or program-specific, contexts. Photo-elicitation, as a child-friendly research design (Capello 2005), has been recommended by past researchers, especially when working with young people from refugee backgrounds. The method can facilitate a safe environment for communication and dialogue (Ramirez & Matthews 2008), as well as helping to overcome linguistic and conceptual barriers (Boyden & Ennew 1997, as cited in Gifford, Correa-Velez & Sampson 2009).

During the consultation, while the teachers and principals had concerns about the quantitative survey, they expressed great enthusiasm for the photo-elicitation exercise. Teachers suggested that it would be a fun and innovative method to use with young people. The exercise was designed as a whole-of-class exercise rather than just for research participants from the target population, and 200 students across six schools participated in the activity.

Following a briefing for the teachers and TSR teaching artists who facilitated this activity, students were each given a disposable camera with 27 shots and asked to take photographs in response to following four prompts:

1. Something that is special to you about your school
2. Something that is special to you about TSR class
3. Something that makes you feel good about yourself
4. Something you want to learn more about.

The photos were developed and students were asked to select images for inclusion in a photo journal which also, on the request of teachers, included space for writing about the image.

Teachers provided the researchers with student journals prior to the interviews and they were then used to initiate discussion at the beginning of each interview.

The images were used in this project as a prompt for the interview rather than as a data source in their own right. It is what the young people tell us about each image and why they have taken or selected it that provides valuable data for the research.

The students were interviewed by case study researchers in each of the schools using a semi-structured interview guide. For some of the interviews a translator was present to assist with language translation, as well as to provide interpretation and cultural context. Yet, even though we implemented strategies to provide a safe context for interviewing the young people, the process was still difficult and experienced as challenging and even distressing by some participants. This happened for different reasons. The research process may have appeared strange to the younger participants, especially those in primary school who had been in the country for only a few months. The actual process of interviewing may be a confronting cultural experience. For some the questions we asked assumed a level of conceptual understanding that

was not appropriate for the young people. And, even though we anticipated some of these challenges as a result of the initial consultation process, and responded by implementing photo-elicitation as a means of building relationships, the interview and research process was inherently imbued with forms of power that influenced the process. We discussed some of these challenges and issues in research team meetings. It is important to recognise these challenges in researching across dimensions of culture, status, gender, race and language competency.

3.6.2 Programs

Structured observations of programs (using note-taking methods) were gathered by each case researcher in the form of thick descriptions of the setting. These descriptions included information about activities, people present, roles and rituals. The observational data provided case study researchers with an opportunity to see the arts program in action, which was important for understanding student responses, as well as the responses of teachers, teaching artists, and principals to the interviews. Reflective notes about observations were kept as part of the research process and discussed at team meetings.

3.6.3 TSR artists and non-TSR teachers

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with TSR artists, non-TSR teachers and principals at the different program sites. A key focus was the sustainability of TSR programs with respect to ongoing relationships, program delivery and outcomes for young people as participants. In addition a semi-structured focus group for teaching artists was held to discuss the role of the teaching artist and the pedagogical approaches used in the teaching of arts to refugee background young people.

3.6.4 Parents and community members/stakeholders

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with these participants were conducted to gauge from their perspective the impacts of TSR program participation on the young people and the role of arts in different refugee community settings.

3.6.5 Archival data

Archival data from teaching artist program plans and teacher and teaching artist evaluations were used to complement interview and observational data. Multiple data sources are valuable because they provide depth of understanding, increase the validity of findings, and are a check for trustworthiness via triangulation (Miles & Huberman 1994).

3.6.6 Pilot interviews

Prior to conducting interviews, one of the project's chief investigators piloted the interview with five students to investigate the effectiveness of questions. Following the pilot the interview schedule was reviewed and revised and the feedback from the trial was disseminated to the team.

3.6.7 Consent

Parental consent forms and plain language statements were translated into Karen, Chin, Dari and Standard Arabic and were distributed to parents and guardians. Parents or guardians consented to allow their children to participate in an interview, as well as the photo journal exercise. As the photo journal exercise was primarily for use as a tool to help researchers engage with the young

people, parents and guardians were informed that the students' images remained the students' property and would not be used in any publication.

3.6.8 Translation and transcription

All the interviews conducted for the different case studies were translated verbatim. Most were conducted with the assistance of a credentialed translator in view of the fact that the credentials and experience will affect the quality of translations produced by the translator and become especially important during qualitative coding and data analysis processes. All translators involved in this project were employed through the agency All Graduates, accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. All Graduates is also contracted by the Victorian government to work in schools and it was requested that interpreters with previous experience at the schools in this study be used wherever possible. The role of the translator or interpreter is an important component of the research process. In our project translators were also used by case study investigators to provide important cultural insights for the researchers.

3.7 Data management and analysis for case studies

In this research, the process of analysis started with the framing of research questions and selection of the sample. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this initial stage as anticipatory data reduction because the researcher is reducing the universe of inquiry. This process is reflected in the framing of our research questions on the basis of the literature review (Donelan & Jeanneret 2008) and the development of the semi-structured interview schedules.

Subsequent stages involve interim data reduction and verification. In interim data reduction, the researcher engages with the data using different strategies, including different ways of displaying the data, to unpack it and derive meanings. In this research we used a question ordered matrix to organise the data after transcription. A matrix is constructed by having the second column and subsequent columns represent individual participants. The rows are used for each question. The cells of the matrix are used to record participant responses, quotations and keywords in respect of interview questions. Columns represent the set of responses for an individual participant, and the rows include participants' responses to specific questions.

The analysis of themes can be inductive in the first instance, but it is mostly guided by the research questions. For our analysis each researcher developed a matrix and conducted the preliminary analysis guided by our research questions. In essence this means thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke 2006). In this case we were interested in the experiences of young people of refugee background in TSR programs, in particular in relation to:

- Belonging and social inclusion
- Sense of wellbeing
- Engagement with learning.

Data analysis focused on identifying what young people reported about their experiences at school and participation in the TSR program. These reports were then considered in light of the guiding research questions and concepts. Teacher, teaching artist, and principal interviews were also analysed thematically, with a specific focus on the impacts of arts participation and the lessons for working with young people with refugee backgrounds. Given the complexity of the

study related to translation and communication, this secondary data in combination with the archival and observational data, provided a means to triangulate the reports of the young people. Once the initial case study findings were reported they were reviewed by the team leaders as part of the process of verification, which focused, in part, on ensuring conceptual consistency. The cross-case analysis that has emerged from this methodology is discussed in the following section of the report.

NEW MOVES

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION



4. CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Cross-case analysis

The analysis and interpretation of the six case studies through which data were collected at each school will be presented in three sections. The first section will draw out the recurring and unique lessons reported in individual case studies of student reports on their experiences. The second section will focus on the reports of the teachers, teaching artists and principals about what they perceived as the key impacts of arts participation on young people from refugee backgrounds. Finally, the key findings are discussed in terms of the relevant research literature in the third section.

Table 10 provides an overview of the case sites used in the cross-case analysis.

Table 10: Summary of six case studies

School		TSR		Research		
School*	Brief description	Program(s)	Years in program	Cultural background of students	Class level	Interviews**
Taloon East Primary School (Tal. East PS)	70% ESL students with 5 cultural backgrounds, including high refugee population	Music	.5	Afghanistan Ivory Coast China Malaysia	2 x Year 6 classes	2 T 1 1 P
Saint Belvedere Catholic Primary School (St Belv.)	98% ESL population with largest groups Vietnamese and Sudanese	Dance and singing (TSR research focused on dance program)	2.5	Sudanese (Dinka and Nuer)	1 x Year 5 class	1 T 1 TA 1 P 1 Pa
Sarawood English Language School (SELS)	Intensive English language school***	Drama	3.5	Burma (Karen and Chin) Afghanistan Sudan	3 x secondary classes	1 T 1 TA 1 P
Haversea English Language School (HELS)	Intensive English language school	Drumming/percussion and music/dance	5.5	Afghanistan Sudan Iran	2 x secondary classes	2 T 1 TA 1 P
Telbridge English Language School (TELS)	Intensive English language school	Singing	.5	Iraq Turkey	1 x primary class	1 T 1 TA 1 P 1 Pa
Randall English Language School (RELS)	Intensive English language school	Drama	2.5	Burma (Karen)	1 x primary class	1 T 1 TA 1 Coord. 1 Pa

*All school names are pseudonyms. **T=teacher; TA=teaching artist; P=principal; Pa=parent; Coord.= coordinator.

***Students stay 6–12 months and are grouped according to age and English level.

4.2 Student voices

4.2.1 Student experiences of participation: the roles and meanings of being in TSR programs

In Figure 7 and Table 11 we have categorised some of the unique and recurring themes that capture student reports of their participation in TSR programs. TSR programs are viewed as specific settings within a broader schooling program that offers students the opportunity for active engagement in arts-based activities. This opportunity for engagement means different things for different students and have particular learning, social and cultural dimensions that are reflected in some of the different outcomes that students reported in the interview data through the case studies. We have labelled these outcomes slightly differently from the original domains with which we began in order to better reflect the data using inductive analysis. These outcomes are not mutually exclusive, but are interconnected – a product of the interplay between person and setting as indicated in Figure 7 (Rappaport 1977; Sonn & Fisher 2005; Zittoun et al. 2003).

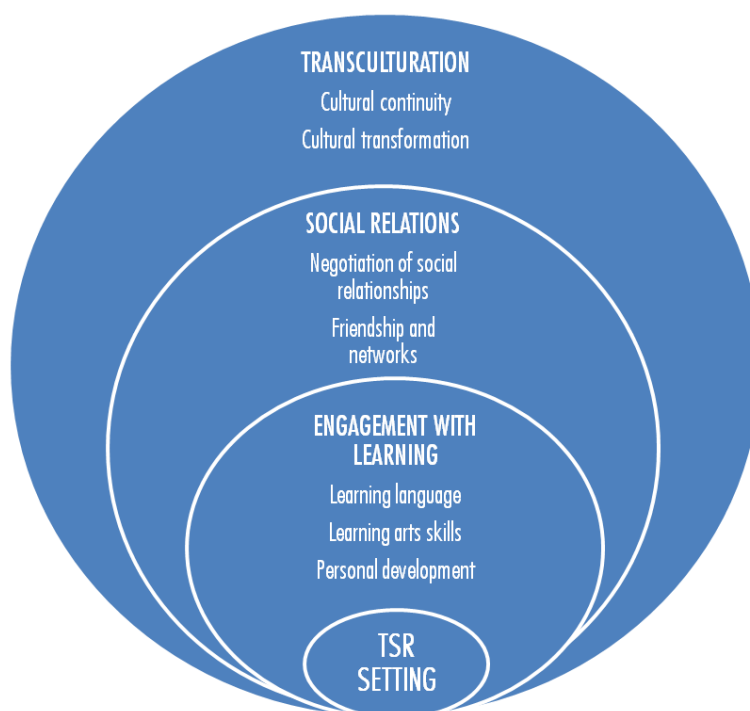


Figure 7: TSR and opportunities for personal and social development

4.2.2 Engaging in meaningful activities in a conducive classroom climate

Across the case studies students overwhelmingly provided positive responses to questions about participation in TSR programs at the different schools. These were variously reported as enjoyment, 'loving' the class, and the classes being 'fun'. The classroom environment produced by the different teaching artists and teachers and the students themselves were also reported in positive terms. The program spaces were described as being a relaxed class environment, an open learning environment, an enabling setting that is not language dependent and as a space in which mistakes could be made safely. Enjoyment and fun are key features of experiences reported by the students in TSR programs. Arts-based pedagogies are seen and experienced as a different way to engage with meaningful activities within the context of schooling.

Table 11 provides a summary of shared and unique ways in which young people reported on what participation in TSR programs meant for them.

Table 11: TSR and opportunities for personal and social development

TSR	Opportunity for personal and social development	Indicators
Engaging in meaningful activities offered by TSR	Engagement with learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate experience and competencies • Learn and be creative • Experience efficacy • Connect with arts and culture 	Learning language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Expression • Pronunciation Learning arts-based skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical instrument • Singing • Dance ('new moves') • Performance Personal development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirations • Enthusiasm and energy to engage • Future identities and roles • Confidence and self-esteem
	Social relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming friendships • Relating to teachers • Connection to school 	Negotiating social relationships, friendship and networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging • Feeling valued and supported • Feeling connected • Feeling safe
	Transculturation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills and knowledge to negotiate relationships and structures • Construct new identities • Translate existing knowledge and integrate new knowledge • Share cultural knowledge with other students and teachers 	Cultural continuity and cultural exchange <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in cultural activities • Re-negotiating cultural and social identities • Relating home culture and arts knowledge to school culture and arts learning

4.2.3 Engaging with learning

We do something and she says that's really good. You do a good job and it makes you all happy...If someone do something not really good, she tells them that's really good and now you can learn more about it and can do more things. You can do it...she'll say you can do very well. Then when you get bigger, you can do better. Now your job is really good.

TSR refugee background student

4.2.3.1 Learning language

As is evident across the different case studies, young people said that they enjoyed TSR classes and had fun. Like play, the complex ways in which fun and enjoyment impact upon these young people is not always self-evident. The fact that the activities are enjoyable suggests an emotional engagement that fosters the learning process. Students reported behavioural aspects of engagement in that they learnt new skills and acquired knowledge about the particular arts-based program they were involved in, as well as English language learning.

We talk about how we play together, telling us stories and working together.

I would say it's fun to be in drama class. You be comfortable and take your time to learn English and I know you will enjoy yourself.

Trying to do this program, it's called capoeira, they try to teach us how to do back flips but [you] have to learn how to do this thing...you have to hold your hands on the floor and try and flip over but that's very hard for me. But some of my friends know how to do it.

[It] helped me because I don't know the name of animal in English you cannot get [it] anywhere else.

4.2.3.2 Learning arts/skills

For those at the different schools who participated in music classes, learning songs, rhymes, intonation, expression and meanings of words formed part of the process of language learning. Participation in TSR classes across different arts genres provided young people with an opportunity to learn skills such as dance, drumming and singing. The acquisition of skills is part of the process of developing competencies to act and to express oneself using language, as well as non-verbal forms of expression.

[I] like it because it feels like the movement and dancing.

You have to shake your body...Like PE you have to move your body parts.

I encourage new students to attend this class. I will tell the new students that they should take [named class] because it's good for you, for your future, as well to learn the language at the same time.

When I am in The Song Room, when you are singing a song, how to get the tone out in your voice and how to sing from the inside and how to sing properly, not singing silly [that's what's important].

Want to learn dancing, maybe one day teacher dance? Yeah, one day I'm teacher.

[I] really want to get it. I also want to get other movements that Eleanor has in her. I want to learn more about jazz, like not just those other movements we perform, but different things.

4.2.3.3 Personal development

The students reported that through joint participation in activities they were able to engage in teamwork and co-construct performances and dance and drumming routines. Over a school term, this joint participation results in both award and reward – typically a performance that signals their investment in the skills and competencies that they developed. The performance, typically in front of the wider school community and sometimes at public community-based events, reflects the broader outcomes related to connections between schools and communities (see Donelan & Jeanneret 2008; Gould 2005). The opportunity to engage in the learning activities offered in this environment also contributed to students feeling valued, confident to perform, and able to engage positively with peers and teachers. In this sense, engagement with learning can be seen to contribute to aspects of personal wellbeing (Fattore, Mason & Watson 2006).

For newer arrivals, the opportunity to engage in creative arts activities that are not English language dependent offers a chance for expressing competencies through a different medium.

We need to learn and you are told that you have to learn because otherwise how will you perform on the stage.

My mum helps me with the singing. I am trying. My classroom and my mum say 'Can I help you' and I say 'Yes' and they help me sometimes...with work and singing.

Like now we're going to go for the concert in the city. We're going to sing there. And this is something we haven't done before so it's a new thing and I think it is very good.

4.2.4 Social relations

4.2.4.1 Negotiating social relationships

The processes of participation in the activities offered as part of TSR class require teamwork, which fosters a deeper set of values about working together and negotiating roles and tasks in a democratic and respectful way. The students learn to cooperate, and engaging in these activities also generates an appreciation of creativity and a sense of personal achievement. For the newer arrivals, the opportunity to engage in activities that are not English language dependent offers a chance for expressing competencies through a different medium. This opportunity is vitally important for those who are navigating their way through and in a new social and cultural environment.

Coordination with the other friends [is important] when we do the acting together

It's a drumming class, so the way we work together and the boys, we work together and we not want to make mistakes. We beat the drum. If someone makes a mistake it's difficult to continue.

4.2.4.2 Friendship and networks

Participation in TSR programs is an inherently social process. The students in the different case studies all reported that being in the program meant they were able to consolidate and expand friendships and were able to engage with a teaching artist in a different type of relationship, where fun was important. The nature of the relationships fostered within TSR classes also plays an important role in promoting a sense of connectedness and belonging, safety, and security within the classroom, as well as more broadly within the school.

[My classroom teacher] is very good singer...Every time when it is coming from the inside. She sings from the inside.

This teacher is very fun...and like, smiling...

The most important thing and special thing for me about drama is that students are sitting next to each other and work together on what their teacher said.

For many, in the first few months of arrival and adjustment to a new environment, meaningful friendships include people from a similar cultural and linguistic background. However, these networks expand over time as the young people acquire language skills and social confidence. For young people at the different schools, having access to those with a shared language and shared history is important for consensual validation of experiences in the new contexts.

4.2.5 Transculturation

Another significant theme that we identified relates to the opportunities for intercultural sharing and translating cultural knowledge into the new context. Here culture is viewed as the practices, activities, symbols and systems of meaning through which people engage in the social world (Gillespie & Zittoun 2010; Squire 2000). Immigration means transition and disruption to taken-for-granted cultural resources, and the classroom setting itself is a cultural product in which people in transition are required to negotiate these disruptions. In this conceptualisation, the TSR classroom, like other classrooms, provides a setting where young people can interact with each other and with the teachers, sharing and engaging in the processes of reconstruction and translation of symbolic resources and practices – in short, (re)negotiating both their immediate and past cultural identities (Squire 2000; Sonn 2002; Zittoun, et al. 2003).

I like to play drum at school...dancing and playing the drum. Yeah, because in our Kareni area, every time we celebrate we play, this is part of the tradition, the drum, and we dance.

I really love the drums with Mr Zachary. I like to play drums in my own country, but in my country I don't have a drum kit.

For students in the study participation in activities such as dance, drumming, and singing, which are shared forms of cultural expression, meant an opportunity for cultural continuity and identity negotiation. Through the process of mutual culture-sharing, students' existing competencies and knowledge were validated and they had the opportunity to articulate those competencies and knowledge into the new context. In our understanding this is a process of transculturation, that is, the process of mutual cultural transformation, not merely mutual cultural exchange. 'Transculturation' is a term first coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1995 [1940]) that has since been disseminated and elaborated in an effort to describe and analyse the complex, reciprocal, bi- or multi-directional flows and exchanges between cultures that share geographical, social, economic, linguistic or other kinds of proximity. Pratt (1991) used it in her discussion of intercultural 'contact zones' to examine ways in which people negotiate intercultural spaces, and she highlighted the personal nature of transculturation. Thus the arts, and in particular the sharing of cultural resources, forms a key part of students' acculturative and transformative experiences. Students were able to translate aspects of self into a new context using the arts learning they gained from participating in TSR classes. This translation is part of the ongoing dynamic of identity construction as a developmental project and as an element of transition and of settlement experiences (Sonn 2002; Zittoun et al. 2003; Hale & de Abreu 2010).

4.3 Teaching Voices

4.3.1 Teachers', teaching artists' and principals' voices on the impacts of arts programs for refugee background young people

In this section we summarise the themes identified across the six case studies from interview data with educators and educational managers about their views on the ways in which participation in arts-based programs impact upon young people from refugee backgrounds. These interviews offer a different but complementary insight into student voices about their experiences of TSR; provide a broader picture of how TSR functions at class and school levels; and, more generally, provide a nuanced context for the case studies.

To enrich and contextualise the student voices captured as part of the research, classroom teachers involved in TSR programs, TSR teaching artists and school principals (and in one case, an ESL coordinator) were interviewed across the six sites. These interviews provided useful background for school and TSR involvement. They explored issues around learning and teaching considerations with refugee student communities and specifically identified salient ways in which TSR functions at a student, school and community level. Here we focus on the challenges of engagement, strategies for engagement, and the perceived impacts of participation from the vantage points of these participants.

4.3.2 Engagement of students from refugee backgrounds

Teachers were asked about how they assist students from refugee backgrounds engage with learning in the school environment. Respondents discussed the challenges of working with students from refugee backgrounds, as well as identified strategies that are effective in engaging this group in learning, as discussed below.

Teachers were asked to identify particular challenges for engaging students from refugee backgrounds in learning. Their responses differed across the sites. While some did not see engaging this

student group as any different to others (e.g. each student has individual needs and challenges), most agreed there were many barriers to effective engagement of refugee background young people.

All case studies referred to the challenge of engaging students due to their limited English (language) skills. While they also all identified strategies for overcoming this barrier, the need to ensure that students understood instructions, could comprehend what was happening in classes and were able to effectively communicate was an important consideration for engaging students from refugee backgrounds. Understanding individual student needs was identified at one school as more difficult in the absence of language skills. Also related to the challenges posed by uneven English language skills was the education gap evident for many refugee students, who in many instances had not had the opportunity for formal education. This impacted on their level of learning and familiarity with common (Australian educational) concepts and assumptions. For others, the main issue was students' confidence to speak English and engage in the class, especially as they transitioned to mainstream school.

It is important to remember that students from refugee backgrounds are not a homogenous group but have diverse needs, challenges and capacities even where there is parity of age, time of arrival and cultural background.

The first thing I notice is language and English as a second language. There is a very big difference in how I need to instruct and the assumptions of the understandings and meanings of words and things like that. Even though we're working with the body, the way that I set up the task for them to perform, I've now brought in language, in a way. There's two levels going on...sometimes I really have to watch if they're just following and if they are understanding. (TA)

The main challenge is for the student to feel the confidence to actually have a go at speaking the language. A lot of them can...but to actually stand up in front of a group and talk out loud, or to have the confidence to put their hand up and answer a question, or just...provide information, is a real challenge, and the feedback that we get from our mainstream schools is, 'These children can't exit, they don't talk'. (Coord.)

It's a big difference in that I have to be a little bit cleverer about my repertoire, my tool bag of tricks, with these kids because I can't go into talking about acting, I can't go into talking about, 'Let's create a show or performance'. All of the stuff that we assume that we know – they don't have any of that repertoire or understanding [when they first arrive]...you actually have to work a lot harder physically. (TA)

Other challenges identified by educators related to the settlement process. There are enormous changes occurring in the lives of the refugee students at the schools in the case studies, including adapting to a new country, culture and school, a process which involves (re)negotiating their sense of identity and self. The teachers interviewed viewed their students within this context and saw them as facing many changes and challenges that in turn impact on teaching and learning. A further challenge is managing the attitudes and behaviours of mainstream students (and teachers) towards refugee students, where issues of racism and misunderstandings have emerged.

Some of the mainstream Grade 6 students come in and are working with our students.... That's been as a result [of] a bullying incident and trying to show the mainstream students that our students have a wealth of knowledge, it's just that they don't speak English. (T)

I think in some cases the factor of bringing in an abstract medium like music, which exists in the realm of the imagination, is that it creates a real level playing field for a lot of children that might be really struggling with the language as refugees; struggling to feel a sense that they can do things because they are so new with the language. They are so new with the whole routine of schooling in Australia that it can feel like there's just these huge hurdles that they have to constantly be jumping over, and music is often how they are instantly good at [something]. (TA)

However, as noted by one primary school teacher, it is important to remember that students from refugee backgrounds are not a homogenous group, but instead have diverse needs, challenges and capacities, even where there is parity of age, time of arrival and cultural background.

4.3.3 Roles and functions of arts-based programs for refugee students

Along with general strategies to engage refugee students in teaching and learning, arts-based programs and approaches have been broadly acknowledged to play an important role in school contexts with a range of young people, particularly newly arrived migrant and refugee students. The principals/coordinator, classroom teachers and teaching artists all responded to questions about the role and functions of arts-based programs in general for young people from refugee backgrounds.

All case study sites agreed that arts based programs are an effective way to assist students from refugee backgrounds with the settlement process. In particular, they identified the potential of the arts to build confidence, encourage self-expression and assist students to develop a new identity, as well as learn English and motivate students to engage more broadly in the learning process through enjoyment and fun associated with the arts.

We start with singing every morning so that the students get used to the English language and become confident in using English, and then we'll move into some maths. (Coord.)

[We have] refugee children who've probably come from backgrounds of deprivation where they've been prevented by all sorts of forces from having any experience of arts. It's a really important dimension of humanity and I think for a well-rounded human being they need to have the potential to express themselves and to be calmed by the language of music and songs and the expression of [arts]. It is very important [for them], probably more important than for kids who have an uninterrupted growth pattern. (P)

I guess the most important [thing is] enjoyment, you know. The students and the teacher, they have to be enjoying what they're doing, otherwise it's just a mundane teaching environment where no one's getting excited. Or there might be learning going on but it's not much fun and not motivating. (TA)

Alternatively, several teachers interviewed saw the arts as a respite from the stresses of learning and settlement; an opportunity for freedom and fun that was not as reliant on English as other subjects or domains of students' lives.

For a lot of kids who find learning English difficult, it's a chance where they can learn a language other than English – learn the language of music. But it's a totally different language and they don't have to focus on English. (T)

Language learning can be really tiring...Having an arts program creates a balance because although they are concentrating, it is a different type of concentrating...I think it creates something that the students can all achieve. (T)

I think the benefit [of] a program like this is it takes them away from all that background. It gives them a safe haven to be able to participate in, joining in with the music, making something. (P)

There were several components of arts programs that are particularly effective in their capacity for effective student engagement according to those interviewed. Teachers identified the potential of the arts to involve inclusive and participatory methodologies, to foster engagement based on individual student strengths and experience (including cultural background), and to promote the development of connections (with teachers, peers, community) in the processes of learning.

There is universality to music, which brings all the kids in. A lot of my songs are non-language based – they are rhythmically based, or they are just call and response chants. So the children get a great sense of interaction with that material without having to have any pre-knowledge. (T)

Music is a very good cohesive force. I find it really puts everyone on the same level, and occasionally if you're singing songs in a different language – like Kye Kye Kule is one of the first songs that I did at this school here – straight away if you've got someone who is from a non-English speaking background, it's all of a sudden, 'Hang on, we're doing a song here that nobody else understands either'. So I believe that they feel more included there straight away. I always try and include songs in another language when I'm working with people from non-English speaking backgrounds. (T)

[It is socially inclusive] because it capitalises on the prior abilities of newly arrived students, particularly those from oral cultures, who are used to expressing themselves through song and dance, and it gives them a chance to shine in a way that straight academic learning doesn't. (P)

It's good they have stories from their own country and their own experiences; and being able to put that to music as well has been really great for them. (T)

4.3.4 Perceived impacts of the TSR programs: teacher and principal voices

In the following section we discuss what teachers and principals reported as the perceived impacts of participation in TSR programs. These perceived impacts are presented in Table 12.

As noted in Table 12 and the discussion above, teachers, teaching artists, and school principals identified different impacts for the young people that flow from participation in programs offered by TSR. These outcomes can be understood at different levels of analysis, including the personal, relational, institutional, and cultural.

Table 12: Teachers, teaching artists and principals' perceptions of the impacts of arts programs for refugee background young people

Theme	Sub-theme	Taloon East PS	St Belv.	Sarawood ELS Sec.	Haversea ELS Sec.	Telbridge ELS Prim.	Randall ELS Prim.
Personal development	Emotional						
	Self-confidence and leadership	X	X		X	X	X
	Self-expression	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Self-esteem	X	X	X		X	X
	Sense of belonging/identity	X	X		X		
	Sense of fun and freedom	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Behavioural						
	Artistic skills/performance	X			X	X	
Relational	English language acquisition/comprehension	X			X		X
	Skills/creativity	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Connectedness/friendship		X	X	X	X	X
	Teamwork	X		X		X	
	Inclusion			X			X
School	Relationship development	X	X				X
	Arts-based expertise	X	X	X		X	X
	Teacher as participant (gain arts-based skills)		X	X		X	X
	Teacher as observer (know students in new ways)			X	X		X

Transculturation	Educative role within broaderschool and community	X	X			X	X
	Settlement		X		X		X
	Cultural identity/ connection to culture of origin	X	X	X	X	X	
	Cultural exchange	X	X		X	X	X

4.3.4.1 Personal

As the students reported their experiences, so the educators reported that participation contributed to the personal development of refugee background students, reflected in self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging, primary indicators of emotional engagement identified in the research literature (Donelan & Jeanneret 2008; Russell, Ainley & Frydenburg 2005). The educators also highlighted the actual skills and knowledges that students gain because of engaging in particular activities, including language skills, performance skills and technical skills such as learning to play an instrument.

That's the thing about music, it can really lift your confidence and your own abilities, and I can only hope that it does that for the refugee kids as well. I believe it does because you can see all the smiles, you can see kind of how proud they are and how much they feel like they've done a good job. (T)

Where it's at now, they fully know the song, they're singing it in pitch, they're able to keep a beat, they're able to improvise a beat, a drum beat by themselves. (T)

The program provides something new for the students. It helps in building confidence and a belief in themselves. (T)

When students, groups of students, do common activities, or not necessarily even common activities but contribute to a common course by, say, playing an instrument, singing a part or performing a part, it builds teams, and people do belong and they get a sense of joy, as well as belonging. (T)

TSR drama class is primarily offering those new to Australia a sense of place and a sense of being part of something, rather than [just] developing skills specific to the form in which [the teaching artist] works as a TA. TSR activities strive to foster in these students a sense of belonging in their new situation. (T)

Inside the Circle: Melanie*

Melanie, a twelve year old Sudanese girl from a refugee background, was in Year 6 at St Belvedere and just about to head off to secondary school. Having already had a disrupted education because of the refugee-related challenges she and her family had faced, Melanie also had some difficult relationships with her peers, especially as she was shorter and heavier than the other girls in her age group. She was sometimes teased and called names by her classmates, which did not help her self-esteem and sense of confidence.

Although Melanie, like other new arrival students from refugee backgrounds in her year, struggled with literacy, she discovered that she could both sing and move very well. In the song, choir and dance classes she was able to access through TSR programs for students in Year 6 at St Belvedere, she was able to show the other children in her class that there was something she excelled at. Other children responded more positively to Melanie when they saw that she could sing and dance really well. The dance classes in particular gave Melanie a chance to engage in self-expression and shine: 'There would be circles in which one student goes in the middle and dances, and she would always be in there', says one of Melanie's Year 6 teachers. When Melanie went to secondary school the following year (within the same independent school area), 'the first thing she did was audition for choir and got herself in'.

As her principal notes, critical to Melanie's success in integrating well in her new school environment was 'that ability to make an immediate connection with other people around something that wasn't sitting down and learning, in terms of maths or English or whatever, but about being with people and using your craft and your art, enjoying it, saying, "This is what I'm good at".'

**Melanie is a pseudonym.*

4.3.4.2 Relational

At this level of analysis, the educators all highlighted the opportunity for students to form and consolidate friendships. The students participate in creative and or artistic activities that often involve teamwork. It is through this teamwork effort that students get to negotiate different aspects of learning tasks, as well as the relationships with their peers and their teacher. A teacher at one case study site reported she believed her students had 'bec(o)me a more close-knit group' through TSR activities: 'I thought it was great for their social aspect.' Her observations included best practice strategies employed by the TA in this TSR class to assist the students to become more willing to work with any classmate, irrespective of linguistic or cultural background. TSR class, she said, 'broke down barriers'. (T)

Other teachers similarly referred to the connections that students are able to make with each other.

They really look forward to the sessions through The Song Room, to their connectedness to school, to their peers – they are sharing an activity together. (T)

It definitely helps them connect with each other and relax. If they are practising it for their concert, you know, they will get together with a friend. (TA)

I've found actually the performing arts got more kids involved more quickly than the music. The music's a little bit more difficult if you don't have – it depends on what resources you have – and if they have to wait while one group's practising one instrument and the others are sort of sitting there. [With] performing arts, I've found all the kids get involved straight away and everyone's actively participating the whole time. (Coord.)

4.3.4.3 Institutional

The educators' reports of the impacts of arts-based participation for these students also included reflections on how participation impacted upon a broader school sense of connectedness and belonging, a framework in which the school is understood as a social and cultural institution. This was typically evidenced when children were able to perform and show what they learnt over a term to the broader school and community. The educators spoke not only of the impacts for young people, but also the importance of the qualities of the teaching artist in ensuring the success of the relationship-building process with students, which is central to the program.

That's not our area so we'd have to get retrained if we're going to do music especially, or singing, I don't know if any of us are any good at any of that. Performing arts, we could do a couple of activities but there's so much more to it than just running a game or two, [the TA's] got all of this acting background and that really shows...You don't want to turn kids off it either. If we ran something and it wasn't great then their idea of that subject or that area is not going to be as good. (T)

We've invited The Song Room teacher to our graduation where he's drummed and then we repeat back, it's like a response, a drumming response, and they just loved it because they could demonstrate that, 'Look, this is what we've learned, this is what we can do and we are proud of it'. (Coord.)

[TSR is] able to engage kids in a very short space of time and I think to a large degree that the [TSR] teacher is responsible for that because he is a very good teacher and he knows what he is doing. You can have a program delivered by [any]body. It might be the same program but if the teacher can't form a relationship with kids and can't engage them and explain it properly and elaborate when needed, then the program can fall over. (P)

4.3.4.4 Transculturation

The final theme in Table 12 relates to the specific issues and challenges associated with transition and settlement dynamics. For the educators, TSR participation provided a unique way for young people to share their cultural stories with the group. This is a means of cultural exchange that provides refugee background young people with an opportunity to translate some of their cultural learning into the new context while also maintaining a sense of cultural continuity. Importantly, this exchange is reciprocal; it is about reconstructing and integrating practices into the new context as part of the process of learning new possibilities (Pratt 1991). For the student this means cultural continuity and it also means learning about other communities. For the teachers it means learning about and being responsive to the life stories of the young people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and gaining new cultural knowledge and resources that they can integrate into their own teaching and pedagogical approaches. This sensitivity is central to

culturally safe educational practice, as indicated in the literature on inclusive and socially just curriculum (Mardirosian, Belson & Lewis 2009).

At this school, obviously there's a lot of different cultural backgrounds...but if it was ever to value the importance of different cultures, here's a great example of how to do it, [that is] with that song [Kye Kye Kule – an African head-and-shoulders song] because it's shown that this other culture, they sing the same song as us. Different language, they use drums, they use all sorts of different ways to do it, but they're just the same as us. And again, I think for the refugee kids, possibly that helps to value their difference as well... keeps them feeling like they're a part of it and that they're able to do what everybody else does. (TA)

A group of Karen parents are gathered waiting to pick up their children. They are playing instruments and singing as they wait...As you can hear, they love singing outside, the Karen groups. So they've got the guitar out and the kids are singing and doing traditional dances. So music's something that they're used to learning through. So whether it's in the performing arts or music, it's a way that they can connect with their past as well. (T)

I think [that] especially because a lot of them are from Africa...they know about music and the African drums and things like that, and what the drums are made from. So it sort of made them feel that they knew more than...the other children...I mean that might have been a good thing; well, definitely a good thing for them. (T)

Sometimes, yes...we have written songs that describe their home country in English. That's been fantastic. Sometimes we get them to dance their own dances from their own cultures. (TA)

4.4 Bringing student and teacher voices together

There is discussion in the research literature about the importance of protective factors at individual, relational and community levels in facilitating the settlement process for both voluntary and involuntary migrants, including refugees. School is a primary institution in which all young people are afforded opportunities, resources and supports that are central to their psycho-social development and processes of identity construction. Gifford, Correa-Velez and Sampson (2009) reported that school is a place of significance for recently arrived refugee background young people. In the case of the young people in this study, who are in transition and are settling into a new country, there are additional demands to negotiate that are linked with their own and their families' displacement and learning a new language which need to be considered.

Sampson and Gifford (2010) explored the significance of place and place-making during the early experiences of refugee settlement. Young people identified different everyday or 'routine' places as important and significant in their settlement experience because it is within and through these places that they are able to build connections, engage in meaningful activities, negotiate identities, feel safe and secure and develop skills. Amongst the different places that young people identified, schools were described as significant. Sampson and Gifford (2010) offered further analyses of what factors in the school environment makes schools places of importance. These factors include programs and classes in which students can participate and are likely to succeed

and form connections with peers. The programs offered by TSR are examples of such factors at work in school settings. In our analysis we were able to identify the ways in which participation is meaningful for young people in the study and how this is connected with engagement with learning and school, social relations and personal and social development. However, in our articulation the settings created by TSR artists within schools may be viewed as one 'place' within the broader school and society that hold heterogeneous meanings for participants in the various classes.

4.4.1 Engagement with learning

The nature of settings, as noted by Jeanneret and Brown (2007) and several other authors (Mardirosian, Belson & Lewis 2009), is important when considering how conducive a given setting is for positive and sustainable engagement. In this study we identified several features of the arts-based classroom that stimulate participation, including the following:

1. Open and fun environment
2. Safe and inclusive
3. Multiple modes for participation (not language dependent)
4. Multiple ways to learn language
5. Student input valued
6. Inspiring and fun teachers
7. Teacher vulnerability
8. Flexibility and creativity.

For young people from refugee backgrounds, especially those in the early part of settlement and who are learning English, this is very valuable because it provides an opportunity to experience and show competencies that are not language dependent. These qualities are important for providing a safe and nurturing space within which young people can develop and explore social identities. Importantly, these features along with the required resources and institutional support form the basis for best practice in arts pedagogy.

There are different understandings of engagement (Donelan & Jeanneret 2008; Russell, Ainley & Frydenberg 2005). We have conceptualised engagement as meaningful participation in an activity and then sought to identify ways in which young people spoke about engagement in TSR. Our findings suggest that TSR programs present unique opportunities for young people to engage in learning and deeper processes related to learning and development. Fattore, Mason & Watson (2006) have argued that participating in activities (e.g. music, sports, drama) and being active in general is an important domain of young people's wellbeing. In their view, 'doing things' offers young people a context in which they 'experience and negotiate competencies and relationships and may also have "fun"'

'TSR teaching artists are very warm, friendly people. They build up good rapport with the students and the students love them, and this makes my job easier as a teacher. There are lots of laughs and children are so ready to participate and do everything that's asked of them.'

(Fattore, Mason & Watson 2006, p. 20). In our research this is also the case, since the young people participate in what can be seen as a specific type of setting in which they are able to learn, acquire skills, and develop and show competencies, an outcome others have reported (e.g. Gould, 2005). Importantly, some of these skills and competencies are also connected with the capacity to negotiate social relations within and beyond the classroom setting; for example, for the students, developing arts skills becomes a means through which to negotiate friendships and relationships, a form of social currency or 'cultural capital' that can be accumulated and (re)distributed in agentic ways (Bourdieu 1986).

4.4.2 Social relations

4.4.2.1 Teachers as role models

The teachers and teaching artists are role models for the students. They represent possible future identities and, through the process of creating conditions and resources for creative experience, the students are able to explore these different possible future identities for themselves. In our study, students commented on the teachers being 'fun' and spoke about wanting to be like their teachers. The arts teacher arguably is able to form a different relationship with the students by virtue of the types of pedagogy involved in arts teaching, and also because of the more institutionally oriented role the classroom teacher has within the school. Importantly, the teaching artists are often able to form a different kind of relationship with the students, one that is more horizontal and not as constrained by established student–teacher relations in the different schools, a factor discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, which deals with teaching artist perspectives and pedagogies. This is perhaps a function of the values and ideologies underlying arts-based pedagogy as well as the liminal relationship and status artists have within the school (see Chapter 6).

Teaching artists are often able to form a different kind of relationship with the students, one that is more horizontal and not as constrained by established student–teacher relations in different schools.

4.4.2.2 Friendships and social networks

For these young people, social relations reflected in friendships and social networks were of primary importance. These friendships can be viewed as formal and informal social and support networks and have been identified in different literature as significant indicators for resilience (Cicchetti & Garmezy 1993; Sonn & Fisher 1998). Friendships are primary relationships through which young people are able to form connections and develop a sense of belonging at school. For those in the early phase of settlement, the friendships they develop with young people from a shared cultural or linguistic background are central to the transition process. These networks provide some familiarity and an opportunity to share experiences and information about being in a new classroom, school and community. Arguably, these relationships are formed as part of the broader process of schooling and settlement, but in TSR class the young people are able to consolidate friendships, as well as learn new things about the unique skills and competencies of their friends, which points to the interplay between individual, social and cultural processes (see also Gould 2005). In some ways the arts classroom represents a setting of opportunity and of sociality (Sampson & Gifford 2010) because it is a space where young people are able to

engage in activities that are fun and that gives meaning while also allowing for the consolidation of social relations that are central to a sense of belonging and connectedness.

4.4.3 Transculturation

Past research indicates that there is a relationship between cultural elements or artefacts such as music and ethnic identity formation (e.g. Gans 1979; Stokes 1994). Stokes (1994), in particular, argues that music is 'socially meaningful' (p. 5), as it allows people in exile to recognise their identities and recognise the boundaries that 'separate them from the "other"'. As indicated in the data, the TSR program provides the opportunity for students from refugee backgrounds to develop or maintain their cultural selves through engaging and demonstrating to others their country of origin's cultural practices. This is important because these young people are negotiating developmental tasks as well as specific demands related to acculturation within a new cultural context. The cultural resources represented in symbolic forms and practices such as dance, song, and music becomes a vehicle for acculturation and related identity construction process. In this way, these modalities of engagement in the arts class actually represent a form of material support that provides a symbolic means through which the young people can integrate existing identities into the new context. This opportunity for translation and integration has been noted by several researchers including Mardirosian, Belson and Lewis (2009). McMichael (2002) wrote about how women of refugee background used religious symbols and practice to provide stability to their lives during transition and periods of instability.

Arts and arts practice have been discussed in the literature as contributing to healing and restoration. In our research, only the educators mentioned the potential of the arts in this way. They suggested that it provides a context away from the intensity of language learning, and some spoke about the arts as a medium for dealing with the implied or reported trauma of the young people's refugee experiences. The young people themselves did not talk about these types of experiences in relation to the arts. There may be different explanations for this, including the broader narratives that inform everyday understandings of refugees. The student's voices tell a different story, one about aspiration to achieve and learn, and of resilience and agency to construct meaningful lives within their new social, cultural and educational context. The commonsense understanding of 'refugees' as at-risk individuals and communities can be a double-edged sword in that, while new arrivals often do require tangible material, economic, social and other support, the construction of them as victims or in a state of continuous need can also overlook and undermine their capacities, agency and strength within communities and as individuals. George (2009) notes the need for more complex and nuanced understandings of the notion of the refugee. She states:

The commonsense understanding of 'refugees' as at risk can be a double-edged sword because while new arrivals often do require support, the construction of them as victims in a state of continuous need can overlook and undermine their strengths.

The notion of 'refugee' does not fit neatly within any particular theory, as some experiences are too deep and painful to allow full comprehension. Furthermore, critical data is often lost in translation, particularly when cultural influences come into play. Routine interventions with

refugees may not always be the most appropriate way to deal with refugee distress. Society, politics and history play an intimate role in refugees' experiences and must be incorporated into the assessment process for the development of effective interventions and tailored service provision. (George 2009, p. 385)

The data suggest that the experiences for these young people of participating in TSR programs (two-thirds of which were conducted at English language schools) were mostly positive. There were some challenges, such as bullying and racialisation in some contexts, which actually worked to undermine belonging and settlement. However, these reports were few. The settlement experiences reported in the literature also suggest that if young people are provided with the necessary social and psychological resources within a receptive environment, their settlement experiences are enhanced. It is the absence of these supports that most trenchantly places young people at risk, as recent research focusing on the post-settlement experience has argued (Porter & Haslam 2005; Sonn 2002). The literature shows that once refugee background young people move from the safe environments provided by English Language Schools into places that do not necessarily have the required resources to construct safe and inclusive places, the settlement process can be compromised (Donelan & Jeanneret 2008; O'Sullivan & Olliff 2006). It is thus a challenge to think about how to develop strategies for sustaining the positive investment in 'good settlement' experiences promoted by participation in arts-based activities at school beyond the life of direct participation in TSR for this group of students.

4.5 Community member voices

Four community members and three parents also participated in the research by undertaking an interview. These interviews aimed to understand more broadly the role of arts across different communities, and more specifically to gauge a small range of community views as to the benefits of arts based programs for young people in their communities.

Community members were from Burmese, Afghani, Iranian, Turkish and Sudanese backgrounds. Two of these interviews were conducted face to face while the other two interviews were undertaken by telephone. Interviews were difficult to organise due to the extensive involvement of many of those interviewed in their respective communities (and lack of time to participate) as well as a potential lack of understanding of the purpose of the research and their participation. Interviews with parents were limited, with several of the parents still not understanding the purpose of the interviews, despite using interpreters and explaining the purpose in many ways. Given they were newly arrived in Australia, it appeared several of the parents were still in the process of negotiating Australian systems (such as the school and education system), which may explain their confusion about the research and interview. Once the interviews with community members were arranged and conducted however, community members provided rich data regarding the role of arts in their communities.

'You are growing up in Sudan and you got your aunty, your uncle and everyone next to you, but in this country it is just you with your kid.'

Major themes identified resonated with those discussed in the student and teacher voices sections above, however community members were more articulate in identifying the important role of the arts in the context of their past experiences of oppression, its significance in passing on and keeping

alive community stories and traditions, and the potential of the arts for re-visioning a future for their communities and the sharing of their arts traditions with the mainstream Australian community.

4.5.1 Role of the arts

The arts play a fundamental role in the lives and cultures of newly arrived communities in Australia. All the community members interviewed agreed that the arts were an essential component in their community lives and played a significant role in maintaining cultural identity and re-imagining new possibilities and futures in their new country. Several community members actually expressed confusion about the need to articulate the role and benefits of the arts, suggesting its role was inherent in every part of their experience, as stated by one participant: *'It is always helpful, I don't know why these questions are asked!'*

A range of arts were identified as important within the communities represented in the interviews including music, story-telling, dancing, drums, poetry and pictures. Everyone interviewed agreed that all the arts were important, rejecting the idea that any one practices in the arts was more important than another.

4.5.1.1 Arts practices, cultural continuity and collective memory

All community members identified the important role the arts plays in remembering or sharing stories from the past. They referred to the passing on of stories, traditions and history through music, dance and song, and specifically discussed the passing on of these stories from older generations to younger people. This was particularly important given the resettlement context.

Art is part of life. It is very important...it is our life...Like a story or a song, it goes across ages; in the olden days, from word to word, from father to son, all stories are carried from generation to generation. Sometimes it's recorded in pictures, on wood, we draw pictures.

Arts, as Iranians understand it within their own cultural setting, plays a very significant role in the way that they communicate their identities, the way that they try to share their experiences with [those who are] outsiders from that community. It's become far more significant when they talk about arts within their own culture and with their own language. Usually arts within Iranians start from poetry.

Yeah, singing and stories. And we have a drum, this is our traditional [musical instrument] for Dinka. And they use the singing in the time when they are dancing, and this song or that song is telling about something happen[ing] – if there is rain, if there is dry – that's why the young people they dance, and that there is a song for the war. If there is a war there is a song. There are some special people who made that song. Yeah, this is the way we do the art.

4.5.1.2 Sense of belonging

Most community members also linked participation in the arts to a sense of belonging. This is particularly important for newly arrived communities, given they have left their home country and face a new culture, system and context. Bringing people together to be involved in arts-based activities provides a sense of 'group' or belonging, which is fundamental to successful settlement in Australia.

And here in Melbourne now we still new, even me. We know some songs, and each group knows their own songs. Then when we are in gathering, and one of the people just put this song, play it, and other people could know it's ready, and then sing the song at once. And it give us the joy.

When you participate [in the arts] it definitely gives them a sense of belonging, and also to be a part of it. I must be there because I belong there and I should do this work...

4.5.1.3 Freedom to engage in the arts and self-expression

Community members identified the impact of oppression and war on the ability of communities to participate and express themselves through arts in their home countries. They suggested that in Australia they were able to resume their practice of the arts as they were now free to express themselves and their cultural identity and experiences.

For some, it was about participating in the arts for the first time. Participants said that amongst the younger generation, for example, many had not experienced the arts as they had lived in refugee camps or situations of oppression where the arts could not be freely practiced, so involvement in the arts in Australia was a first for them. Similarly, in some communities, females were restricted in terms of their participation in cultural and artistic activities, but now in Australia were free to be involved.

Afghanistan was a very music/drama loving country before the war but this generation they come young here [and] they didn't experience this stuff. But they are really keen to get involved in it because they were always kept away from it; they didn't have an opportunity to get involved with this because of the war back in their home country.

In our country we are a minority group and very much oppressed by the majority government, so [is] our culture and our identity – I mean we can't bring [it] out. Here in Australia it is good we can bring out our songs and our music again freely.

For some it was about healing; the ability of the arts to express and understand their experiences, and share those with the broader community. Gifford and her colleagues (2009) refer to this as the restorative functions of arts.

In my own experience, when I took part in the play, it was very good experience for me. I could express myself and talk about myself and before that I was really isolated. I was sitting there in stress with anxiety attacks all of the time and when I took part in the play...It's very helpful you know, you get yourself confidence, you think you are somebody, you feel you are strong, you feel valued, people take notice of you, you are a human being, you are equal to other people.

4.5.1.4 Cohesive and re-visioning impact of the arts

All community members discussed the potential of the arts to break down barriers and to address conflict in their communities and across communities. For them, the arts held a very powerful place in resisting, re-imagining a different future and as a force for bringing diverse groups, ages and viewpoints together.

[A]rt is also about releasing energy...it is also about when you are resisting, you hold energy. If it's just conceptual, I could actually resist and [it would] become impossible...But when art is there, you could visualise certain things. So language could become more accessible.

Because people coming from war torn countries, especially children, are very vulnerable and they don't have a voice...Here sometime if you go through the system they will deal with them in the right way, but if you don't put the proper program through art or education or skill development, there is going to be a clash of culture, because they face two cultures here – they go to school, they go to their friends, then come back to their own houses because their father bring their old culture with them from the country back home...It is a struggle for them, but if you find a peaceful way for them in the middle that I think is the arts, it is a bridge.

Arts play a great role to open up and facilitate...If there are, for instance, five people who might have different philosophies and different ideologies and different beliefs, for some reasons these arts – this politics, this music, this film maker, his name – and then facilitate. It almost democratises the situation...My sense is that in that aspect, they suddenly feel that they have to be more generous to each other. So art has that sense of welcoming and not only calming people down.

4.5.2 Barriers to participation in the arts for newly arrived communities

While participants were not asked directly about barriers to participation in the arts, many identified reasons why it was difficult for newly arrived communities to get involved in arts-based activities. The perceived barriers included not knowing the Australian system and how to become involved, limited opportunities within schools, and not being able to afford formal arts activities:

When they see the activities, what's called the achievement of musical people or actors on the TV here, it is a big question mark for them, how can they get involved, how can they build up their talent...because it is important for them to understand the system here, how to get involved in such situations and what is the support for them.

We have been in this country for three years...Then later on we moved to another school, with much better facilities and they have offered some kind of these things, like piano lessons. So my daughter was immediately able to join again. Before we came here [Australia] she could play about five years in a private music school so for about a year or two years she stopped doing this because the school didn't offer it and we couldn't afford private lessons...and now with the new school she is taking the lesson with the school...of course we have to spend some money.

Two years ago we start running piano class in our small centre in Springvale. We paid the teacher and we asked the students to bring \$5 per lesson...We were only able to run it for one term and the second term we didn't have the money to run it, and all these children were always asking, still asking (and this was two years ago), 'What happened to that class? We were loving it and just started to doing something', but we didn't run it and we had to say sorry we didn't have the money...This is my direct experience of it...The arts is very popular in our culture.

4.5.3 Benefits of the arts for refugee background young people

Table 13: Main benefits of arts for young people in your community

Benefit	Illustrative quotation
Sense of belonging	<i>It's not just learning in isolation and maintaining isolation but also it's the best way to communicate my sense of belonging or not through the art as well.</i>
Settlement	<i>Everything is dependent on something...and leads you to something else...Art and music you know is the best medicine for those people who are escaping from the war and able in the peaceful manner, to ease the pain of the past and to ease the problems from their background...Study is a good thing but if you have the chance and the support to do something that you love to do that is the difference.</i>
Learning/self-confidence	<i>I[t] help young people because when they are small it's a part of playing. For example, the children are playing, and when they are dancing they are involved the singing and the dance together for the play...Even if you can't understand the language, but if there is singing they encourage that...That's why the children, they like it – to get them to be confident for themselves.</i>
Self-esteem	<i>Definitely good for young people. Even younger child, from two months old, even babies can appreciate and understand those sounds and singing, they all enjoy...That's why we have babies' songs and children's songs...We use in the playgroup, the rhymes and lullabies...</i>
Self-expression	<i>So they are singing a lot of things. I could say like also you can express your feeling with the song. Even if you are small. If you're not happy with the way that life's going, you can sing a song.</i>
Engaging with parents	<i>Again it's quite embraced by all – mostly parents – and they recognise the value of learning, also connecting the children with other kids and connecting themselves with parents because again, that arts space provides that relaxing, more inclusive environment so parents feel more comfortable to talk to each other.</i>
Connectedness	<i>Well, if they are extremely troubled, of course you observe them and just get them to sit there. The fact that if they just sit there, that's participation. They are letting things in. And they move in when they really feel like it. But if you sit and just talk to them, counselling them all the time, which could be effective, but they have to conceptualise even though they might use simple language. Whereas music doesn't need to have complex ideas. It is very complex. So if that complex body...maybe they don't need, they don't use these words but I have seen it. The body feels that this place is welcoming. This place is generous.</i>

4.5.4 Suggestions for the future

Those community members interviewed had a rich understanding and array of experiences in their own community. They were all actively involved in the settlement context, and were committed to ensuring their communities had access to arts-based opportunities. They were particularly passionate about young people having opportunities to participate in arts, for skill development and self-expression, and as part of their learning experience in Australia. As such, these community members could be considered well placed to identify opportunities for enhancing the engagement of newly arrived communities (especially young people) in the arts.

I guess for the Dinka children who have been living now in Australia and in other countries before Australia, they really, really didn't have much to know about Dinka culture, and they missed out a lot, the language and all culture, you know? Including arts, and singing, and dancing, all this stuff. And we don't know what to do with them. We sometimes try to fill the gap with Dinka, but it's hard...Some musicians from Sudanese background who are Dinka, we invited them to come to Australia to do some performance – at least kids can know about the path.

When you have new and emerging communities it will be encouraging to see the emerging communities' music. For example drums, you could take it into schools and I think this would be really good.

When you can take my music and my art, something that I did, if you can accept it, it makes us feel very good...appreciate[d] and [we] really feel the belonging of the group. And also it will show more inclusiveness.

NEW MOVES

THE SONG ROOM
TEACHING
ARTIST
PEDAGOGIES



5. TSR TEACHING ARTIST PEDAGOGIES

5.1 Background and context

This section of the report focuses on the experiences and insights of TSR teaching artists in the six case studies informing this study. Whatever the background of the children and young people with whom they work, TSR teaching artists are the backbone of program delivery for TSR. In consultation with TSR's central educational coordination team, teaching artists are responsible for designing, delivering and evaluating the specific arts-based curriculum they bring to each of the schools they work in, whether this is music, dance, singing, drumming or another art form. They are also responsible for working proactively within the more general goals, structures and objectives of each school, which includes not only delivering and assessing the effectiveness of student-focused arts programs but also developing and sustaining close working relationships with classroom teachers in order to foster enhanced dialogue, cooperation and knowledge transfer around the effectiveness of arts-based learning modes for students as part of a school's general educational curriculum.

Yet while the existing research literature documents a range of experiences, perceptions, benefits and outcomes around arts-based learning and teaching from the point of view of students and classroom teachers (see the literature review in Chapter 2 above, particularly the studies by Mackey & Ullman 2006 and the 2006 Ofsted report), less is known about the experience and perceptions of the arts practitioners themselves who serve as teaching artists in designing, delivering and evaluating the effectiveness of creative arts-based pedagogies and programs in schools in programs like TSR. As a result, this section of the report offers some new and valuable insights into the experience of teaching artists who participated in our study, and enriches our understanding of some of the data and insights provided by students, teachers and principals on the impact and effectiveness of TSR programs and models of practice in working with refugee background students.

5.2 Inside/outside: the arts, learning and teaching artists in schools

As the discussion above highlights, arts-based pedagogies are increasingly viewed by educators and policy makers as effective in promoting both extended and new forms of learning for student populations that may be disadvantaged in relation to access to the arts and also to thriving in conventional educational settings (Waldorf 2002; Bryce et al. 2004; Krensky 2001; Hunter 2005). There is significant research both internationally and in Australia on the benefits of integrating teaching artists and artist-led curriculum into general educational programs at primary and secondary school levels (Remmer 1996; Waldorf 2002; Galton 2008; Thiele & Marsden 2003). These benefits have been identified as young people being offered the opportunity to take meaningful risks in a safe and supportive environment (Brice Heath & Roach 1999; Bryce et al. 2004); the chance to develop more 'horizontal', enabling relationships with adults outside the conventional authority structures of teacher–student relationships (Galton 2008; Thiele & Marsden 2003); and the ability to learn more on a first-hand basis about professional arts domains, skills and practices from practising artists, rather than gaining only second-order knowledge about arts genres, histories and possibilities (Gilmore & Clark 2009; Seltzer & Bentley 1999).

Yet despite the clear role and impact of 'present', actively engaged and embodied teaching

artists in schools that is a hallmark of TSR program development and delivery, the position of teaching artists within schools is more liminal – straddling the boundaries between the world of the arts and the world of schooling and education – than we realised when we began this study. One of the most interesting insights yielded by our research suggests that while teaching artists can at times be intricately involved in rich and sustainable working relationships with students, classroom teachers and principals, they are in a deeper sense both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in the cultural and institutional context of the school environment, coming in to offer specific programs throughout a given term for a particular student cohort, rather than maintaining an ongoing role within a school over a period of time as an employee or continuing member of the institution. They value their ability to straddle the worlds of professional arts practice and professional approaches to arts-based pedagogy and learning. They also relish what they see as their freedom from some of the constraints by which they perceive standard classroom teachers to be governed. Teaching artists in this study thus see themselves as being ‘with’ the school but not ‘of’ the school in important ways. The liminality of TSR teaching artists in relation to both institutional- and student-centred contexts brings with it a combination of strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of teaching artists themselves, as will be discussed further below.

Teaching artists are in a deeper sense both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in the cultural and institutional context of the school environment.

5.2.1 The emergence of arts-based teaching and learning models

Arts-based pedagogy is an emergent educational paradigm that uses the creative arts as a foundation for engaging students educationally in discovering, understanding and intervening in both their own (knowledge) development and that of the world around them. Discovery-oriented, question-based and process- rather than outcome-focused, in many ways arts-based pedagogies are the educational application of knowledge and insights drawn from arts-based educational and social inquiry which, as Leavy (2009) notes, is ‘especially attentive to processes. The capability of the arts to capture process mirrors the unfolding nature of social life, and thus there is a congruence between subject matter and method’ (p. 12).

Karen Rodriguez (2006) posits that arts-based educational models:

use the arts as conceptual tools and modes of inquiry to understand the self, the other, and social realities. These approaches are largely grounded in the work of educators such as Barone, Greene and Eisner, among others, and tend to be used in teacher-training and in the study of classroom cultures. Eisner (2004) even goes so far as to argue that we should prepare students as if they are artists, by which we mean individuals who have developed the ideas, the sensibilities, the skills and the imagination to create work that is well proportioned, skilfully executed, and imaginative, regardless of the domain in which an individual works. (<http://www.iienetwork.org/page/90049>)

However, for education theorists such as Elliot Eisner, arts-based pedagogies represent more than an ‘as-if’ proposition: they offer what he sees as a fundamentally different approach to the current ‘tidy right-angled boxes we employ in our schools in the name of school improvement’ (Eisner 2003, p. 382), a conceptual and indeed ideological framework that works around and against

the 'highly rationalized standardized procedures' (Eisner 2003, p. 382) on which conventional Western approaches to learning and learning outcomes are based. In a highly influential article, Eisner (2004) advocates for an arts-based model of education that profoundly alters the culture of how we teach and learn. He calls for a new arts-based educational paradigm that involves:

a culture of schooling in which more importance is placed on exploration than on discovery, more value is assigned to surprise than to control, more attention is devoted to what is distinctive than to what is standard, more interest is related to what is metaphorical than to what is literal. It is an educational culture that has a greater focus on becoming than on being, places more value on the imaginative than on the factual, assigns greater priority to valuing than to measuring, and regards the quality of the journey as more educationally significant than the speed at which the destination is reached. I am talking about a new vision of what education might become and what schools are for. (Eisner 2004, p. 10)

Significantly, in the context of working with culturally diverse young people from refugee backgrounds, what some American education researchers call arts-based teaching is also seen as an educational model that engages students in 'authentic learning through delivering classroom practices that develop student capacity to function within our culture while incorporating elements of their own culture' (Mardirosian, Belson & Lewis 2009, p. 7).

Mardirosian, Belson and Lewis (2009, p. 8) note that other researchers have described an 'arts-rich [schooling] environment as a "third space" where young people and adults can create in an environment free of barriers imposed by themselves or by others' (Stevenson & Deasy 2005). This aligns well with other research on arts-based pedagogy that emphasises the ways in which arts-based teaching models can reach young people who struggle with traditional learning environments, including children in socio-economically disadvantaged areas and communities (Waldorf 2002, p. 14; Bryce et al. 2004; Krensky 2001). Additional research from the United States draws attention to the ways in which arts-based teaching and study promote social inclusion because they are themselves based on inclusive forms of creativity and knowledge formation and can have broader effects beyond students and schools: 'An arts-rich learning environment can have far-reaching effects that extend to the entire school and surrounding community' (Rupert 2006, p. 15).

An arts-rich learning environment can have far-reaching effects that extend to the entire school and surrounding community.

5.2.2 The teaching artist/school relationship

One of the demonstrated strengths of linking teaching artists with schools focuses on the effectiveness of the partnership model implemented between teaching artists, classroom teachers and school principals, a model already successfully used by TSR. As the literature suggests, embedding teaching artists within schools and integrating transferable arts-based pedagogy within the curriculum more broadly can help create new models of teacher–student interaction that meaningfully connect the classroom experience of students with their lived experience beyond the school walls (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). The success of this approach relies strongly on an understanding that 'close collaboration between the artist and the school is fundamental to sound partnership planning and effective communication' (Orfali 2004, p. 4). Using a

partnership model to inform and drive the relationship between individual teaching artists and schools creates a space in which mutual learning between teaching artists, teachers and school leaders can occur and grow (Orfali 2004, p. 4).

5.2.3 Arts-based pedagogies and enhanced academic achievement

Some of the key outcomes of earlier research evaluating the relationship between student participation in the arts at school and academic success have demonstrated powerful links between arts-based pedagogies and overall enhancement of learning experience and outcomes. In addition to the large-scale statistical correlations between arts-based project participation and academic success for primary and secondary school students documented through the UK's Creative Partnerships program (Eames et al. 2006), previous international studies in the United States and Canada have showed that school students from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds who participated in arts-related subjects within their curriculum performed more strongly in non-arts-based subjects, such as English, mathematics, reading and history (Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanaga 1999; Upitis et al. 2001); demonstrate the required levels of creative, cognitive and personal competencies needed for academic achievement (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles 1999); and, for some Indigenous students in Australia, have shown higher levels of achievement in mathematics when they studied music as part of the curriculum (Hunter 2005, p. 181).

5.2.4 Arts-based pedagogies and personal/social outcomes for students

Beyond formal academic achievement, the involvement of teaching artists and arts-based pedagogies in school curricula has been shown to promote a range of other positive developmental and adjustment outcomes for students, including for those young people deemed 'at risk' of being disconnected from or alienated by schools and other educational, social and community institutions and frameworks (Donelan & O'Brien 2008; see also the literature review in Chapter 2 above). The outcomes for students who participate in school and community-based arts programs can include the development or further strengthening of attributes such as a sense of leadership and agency (Harris 2009); enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem (Buys & Miller 2009; Pope & Doyle 2006; Thiele & Marsden 2003); skills that are transferable to employment, further study and civic aspirations (Brice Heath & Roach 1999); a greater sense of freedom and potential to explore opportunities for personal and creative development (Krensky 2001); and the acquisition of skills vital for working in group contexts such as the ability to collaborate, to exercise self- and group discipline, and to function as part of a team (Brice Heath & Roach 1999; Gilmore & Clark 2009).

5.2.5 Strengthening arts-based learning in educational settings

Overall, the literature demonstrates that the role of teaching artists and arts-based pedagogies in schools requires not just the expertise, commitment and goodwill of teaching artists, students and educational professionals for arts-based pedagogies to yield the positive outcomes described above. It is also necessary that educational institutions and settings themselves create the conditions in which arts-based learning can thrive successfully. As we saw earlier, these conditions have been identified by some researchers as involving trust, freedom of action, variation of contexts, the right balance between skills and challenges, interactive exchange of knowledge and ideas and real-world outcomes (Seltzer & Bentley 1999). In addition, a safe

learning environment that encourages students, teachers and schools to take meaningful risks (Bryce et al. 2004; Brice Heath & Roach 1999), to engage with each other as co-learners (Galton 2008; Bryce et al. 2004) and to embrace systemic school change as a result of the lessons gained from arts-education partnerships (Jones & Thomson 2007; DEECD 2009) are also important in creating a healthy and sustainable environment in which the positive outcomes of arts-based learning and whole-of-school engagement with the arts and artists can flourish.

It is also necessary that educational institutions and settings themselves create the conditions in which arts-based learning can thrive successfully.

Taking Risks: Alice and Eleanor*

Eleanor: 'One particular girl, Alice, felt to me like she was hiding, hiding her body, her physical language – she was just hiding. I also wondered if she just lacked enthusiasm initially. It kind of seemed like she wasn't that interested. Then, through the different creative tasks, I could see, depending on the group she was involved with, that the dynamic of a group would allow her to feel more confident at certain moments. And so she started to express herself a little bit more but every time they came to perform for each other, she would disappear again. So it showed me that it was more to do with lack of confidence than with lack of enthusiasm. Then it got to the point where we were not long before going to perform at BMW Edge in Federation Square, a few weeks before, and she was in the front line and I could see she kind of enjoyed being in the front and at the same time was very scared. Then I heard her say, 'I don't want to go, I don't want to do this'. I hadn't had a really direct moment with her because I knew it would draw attention to her, but at that point I just went up to her and I said to her, 'You're amazing, you can do this, it's going to be great'. I watched her and there was something in her that somehow...that combination of her feeling ready and that affirmation from outside, 'I know you can do this', and she just stepped up and I could see her body [was] changing, her physicality, in terms of that kind of 'I'm confident body' was starting to emerge. But I just saw her in class today and in one of the creative tasks she led the whole task. She led it.

**Both student and teaching artist names are pseudonyms.*

5.2.6 Arts-based pedagogies and young people from refugee backgrounds

There is comparatively little research specifically on the outcomes and impacts of arts-based pedagogies for refugee background children and youth (Gifford, Correa-Velez & Sampson 2009). The current study seeks to contribute new data on and analysis of how effective arts-based approaches may be in engaging refugee background young people with learning, as well as the impact of arts-based learning approaches for refugee background young people's sense of belonging and sense of personal wellbeing. Literature dealing with the ways in which the arts can promote and strengthen protective factors for at-risk young people in relation to sense of belonging, positive school climate and opportunities for success and recognition of achievement

(Mitchell 2007) is relevant to the experience of early-settlement phase refugee background young people, particularly the many who have experienced disrupted schooling, trauma and displacement in the course of their journey to a final country of destination. As Cassity and Gow (2006, p. 48) note in a study of refugee background students and schooling in western Sydney, a sense of community and of belonging in and to a school is vital for positive learning outcomes.

5.3 Teaching artist program planning and evaluation for working with refugee background young people

This section summarises the program planning and evaluation processes used by teaching artists in conjunction with TSR and the schools in which they are based. After discussion with the TSR programs team and the school, teaching artists create an individual program plan which is designed with the particular school's specific needs in mind, including the specific needs of student cohorts such as those from refugee backgrounds.

TSR program planning is a four-stage process that involves:

1. Planning day for principal, teachers and teaching artist

The first day of the program is a non-teaching day for The Song Room teaching artist. The teaching artist meets with the school principal and as many teachers as possible to gain information about the school and the students the teaching artist will be working with prior to their first session.

2. Establishing objectives

In consultation with the classroom teacher/s, the teaching artist develops the objectives for the program and sets out the expected outcomes of the project, including:

- a) Program objectives: focusing on student, teacher and teaching artist development of skills, knowledge and experience.
- b) Music/arts outcomes: including performances, participation, enjoyment and learning.
- c) Broader student outcomes: incorporating social, broader learning outcomes and personal development.
- d) Capacity building and sustainability objectives: including resources, skills and community development.

3. Program delivery

The Song Room teaching artist works closely with relevant classroom teachers to deliver a weekly program in the classroom over 20 weeks.

4. Review and evaluation

At the conclusion of each six month workshop program the Teaching Artist conducts a formal evaluation of the program against the objectives set in the Program Plan. The classroom Teachers are also requested to conduct an independent evaluation of the program.

Source: TSR Members Website (<http://www.songroom.org.au/school/welcome-members>)

5.3.1 TSR Program objectives across the six case-study sites in Semester 1, 2010

We provide here a summary of the six program plans and evaluations conducted by participating teaching artists at each of the case study sites in the first half of 2010, the same period during which we conducted our data collection and observations. Teaching artists working in the six school programs included here were aware when developing their program plans that many of the students they would be teaching came from refugee backgrounds, often with disrupted school learning and little if any English, particularly for those working in English language school programs.

When comparing the goals identified by teaching artists for their arts programs with refugee background young people in tandem with what young people, teachers and principals said about the program outcomes for this group of students across the six case study sites, we found that all of the goals listed by teaching artists were perceived by students, teachers and principals to have been achieved.

Four of the six teaching artists identified the development of English speaking skills and literacy as one of the primary objectives for the program, as well as:

- Fostering teamwork
- Increasing confidence
- Increasing student participation
- Developing student cultural appreciation
- Creating joy in students
- Developing skills for their new lives in Australia.

Key outcomes identified by teaching artists when evaluating their programs involving refugee background young people included:

- Improved English language skills
- Increased confidence in their musical and physical movement abilities
- Teamworking skills
- Sense of pride and achievement
- Sense of play and enjoyment
- Sense of trust and safety
- Sense of confidence and ownership
- Sense of self-worth and dignity
- Happiness and joy.

Music/arts outcomes

Teaching artists identified a range of music/arts outcomes related to specific activities for achieving these outcomes. Below is a sample of outcomes and activities from the teaching artists' program plans.

Table 14: Music/arts outcomes

Music/arts outcome	Activity
Learns songs from a variety of cultures	Begin with Kye Kye Kule, an African song requiring rhythmic improvisation, then move to other songs
Uses imagination to create movement for dance	Teach students the song 'Copy Me': students stand in a circle and take turns in the middle performing their own movement while the other students sing and copy the movement
Writes original song	Learn songs and for older grades analyse song elements; do rhyming activities, call and response, song story-making games
Cultural fusions	Teach/facilitate sharing of multicultural dances
Creates a dance in collaboration with class	Working with the theme of community, explore different aspects of this and create a contemporary dance piece drawing on the hip hop skills that are evident in the students
Confidence to speak and perform in front of class	Name games, 'Simon Says', reading stories, scene performances, alphabet story

Source: The Song Room, 2010.

These outcomes and activities reflect the teaching artists' broader program objectives, which were to foster teamwork, encourage cultural appreciation and increase student confidence and participation in class. Teaching artists used arts-based activities to enable students to work together as a team, to explore and share other cultures, to create their own work drawing on their individual skills and experience, and develop their confidence to perform with and in front of their peers.

Broader student outcomes

Teaching artists were also asked to consider the broader outcomes for the students participating in their programs, including social, personal development and learning outcomes. Below is a sample of outcomes and activities from the six teaching artist program plans in Semester 1, 2010.

Table 15: Social, personal and learning outcomes

Social outcomes	Activity
Teamwork; respect for others' opinions and others' cultures; increased class participation and engaging positively with activities	Use mainly physical games to address these social outcomes. All these games require teamwork, concentration, respect, participation and leadership
	Encourage students to work as a team to achieve group dynamics of loud and soft and starting and stopping playing together
	Listen to others' ideas for songs and take turns in creating dance steps

The Song Room teaching artist pedagogies

	<p>Share cultural dances and describe the differences and similarities</p> <p>Learn call and response songs and rhythmic patterns, in which many students have the opportunity to be the leader</p> <p>Provide music tasks that require strong teamwork, rotating leadership and group devised work</p>
Personal outcomes	Activity
Increased self-esteem; increased confidence; increased self-awareness; increased self-expression; willingness to help others and ability to follow instructions	<p>Devise songs expressing personal experiences</p> <p>Learn how to do group choreography and group-devised choreography</p> <p>Allow students to express their own individual abilities with singing and playing in a friendly and rewarding atmosphere</p> <p>Encourage positive/constructive feedback from peer-to-peer</p> <p>Ask students if they can teach the class a traditional song from their country</p> <p>Ask students to set personal goals for themselves and assist them in observing their own personal creative changes throughout the term</p> <p>Story-telling and scene constructions to address personal development outcomes: addressing self-expression, confidence, group work and following instructions</p>
Learning outcomes	Activity
Goal setting; articulating words; problem solving; ability to concentrate and stay focused on tasks; learning about curriculum themes; learning about different cultures and generating new or creative ideas	<p>Learn a body of musical work that focuses on literacy</p> <p>Focus on diction when singing songs as a way to convey meaning</p> <p>Connect with the current curriculum theme of myself/my family/my story being taught by teachers via group or individually devised song material</p> <p>Invite students to participate in discussions about the origins of music, e.g. rap music</p> <p>Create movement from word stimulus, e.g. create movements that are spikey, twisted, narrow, pointed, stretched, etc.</p> <p>Develop drama scenes which include personal stories, imaginative fantasy and abstract concepts that push the students and make them work in a more lateral way</p>

Source: The Song Room, 2010.

To achieve broader student outcomes, teaching artists said they used a range of arts-based activity to encourage teamwork, such as singing together to achieve group dynamics, and devising and creating work together. These activities were designed to enable students to take different roles in the team such as leader or follower, speaker or listener. Through creating work (songs, dance and scenes) together, students shared their experiences, their individual skills, their ideas and their cultures. The activities were also aimed at connecting to broader curriculum areas such as communication and literacy.

Capacity building and sustainability objectives

When developing their program plans, teaching artists are asked to consider capacity building and sustainability and to develop strategies to address these key areas of TSR philosophy and practice. These six teaching artists included the following capacity building and sustainability strategies in their program plans.

Table 16: Capacity building and sustainability outcomes

Capacity building and sustainability	Activity
Resources; skills development and sustainability of program	<i>Given that both teachers are musical, and one is a dancer, I hope to harness these abilities in session time and performance, leaving a legacy of activities and musical material that can be sustained there.</i>
	<i>I will support and mentor any staff who show an active interest in this.</i>
	<i>The teachers want to access the members' site.</i>
	<i>The school would benefit from receiving a CD library.</i>
	<i>It would be beneficial for the school to have a new portable CD sound system.</i>
	<i>Supply classroom teachers with music material such as lyrics and music.</i>
	<i>PD for teaching resources, online songroom demonstration, singing techniques, repertoire access.</i>

Source: The Song Room, 2010.

5.4 TSR teaching artist voices: cross-case and focus group analysis

In order to learn more about the experiences and perceptions of TSR teaching artists who work with refugee background young people in the six case-study schools, data were collected through several methods: individual interviews, a focus group, and a review of existing TSR teaching artist program plans and evaluations for then-current arts programs. The TSR teaching artist program plans and evaluations are summarised in the preceding section, and the analysis of data from interviews and focus groups is presented below.

Table 17: Demographic profile of TSR teaching artists in study

Teaching artist (pseudonyms)	Age	Gender	Artistic genre	Years as professional artist	Years with TSR
William	35	F	Drama	15	1.5
Eleanor	38	F	Movement	18	3
Robbie	32	M	Music/singing	10	2
Callie	50+	F	Music/singing	30	3
Zachary	35	M	Music/singing/percussion	15	5
Suzanne	30	F	Music/dance/drama	12	3

Source: The Song Room, 2010.

5.4.1 Demographic profile of TSR teaching artists

The table below summarises the demographic profile of the four female and two male TSR teaching artists involved in the study, all of whom have been with TSR for two or more years and have been professional arts practitioners for between 10 and 30 years. All but one of the artists are in their thirties.

Six teaching artists were interviewed individually across each of the case study sites. During one-to-one interviews, teaching artists were asked for some general information about their involvement with the TSR program; their understanding of the main function of arts programs in schools, and for refugee background young people in particular; their key assumptions about arts teaching and curriculum design; their prior and present experience of working with refugee background students, including differences, challenges and unique aspects of this compared to working with non-refugee background young people; their perception of the impacts of TSR programs for refugee background young people; their thoughts around successfully engaging refugee background young people through the arts; and what they see as the main benefits of arts-based education for this particular cohort of students. These interviews all took place at the school in which the teaching artist was based during the research project, and most interviews ran for about an hour.

For the focus group, five of the six relevant teaching artists participated. They were asked about what they considered to be successful TSR projects they had run in which young people from refugee backgrounds participated in primary and secondary school settings. The questions in the focus group centred on three key themes:

1. Teaching artists' perceptions of how well their arts-based programs help young refugee background students experience a sense of belonging, engagement with learning and a sense of personal wellbeing
2. Teaching artists' perceptions of the impact of their involvement and presence in schools on curriculum design, teaching methodologies, professional development for classroom teachers and general school ethos
3. Teaching artists' perceptions of the ongoing sustainability and efficacy of TSR programs in schools with respect to future planning and outcomes.

5.5 Teaching artist perspectives on the impacts of arts-based learning for refugee background young people

Across the six teaching artist interviews and focus group discussion, a number of common themes were developed by these participants, suggesting that some limited generalisations may be made about the experience and perspectives of TSR teaching artists in relation to working with refugee background young people using arts-based pedagogies. The analysis and discussion of data provided by TSR teaching artists has been organised around the three major domains of the current study: sense of personal wellbeing; sense of belonging; and engagement with learning. In some cases, selected comments from teachers and principals have also been included where these reinforce or amplify the perceptions and points of teaching artists themselves.

5.5.1 Sense of wellbeing

5.5.1.1 Sense of wellbeing and safe learning spaces

One of the most common themes to emerge during the cross-case analysis of teaching artist interviews was the importance of creating and maintaining safe learning environments for refugee background young people. Four out of six teaching artists perceived the creation of 'safe spaces' as a key element for refugee background students' sense of wellbeing, a perception confirmed by students and teachers in the study (see also Cross-case analysis of student and educator voices above) and emphasised in the research literature (Seltzer & Bentley 1999; Hunter 2005). 'Safety' was used by teaching artists in several different ways throughout the interviews and focus group, suggesting some of the different conceptual layers and nuances that 'safety' and 'safe learning spaces' have for arts-based educators.

Safety through sense of belonging and inclusion

For several of the teaching artists, the concept of 'safety' and 'safe learning spaces' involved the need to create a sense of inclusiveness and belonging for refugee background students, spaces in which young people feel engaged, trusting, able to take learning risks and are able to feel that their interpersonal relationships with each other and with school staff (including teaching artists) are safe as well.

Teaching artists related sense of safety and wellbeing for refugee background young people in particular to not feeling different from other kids in the group, and the concept of a 'level playing field' was seen as highly significant in this regard. As one teaching artist said, 'So [with] the idea of creating the space, I have the intention and the knowledge that everyone is capable of doing something. It's very welcoming, it's not too threatening...[the students are able to say] "Yeah, I'm able to make mistakes".' Other teaching artists commented:

[It's important to] create a level playing field for a lot of children who might really be struggling with language as refugees; struggling to feel a sense that they can do things because they are so new with the language, they are so new with the whole routine of schooling in Australia.

Music is a very good cohesive force. I find it puts everyone on the same level...straight away if you've got someone who is of a non-English speaking background, it's all of a sudden 'Hang on, we're doing a song here that nobody else understands either'.

I don't want these people to feel like they're different. So in that respect I don't want to single them out either. I want everybody to feel on the same level.

Cultural safety

Safe spaces were also associated by teaching artists with cultural safety: the ability for young people to feel that their own cultural backgrounds, artistic traditions and heritage are valued, as well as feeling comfortable with learning about new or less familiar cultural traditions from teaching artists and their peers:

It's important to find out about them and particular things that are important culturally so that the initial engagement is not what I have to hand over to them. There's an exchange that can happen, that sense that they are sharing something...Some of the [named ethnic background] kids really...needed me to know their background and they needed me to learn it. And I knew nothing about that. So that is a really wonderful way to start the program by seeing what they can do. The challenge [is then] to inspire them beyond what it is that they know.

Adaptive safety

In addition, the learning spaces created through TSR programs were seen as offering a safe place in which to deal with the adaptive demands of transition into a new and unfamiliar environment that can be overshadowed at times by past traumas and dislocations common to refugee experiences.

It must be incredibly exhausting, arriving into a new environment and having English as your second language...

I just find that release for them first and foremost [through physical movement], and then we get into exploration, and then exploration inserts itself through various tasks, and it sets them on a different course in their day.

[The TSR class] gives them a safe haven to be able to participate in, joining in with the music, making something.

Physical safety

Safe learning spaces were not strongly associated by teaching artists with the physical safety of school environments or infrastructure, but one dance-focused teaching artist did reflect on the importance of children feeling physically safe with each other in terms of physical conflict and injury.

At first they found it difficult to follow instructions, to even concentrate long enough for us to get anywhere. Because they're moving, the limbs are flying and they might speak and say something to each other and then someone throws a punch at someone and we've lost the class. [But] what I've seen happen [over the course of running the TSR program] is their connection and their commitment to themselves and their focus.

This teaching artist's comments were reinforced by the principal at her school, who noted that physically oriented arts classes such as dance can actually create safer spaces within the school environment generally by providing a constructive way to use excess physical energy.

Once kids are five and they are coming to school we institutionalise them and we make them sit and do all these things, yet here we've got all these kids with so much energy. We all see dance class as an outlet for that.

One of the parents interviewed for the study also saw the participation of children in her community in arts classes as promoting safety and wellbeing because it helped them stay 'out of trouble' and off the streets.

5.5.1.2 Sense of wellbeing and settlement processes

Teaching artists, as well as principals and teachers in the study, emphasised their perception of the positive benefits of arts-based teaching and learning in relation to how well students from refugee backgrounds coped with the demands of the settlement process, particularly in the early stages of adjusting to life in a new country. The settlement experience for young refugee background people can pose significant adjustment-based personal, social and learning challenges both for the young people themselves and for the institutions and professionals they encounter on a regular basis, particularly highly structured settings like schools.

Respite from the demands of early phase settlement and adjustment

As for the educators in the cross-case analysis above, the use of arts-based curriculum was stressed by teaching artists as an important way of facilitating a sense of respite from the difficulties of coping with a new environment. TSR classes were perceived as providing a creative outlet through which to explore both positive and negative experiences of settling into a new country, language and community, and also to contribute to helping refugee background students acquire a sturdier sense of self through being able to explore identities and relationships through art forms such as dance and music. In the words of one teaching artist which encapsulated the observations in the focus groups of several of his colleagues.

Some of these students speak no English. They have come in from incredibly compromised [experiences] in terms of social and cultural backgrounds. They've just arrived, often through circumstances that are quite traumatic. They have six months to integrate into a society that's not theirs, and then once they've done that, they're pushed into another school. The adaptation that they have to do is huge. My focus [as a teaching artist] is really about trying to [bring] out their sense of self, their sense of play, their sense of confidence, their sense of who they are and how they can then [use] this in situations where they don't have that absolute support structure.

These points were echoed by one of the school principals.

The issues around settlement are massive. But I think The Song Room gives them an in. I think when they first come it's language, it's trying to work out, 'I'm in a new place, I've got new food, my parents are dealing with me in a different way, I've got to go to this new school'. ... I think The Song Room gives our refugee background kids respite. It is a lifting off of a burden for a time, 'I can be in there and I can just be, and I don't have to try and be anything else, I can use my talents or whatever I've got and just enjoy.'

'I think The Song Room gives our refugee background kids respite. It is the lifting off of a burden for a time: "I can be in the TSR classroom and I can just be."'

5.5.1.3 Transculturation, respect and learning

Culturally validating approaches to arts-based teaching

Many of the teaching artists spoke of the importance of developing cross-cultural and culturally inclusive approaches to their arts teaching when working with refugee background young people. This was perceived as critically important to fostering a sense of wellbeing and trust (Seltzer & Bentley 1999) amongst refugee background students in their TSR classes. For some teaching artists this was a new experience that initially stretched their capacities but was for the most part viewed positively because it challenged and inspired them to think about novel approaches and techniques for designing and teaching their arts classes.

It's a big difference in that I have to be a little bit cleverer about my repertoire, my tool bag of tricks, with these kids because...all of the stuff we assume that we know – they don't have any of that repertoire or understanding [when they first arrive in Australia]...you actually have to work a lot harder...

You might have to modify the way you speak, the language that you use, and just constantly check that we're all on the same level with each other, that everyone's understanding what's going on.

We're not averse to improvising. A lot of us improvise in our work, in our life. That's part of being in the world, [and it's] to do with cultural difference. But also just that thing of being able to go, 'Okay, so I'm going to try this, but no, that didn't work, so how do I go now? Okay, so that sort of worked, so where now?'

5.5.1.4 Respect and transculturation

Teaching artists focused in particular on the benefits of sharing in and validating the different cultural traditions and knowledge that refugee background students bring with them to arts-based learning settings. In many respects, this is related to the importance noted above of creating a culturally safe environment in which young people from diverse backgrounds feel free to explore their own creativity while anchored in the familiar as well as challenged by the new. But cultural sharing and respect were also seen by teaching artists as opening up opportunities for cross-cultural respect among children of different backgrounds with each other, and as a means of signalling that students' own cultural traditions are valued as strong and enduring elements of who they are:

'As teaching artists, we reinforce the value of refugee children's culture, of their music, of the abilities that they bring. Their cultural values are appreciated and relevant in the work we do; in fact, they're celebrated.'

Our job is really important in that we create a sense of welcoming and we create a sense that their abilities in music and culture are just as important in Australia as they were in their own country. So it's not like they just have to wipe their background. We reinforce the value of their culture, of their music, of the abilities that they bring. Their cultural values are appreciated and relevant in the work we do; in fact, they're celebrated.

As another teaching artist noted, the challenge is to respect and validate existing cultural

knowledge while simultaneously stretching students' sense of what else they can learn from other cultural traditions both in Australia and elsewhere. Productively combining the known and the new is central to this process. As one dance teacher said:

I take a [culturally specific artistic] offering from them and work with that so there is a known place and then from that known place I expand it out.

5.5.1.5 Reciprocal transculturation and co-learning

These teaching artists also focused on the importance of working outside the 'task and control' orientation that they perceived constrained the pedagogical approaches of some teachers. Key in this regard was the idea that in engaging with students' various cultural traditions and knowledge bases, teaching artists were alive to the importance of putting themselves in the role of novice and beginner, since they are struggling with the 'new' in much the same way that their students are when learning about students' own cultural backgrounds and traditions (see Galton 2008). One extended comment from a teaching artist illustrates well the general perceptions of the group around the benefits of risk-taking, empathy and cultural reciprocity as she described her experience of learning how to sing songs in the native languages of refugee background students:

Teaching artists are alive to the importance of putting themselves in the role of novice and beginner, since they are struggling with the 'new' in much the same way that their students are.

Teaching a song in their language...it doesn't have to be in the too-hard basket [as she believes some classroom teachers perceive it to be]. [At another school] I was being taught songs in Chinese and Timorese. It became really obvious to us all that when I had to learn a song in Chinese it was really – like, it was a big challenge for me. I was often at sea. I often felt like a failure, you know, a real beginner. I would make mistakes and not remember the right words. I think that [for these students] seeing the teacher having to do the same tasks that we're asking of the students, there's something really good about that. To me, that is what exchange is all about: the idea that you're really making an effort in goodwill to learn about the other culture and you might be having a hard time, struggling and getting it wrong. But that's what's being asked of them constantly.

5.5.1.6 Connecting school and home through transculturation

Finally, a sense of wellbeing for this group of students through drawing on cultural knowledge and practices that students experience at home and in their communities was seen by the teaching artists as a vital element of their pedagogical practice.

Often that sense of coming to a new place and not quite knowing where you fit or difficulty settling and that sense of finding their way...A lot of the [named ethnic group] kids do a lot of dancing with their families outside of school. So for them to be able to share that with me and with the class is a connection between what they have at home and what they have at school.

5.5.1.7 Self-confidence and self-esteem

All of the teaching artists in this study were enthusiastic and at times passionate about the capacity of arts-based learning to promote self-confidence and self-esteem for refugee

background students who may be struggling with a range of issues around wellbeing, sense of self and sense of belonging. This was particularly the case in relation to the capacity for arts classes to promote self-confidence for students who may be experiencing a lesser sense of achievement in conventional academic subjects such as English, mathematics, science and other areas of the curriculum (Bryce et al. 2004; Krensky 2001; Uptis et al. 2001).

Teaching artists spoke of their approaches towards and impacts on improving self-confidence and a sense of self-esteem among refugee background students in the following ways.

<i>[What's important is] getting everyone involved and getting everyone feeling like they have a sense of worth.</i>	<i>I don't force anybody but make sure [they] feel welcome to join, that [their] part [in an arts activity] is valuable, that they've got a valuable part to play.</i>
<i>I noticed at the beginning there was a reservation [amongst students], there was all that sort of stuff. You saw them at the end of it, they're running around as if they're extroverted, screaming, yelling, physically bold, physically aware. And everyone is participating.</i>	<i>It's about the confidence and development and the sense of self...An assurance in terms of that sort of stuff. Once they have that, then the skill sets will be folded back into society.</i>

School principals echoed some of these observations.

<i>Particular groups of children or individual children can be particularly shy, painfully shy in some cases, but by actually doing things with [TSR] groups, it helps build their sense of confidence and to be able to learn the words to songs and then join in, and later on that confidence turns into literacy, given the right support.</i>	<i>TSR brings [refugee background students] out of their shell, gives them a chance to do something that they've maybe never done before...It gives them a chance to shine in a way that straight academic learning doesn't.</i>
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5.5.1.8 Sense of mastery and achievement

Finally, sense of mastery and achievement emerged as a significant theme for teaching artists when reflecting on how TSR classes related to wellbeing for refugee background students. This theme focused strongly on the capacity of arts-based programs such as TSR to provide alternative learning experiences and models that can help children from refugee backgrounds feel excited and inspired by learning that does not conform to traditional educational models of achievement and success, particularly important when they are still dealing with the challenges of a new language and new learning styles:

Some of the children are low achievers in the classroom, but they're high achievers in dance or music or singing and that gives [us] another way of saying to them, 'You were fantastic today', another aspect where [we] can give them praise. (TA)

Critical to promoting a sense of mastery and achievement for one teaching artist was the sense

that in arts-based learning, there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to do something (Hunter 2005):

That sense of achievement, where I think there's potential struggle occurring in other areas for all the children and there is a sense that it is really difficult for them, that real achievement that they have from [the TSR class]. There is potential for every single person to have a feeling of success because they're working at the range they're in, and it's a creative range, there's nothing right or wrong about it. (TA)

This in turn feeds into what the same artist called 'the sense of agency that a child can have – 'I did that, and I made that, and that was me'.

For other artists, it was about:

the opportunity for [students] to experience themselves in a different part of the curriculum...and often that provides some students with such a sense of success and connection, they really just [can't] wait...to have that experience of themselves [again].

5.5.1.9 From troublemaker to shining star: transforming teacher–student relations

One very interesting part of the focus group discussion in relation to wellbeing and achievement for students through TSR classes was the impact that teaching artists felt a student's accomplishments in an arts-based learning context could have in transforming a negative relationship between a student and teacher into a positive one. For the most part, this was based on comments regarding a few teachers in different schools who the teaching artists believed saw various refugee background students as poor learners in traditional subjects such as English or maths. Some of these students also presented with continuous behavioural issues or problems that required ongoing discipline or monitoring, which was perceived to further entrench classroom teachers' negative views of some students.

However, the opportunity to discover and hold onto a sense of achievement and mastery through TSR classes was seen by teaching artists to impact not only upon the students themselves, but to improve teacher perceptions of these students, as described in the following composite narrative from the focus group:

You work with students who would fall into patterns with certain teachers and because they're working with teachers consistently... It's often very hard to break those relationship patterns...And sometimes the teacher can see them in a new light, based on how they've behaved given that new set of circumstances to work with [created by the TSR class]. I dare say that might help change a destructive relationship between a teacher and a child in a subtle way...[Observing how some children can shine in a TSR class can provide] an opportunity for a teacher who has spent a lot of time saying to that student, 'You're not behaving, you're not behaving' to say [at the end of a TSR session], 'You were amazing'. So that relationship between them has absolutely changed from that moment, and they love it. The teacher loves that they can go, 'How great were you'.

The following vignette from a TSR singing teacher about a withdrawn and academically disengaged student whose teachers initially wanted to see the student excluded from the TSR program highlights the points made by teaching artists about the importance of coming into their classes with a 'baggage-free' approach to their students that can transform both students' and classroom teachers' perceptions of student capacities.

I remember one particular refugee background kid who the teachers had sort of given up on a little bit. I knew this kid was so pressured by his peers. He wasn't allowing himself to enjoy anything. His face was always – he would hardly open his mouth when he would sing. And I had at least two other teachers saying to me, 'Kick him out, kick him out. Just kick him out. He's not interested, he's blatantly not interested'. But I had this kid coming up and telling me how much he was enjoying things in the singing class, yet he would never admit it to anyone else. He was enjoying it. He just didn't want to look [like] it in front of his peers. And because of his attitude teachers had given up on him. But that's another reason why The Song Room is really important because... we've got that unique opportunity to come in and help kids like that just by being someone who's not part of the regular staff and [who] doesn't have those preconceived ideas about a person.

5.5.2 Sense of belonging

As the previous discussion of teaching artists' perspectives on arts-based learning and sense of wellbeing might suggest, in a number of respects, this group did not draw rigid boundaries between wellbeing and sense of belonging, seeing the two as integrally linked (Cassity & Gow 2006; Burnett & Peel 2001; Brice Heath & Roach 1999; Thiele & Marsden 2003; Kelman, O'Brien & Donelan 2005). However, several themes did stand out for teaching artists in relation to sense of belonging and the impact of particular arts-based teaching practices that they used in their own specific praxis when working with refugee background children.

5.5.2.1 Being in groups

TSR teaching artists saw the orientation of many of the arts-based genres they specialise in with students – for example, choir, dancing and drama – as easily aligned with group activities and experience. This in turn was perceived as fostering or drawing on valuable experiences around teamwork, collaboration and sharing with their peers. The last can be of particular significance for some refugee background children who, along with their families, have endured often protracted periods of struggle merely to survive physically and psychologically, in which both sharing of and competition for scarce resources necessary to stay alive has profoundly affected their sense of wellbeing and identity (Voutira & Harrell-Bond 1996).

In addition, a number of teaching artists noted the social importance of being in groups and participating in group-dominated activities for particular groups of refugee background young people, especially those who come from collectivist rather than individually based cultures. In a number of cases, examples were given of culturally based group practices that facilitated or enhanced participation in TSR classes because they did not focus on individual performance at the expense of the group as a whole, or alternatively, allowed everyone in the group to have a turn at expressing themselves individually without privilege or preference for any one member of the group. Sometimes this can also cut across gendered attitudes in different cultures around individual versus group activities and performance: as one teaching artist observed,

There might be a lot of shyness; there might even be reluctance to sing and be heard. In some cases, girls find it really hard to feel free, to express themselves because there might be cultural reasons why singing is not necessarily approved of in girls; it draws unnecessary attention to them.

Another artist commented that the focus on group work in arts classes such as dance sits well with the orientation towards an existing sense of community that she sees in the group of refugee background children she currently works with and is good for reinforcing their ‘social interaction’ within their own group and also with others from different cultural backgrounds in the same student cohort. This connects well with the comments of a classroom teacher in the cross-case analysis above who felt that working together in group settings in TSR sessions had caused her class members to ‘become a more close-knit group – it was great for their social aspect’, and to become more receptive to working collaboratively with any classmate, regardless of linguistic or cultural background.

5.5.2.2 In the director’s chair: belonging through leadership

A key element involving sense of belonging for the teaching artists revolved around student-led arts-based activities. Being in the driver’s seat, taking control of an activity or group with support from the teaching artist, and being allowed to direct or shape the way in which an arts activity unfolded during a class were seen as valuable experiences for refugee background students. It allowed them to feel front and centre of a group of learners, redistributing power away from hierarchical student–teacher models and helping to foster a stronger sense of social inclusion as well as pride in what they could do.

Below are some of the comments made by teaching artists around the importance of student leadership and sense of belonging.

<i>If I have a new student, I’ll hand it over to the kids and say, ‘All right, who can teach our new member the first bit?’ or something like that. They love it, being able to show what they can do.</i>	<i>That sense of achievement when they pull something off in front of their peers, that can create a sense of belonging for them as well; that sort of getting respect from their peers by being successful in an arts medium can be good for them.</i>
<i>I think because they’re in small groups working and making, what I try to do is have them make together. After a series of weeks when I start the warm up, then I will step aside and rotate that. And someone steps up, and who’s doing the next, and the next. So they get to become the teacher.</i>	<i>A lot of these children would be very reticent to take a leadership role in any other subject area because they are still so much behind the eight-ball with their knowledge of English and our schooling. But I offer opportunities for leadership in music very early in simple ways.</i>

5.5.2.3 Performance and sense of belonging

A strong link between performing and sense of belonging was drawn by the teaching artists in the study. They emphasised the benefits of feeling included within a group; the approval and praise received from audiences made up of the general community at public events; and the support and encouragement of peers, teachers and teaching artists for their performance endeavours. There were seen as important features for increasing sense of belonging for refugee background young people engaging in TSR classes. One coordinator working in an English language school reflected:

You don’t realise [at first] how much they love to perform. We provide a lot of opportunities to be

involved, but they really want to demonstrate, they want a group of children sitting down watching them, and they want to be the ones in the limelight.

Performance opportunities were also perceived to increase sense of belonging through building confidence and the capacity for self-expression, especially for students who were reserved and came from cultural backgrounds where going out in public to perform was not a familiar practice.

Performance opportunities [are] a big thing, and The Song Room definitely provides a lot of that. I think they get a sense of belonging, or I guess, yeah, belonging to their school and a sense of ownership of what they're doing.

That sense of achievement when they pull something off in front of their peers, that can create a sense of belonging as well, that getting respect from their peers by getting success in one of the arts mediums can be good for them.

This aligns well with the emphasis in student interviews on the ways in which watching fellow students perform helped them learn new things about their classmates that increased socialisation and friendships, both in and beyond TSR classes.

Performance was also understood to promote sense of belonging not just within the group of children participating in TSR activities, but also of belonging to and being appreciated by the wider community:

I think for The Song Room to house performances in the Melbourne Town Hall, or the BMW Edge, which is sort of iconic, like big arts venues or big community venues, that's really wonderful for kids from marginalised areas to have that opportunity; to be dropped right into the cherry basket of the arts precinct. It's really great that The Song Room does that. They've got lovely support from the people around them because of the nature of their work.

More generally, performance was seen by not only teaching artists but also school coordinators and classroom teachers as fostering a strong participatory framework that also contributes to sense of belonging.

I've found the performing arts got more kids involved more quickly than the music. All the kids get involved straight away and everyone's actively participating the whole time. (Coord.)

We've seen how the kids have come out of their shell, the shy ones and how they've actually bonded together...All the activities are structured and kids come from a different country, they just work together. It really brings kids [together] and brings another strength through that we need to see as well. (T)

Finally, in relation to TSR's regular performances, sense of belonging was linked to the capacity to develop a sense of connectedness with the arts and with each other through public performance. As one teaching artist put it:

The children come and sing and perform, usually in groups of schools. Then they are offered a performance back[ed] by a professional. So they get two sides of the whole performing scenario and I think that's a really lovely formula. I think it helps with their English and with their sense of social cohesion.

There were also additional opportunities for refugee background young people involved in TSR classes to become better connected with different people and communities through being called on to perform at various community-based festivals and events:

The Brotherhood of St Laurence rang me and said, 'We've got an aged care festival down at [a neighbouring suburb's] Town Hall and one of our acts has dropped out, could your kids come along and do it?' I went upstairs and said to [the students in the TSR class], 'Can you do it?' and they said, 'Yep, okay'. (P)

5.5.3 Arts-based pedagogies and engagement with learning

Engagement with learning was an area where teaching artists felt that the arts-based pedagogies they employed in TSR programs really came into their own in terms of impacts for refugee background young people. The chief themes emerging in this portion of the data relate to facilitating language learning through the arts; exposure and responsiveness to different teaching styles through arts-based pedagogies as distinct from regular curriculum and classroom approaches; role modelling opportunities offered to refugee background young people around careers in the arts through the presence of TSR artists (Waldorf 2002); the transformative power of arts-based pedagogies for teachers and schools, as well as for students; and the sustainability of TSR programs in terms of what remains of arts-based pedagogies, knowledge and techniques for teachers and children when TSR programs conclude.

5.5.3.1 Arts-based learning and English language skills

The issue of English language capacity and learning for teaching artists was identified by them as significant in a number of contexts. As indicated above, many teaching artists stressed their own need to re-think and modify how they used English language in their classes when working with refugee background and children from non-English speaking backgrounds, particularly those early arrivals who are struggling with learning a new language in the context of other issues around adjustment, adaptation and transition into a new environment. However, one of the strengths of arts-based pedagogies in the eyes of teaching artists is their capacity to engage students in ways that do not rely heavily or solely on language comprehension i to facilitate learning. This was seen as enabling early support and access to learning engagement even for students from refugee backgrounds who had no or only very little English at the time of their involvement in TSR classes. One teaching artist described his perspectives on this issue in the following way:

When I first started working with refugee classes in drama and acting, I obviously realised that the majority of them didn't speak any English. So I decided to work in a physical way. And I think being able to access their education in a different way, it sort of escalates the way they can engage in other [learning] areas. Because we were able to work in a physical way, they didn't need to have all of the verbal skills that were required in the other subjects, and as a result, they developed a stronger sense of trust and play I suppose the different ways that we all work to try to elicit things from them is really beneficial.

Many of the teaching artists felt that improved engagement with English was a welcome ancillary benefit of their work with arts-based pedagogies in the TSR sessions. Opportunities for improving English language comprehension were seen by teaching artists to involve what one called 'modelling' speech and language, as well as the art form being taught through the way they

voiced their instructions and verbal cues to the children in the class. Another teaching artist stressed the importance of ‘multiple ways of conveying information’ that included but did not rely solely on linguistic communication. A teaching artist reflects below about using both physical and verbal means to communicate abstract ideas and concepts to help students translate them into movement:

The first thing I notice [when working with refugee background young people] is language and English as a second language. There is a very big difference in how I need to instruct and [my] assumptions of the understandings and meanings of words and things like that. Even though we’re working with the body, the way that I set up the task for them to perform, I’ve now brought in language in a way. Sometimes I really have to watch if they’re just following and if they’re understanding.

Another critical element identified by teaching artists and also teachers and principals was the way in which arts-based pedagogies help educators provide opportunities for children to find and use their ‘voice’ in both English and non-linguistic modalities such as movement or drama, with the latter sometimes providing a welcome break (Waldorf 2002) from the intensive language learning that new arrivals undergo in the early stages of their Australian education.

I’m not so much concerned about creating an outcome or a product in terms of drama, it’s more about them really feeling a sense of confidence and a voice, I suppose, and really pushing that. (TA)

Language learning can be really tiring...Having an arts program creates a balance because although they are concentrating, it is a different type of concentrating...They are interacting, learning words, learning English, but in a fun way and they absolutely enjoy it. (P)

5.5.3.2 Freedom to act: the difference between being a teaching artist and a classroom teacher

Teaching artists had a lot to say about their sense of freedom and difference from classroom teachers. Their sense of freedom was valued not because they felt they could do whatever they pleased, but because they were alert to some of the differences and flexibilities that arts-based learning could provide for approaching teaching and learning with challenged, and challenging, student groups such as some (though not all) refugee background children who may be negotiating a whole range of issues and problems within and outside the formal school environment (CMYI 2006). One teaching artist saw the engagement benefits of flexibility in how he designed and delivered his classes as follows:

I’ve got a rough outline for my day but it will change depending on where the kids’ interests are, and I really like that I can be that flexible. And it’s good for them too. Why not? If someone out there in the class is saying ‘I would like to try that thing again that we did...’ I’ll generally say fine because it’s sparking their interest and keeping them engaged.

While they expressed a great deal of respect for the work and commitment of classroom teachers, and often spoke warmly of close relationships at particular schools with teachers they collaborated with, most of them felt that being teaching artists, rather than teachers per se, gave them a certain ‘freedom to act’ in relation to what they could achieve around engagement with learning in TSR programs. Teaching artists commented that they felt they were able to be ‘a bit

more relaxed at a school than most teachers' because they 'were not at the school five days a week'; they saw it as valuable that they could come to their classes with 'that freshness once a week and the kind of energy' this allows them to bring into their teaching spaces.

Being – and being seen as – an artist rather than a teacher was perceived as having both *positives* and *negatives* by teaching artists.

We're coming in as artists, and that gives us positives and negatives. It gives us, perhaps, a greater sense of licence with the children, which can work really well and sometimes not so well. ... A lot of classroom time for teachers is about the management...of the children into something that is a little bit more sober. As all the others have said, we're offering something that's different and perhaps a bit more energising and liberating.

When you don't have all that history, it allows you to see these students with a bit of freshness, and often that can really give them another kind of learning experience because you don't come with what they did yesterday or what they did the day before or what trouble they might be in or what difficulty they're having.

The relative freedom valued by teaching artists is not without its risks, however. All teaching artists stressed the vital importance of close and enduring collaborations and partnerships with teachers. As one teaching artist noted:

[Things] also need to be handled really well in terms of classroom management, otherwise our lack of skill in that area can sometimes be our undoing. As [other teaching artists have] said, we really need to be in a really strong partnership with the teachers so their abilities and their knowledge are allied to ours.

Finally, teaching artists thought their role as artists in the context of TSR enabled them to bring students into new worlds and new domains of learning that relied directly on their professional artistic experience, knowledge and standing:

Sometimes I feel like the history I've had as an artist – particularly a practising artist in my own area – brings a broader context for the teaching of movement in the school. The artistry extends beyond teaching dance. When you can talk about your own experience of being in a theatre or experience of seeing dance in other cultures, you can bring [students] into a broader framework for what they themselves are doing, through my own experience of being an artist elsewhere. It kind of blows their minds when they get to hear that there's something outside the classroom, outside you as a teacher.

As one teaching artist said, teaching artists in the TSR programs feel empowered to use their creativity and sense of artistry as an integral part of their offerings to students because they understand that this is why they are there to begin

TSR teaching artists say they feel empowered to use their creativity and sense of artistry as an integral part of their offerings to students because they understand that this is why they are there to begin with.

with. While teachers were felt to be more proscribed and constrained by the curriculum they undertake in academic subjects, this teaching artist felt that 'as teaching artists, we can go that step further' than classroom teachers in exploring and developing alternative approaches to teaching and learning that maximise creativity, play, exploration and a focus on process rather than outcome for the extended learning benefit of refugee background students.

The sense of freedom articulated by teaching artists here was also, interestingly, expressed by one of the student's parents interviewed during the study. She too noticed the relative freedom to learn and explore that characterised her daughter's TSR dance class and found that it had freed up her own willingness to embrace and support her daughter's interests and aspirations:

In our country children don't have the power to say, 'Mum, I want to do what I want' because your parent is the person who says you do this and you do that. But when I come here [to school] I see the way my daughter is moving and when we are in the house I see what my children like, and they like a lot of dancing and singing. So you let the child do it and you can't block them. Make the child happy. (Pa)

5.5.3.3 Using arts-based pedagogies to engage non-traditional learners

The role of arts-based pedagogies was perceived as highly valuable by teaching artists as well as teachers and principals for engaging those students who were not so successful in more traditional academic subjects within the curriculum. They also felt it enriched the curriculum more generally for schools that might not otherwise have access to arts forms that expanded learning and skills development repertoires for students in resource-poor environments. A teaching artist familiar with early settlement phase refugee background student learning recalled:

I worked with English language schools, worked with disadvantaged socio-economic areas, and...these schools...really had no other music offered to them [besides TSR programs] – or maybe just here and there a smattering from teachers who didn't feel particularly confident...I realised it was like bringing a whole other form of nourishment into those schools...And there was in general a wonderful, positive reaction from the children.

Another teaching artist told a story that described well the space of trust and freedom for students that arts-based learning can facilitate for those who are disengaged or struggling with traditional learning modes:

A new kid came into my [TSR] class for the first time. The class had been established for a couple of weeks and they were a new refugee who was brought into the class and they hadn't spoken in [regular] class for a week. And they came into my class and I don't know what happened, but this child just would not stop talking. I had to say, 'Okay, settle down, settle down' but the teacher was absolutely smiling and dumbstruck that this was happening and she came up to me and said, 'I haven't been able to elicit any sort of communication at all'. So the fact that this kid was talking and talking and talking was just a wonderful experience. With those different sorts of roles that [students] don't have to adhere to [in the classroom], they can...be new and fresh.

In support of these perspectives, arts-based learning for non-traditional learners can be seen as:

a vehicle. It's just like computers or video cameras – this is something that engages kids, that gets them involved, that actually increases their skills...If you take that away...you will have a number of students who will really miss out because they'll be in that twenty per cent of children who won't learn the other way...you need to cater for their interests and needs as well. (P)

5.5.4 What gets left behind? Sustainability and knowledge transfer

Sustainability and knowledge transfer between teaching artists and the classroom teachers and schools they work with – what gets left behind when they go – is fundamental to the ethos and practice of The Song Room as an organisation. Teaching artists themselves see sustainability as a critical factor in how they evaluate their own success in designing and delivering programs within a school. The interviews and focus group suggested a keen awareness of the importance of sustainability and much enthusiasm on the part of teaching artists for fostering enhanced sustainability of the skills and outcomes for both teachers and students.

In the presentation of data and analysis that follows, it is important to note that the discussion in the focus group was framed by a shared sense among teaching artists that they were bringing something into schools that cannot afford to take arts-based pedagogies or artistic learning and outcomes for granted. There was a high level of awareness among teaching artists of the structural inequities around resources and access to the arts in the schools that TSR engages with. This clearly motivated them, in both their comments and their practice, to privilege issues of sustainability and knowledge transfer that schools with large populations of refugee background and other socio-economically disadvantaged groups experience. They were similarly aware of teachers' heavy burdens involving a variety of teaching and non-teaching duties and that they have fewer opportunities for professional development as a result.

Consequently, sustainability was understood by teaching artists not only as the sustainability of individual arts-based learning initiatives of particular artists, schools and teachers, but as a broader issue of how sustainable the arts can be as an element of educational programs in general, even in schools where resources and budgets are not able to provide this as a matter of course. One teaching artist summed it up in the following way:

We're [going] into schools that really have been denied lot of access to the arts because they're poor schools, or because they're schools that have a lot of special needs...Where we're working in under-privileged schools we're bringing in something that in some schools is just natural, it's not a luxury, but in these situations, it is a luxury that they have the opportunity to work with music and singing because there's no chance for dedicated music teachers to be [employed] in these schools, and also there's not enough energy behind the idea of the children learning the arts. We're bringing in something that in some cases many schools would take for granted, but are simply not accessed in some areas [marked by socio-economic disadvantage].

Some of the key elements and mechanisms that TSR teaching artists see as integral to creating sustainability and knowledge transfer through delivery of TSR programs follow.

5.5.4.1 Mentoring and professional development of teachers by TSR artists and programs

The mentoring relationship between teaching artists and teachers was seen by all the artists in the study as perhaps the most significant element of sustainability offered through TSR programs. Mentoring relationships were described as providing nurturing and support for teachers who might have some arts-based skills but lack the confidence to use them in the classroom; new pedagogical approaches for teachers who are unfamiliar with arts-based learning models; and new opportunities to integrate elements of the arts and arts-based learning even within standard or formal curriculum objectives in literacy, numeracy and other basic skills areas of learning and engagement. One teaching artist saw the sustainability focus of TSR in this way:

There is a lot of energy that goes into different models of sustainability. The program [itself] of 6–12 months; the mentoring of teachers, as well as professional development with the teachers; there's also, if you spot the odd student who is really talented but where they don't have the funds and the facilities [to develop this talent further], you can nominate them for a scholarship. So [The Song Room] is really trying to nurture it from different angles, but with a target of, once we leave, getting the schools to make a commitment so that something is implemented artistically; it's not just about us.

However, while there was a lot of enthusiasm and support for the model of sustainability used by TSR, there was more ambivalence about the capacity of all teachers and all schools to make good use of the sustainable practices and opportunities on offer through the presence of TSR:

What's tricky about [sustainability and knowledge transfer] is that it's very much based on the teachers you meet. I've been to schools where the teachers are just fantastic and ready to take on the challenge, so you just nurture them through the mentoring and the professional development and you set up programs that they can teach, and it's just stepping right into those programs. Then you get other teachers where it's very, very difficult for them; so it might be that it's ten minutes a week and you talk about how you might do ten minutes a week in the classroom and you can build on that. So it's not, it can't be...

When the mentoring relationships work and teachers are able to respond positively, the sustainability dividend is evident and highly valued.

When you're in [TSR class] teaching, you're teaching and you're also trying to develop a relationship in and outside the classroom with the teacher. They might start to participate in the class. I had one teacher last year who did everything through the whole year – every single [TSR] task [set for the students] – so by the end of the year, we could sit and she was able to structure a program from having physically done the program herself. And now we just email regularly, checking in on what she needs.

The mentoring is a really good tool because there's constant contact with the teaching artist who has been delivering programs there, and the teaching artist can provide access to where the teacher can gain resources, activities and professional development as well. Quite often, there will be one or two teachers at a school who will maintain informal contact with the teaching artist outside of the school as well, so it's only a phone call away, really.

Other teaching artists, however, described situations where some teachers were perceived to have a hands-off approach to becoming involved in what the TSR teaching artist was doing, seeing arts-based learning as strictly the domain of the teaching artist and not relevant to their own practice.

You have teachers who like to go, 'It's yours' and you're kind of going, 'Where are you?' So you know, it's not easy, but you can make ways to collaborate.

It comes down to individual teachers and their capacity to absorb and articulate for themselves, and how to work with what you've brought to them. Because there are teachers who are actually almost ravenous for what you've got, they're watching you like an eagle and you know they're going to be trying this stuff on. And then there's other teachers who feel, 'This is not my persona at school' and 'I don't know how to get into that'.

It was like, there was the teacher, and then there was the musical here. And those two – she didn't know how they would connect, because the teacher was so much to do with control and executing tasks, and the musician was about something completely [different]. And she was finding it really hard.

For most of the teaching artists, adopting a collaborative, partnership approach that helps teachers build self-confidence to try various forms of arts-based learning and that highlights the compatibility of arts teaching with student engagement and a healthy co-learning environment are the keys to sustainable teacher integration of art-based learning into non-arts-based subjects and classes:

So you've got two extremes there: those who are ravenous and want to voraciously take on what we're doing, want to learn from us, and those who are feeling that it's really another world that they can only gaze at from a distance...But I guess the approach is by small steps, a new way of offering singing to the students. It's trying to make people with a little bend toward the arts realise what they've got to offer is valuable, and they can still learn new tricks, you know. (TA)

However, the teaching artists also perceived that not all teachers would or could respond successfully to mentoring, and that it was important to assess the teachers who could respond constructively to avoid wasting teaching artists' resources and commitment:

I think that [a teacher's sense of self] determines how successful a program will be after[wards]. I must say that can't really be controlled by The Song Room, because I've been put with teachers as my mentees who were really not able to make that crossing over to the executing or the leading of that work. They lacked either the confidence or the basic [capacity for a particular art form] and that can sometimes be really a sad story when you've got the chance to work with someone. So you really do need to work with people who have some basic capacity. Don't waste your time. (TA)

New moves for teachers

Helen* has over 15 years of teaching experience and has taught for almost five years as part of the Western English Language School (WELS), an intensive English language program for newly arrived refugee students. Helen discovered early on the power of the arts when she incorporated music, dance and movement as part of a physical education program she coordinated in the 1990s. She also describes herself as a kinaesthetic learner and personally enjoys participating in the arts.

Through a TSR drumming program, Helen has been able to participate alongside her students as a fellow student of music. For her, this participation has had many benefits. It has enabled her to develop skills in a new area (music/drumming) which she has been able to incorporate in her regular classes. Through her contact with TSR teachers and classes, Helen has a new-found level of energy (as well as new ideas for teaching and learning) after participating in drumming classes. This is particularly important in the context of the intensive English language teaching environment and in working with students from refugee backgrounds where opportunities for fun and release are just as important for teachers as they are for students in terms of sustainability.

...I loved learning it (drumming) myself... we had a ball, and I was able to be really involved as a student. I wasn't there as a teacher, I was a part of that and I had to come in at my beat at the right time, and then we shared a lot of laughing, a lot of fun from that...

Participating alongside students also embedded Helen in the student group, creating a stronger, more cohesive group, where mutual respect and trust were more able to develop. This is particularly important for newly arrived refugee students and also for Helen herself, who usually only teaches the students for a few terms before they transition to mainstream education. For students, Helen's participation in TSR provided a context where they were participating as equals with their teacher. In this way, students were able to see teachers in a new light, as a fellow human being, making mistakes and also in the process of learning.

Helen also noted that TSR was an invaluable opportunity for her and other classroom teachers to observe their students. TSR classes enabled Helen to stand back and see how individual students were going, how they responded to a different person (the TSR teacher), particularly in relation to English language comprehension, and how they worked together. She gained a richer understanding of individual students' needs and their unique potential through this process, commenting that she was amazed at 'how sharp our students were, what a good ear they had for remembering a beat and a whole song'.

**Helen is a pseudonym.*

5.5.4.2 New pedagogical horizons for teachers

Despite occasional difficulties with teacher resistance to what they provided in the way of knowledge transfer around arts-based learning, most teaching artists felt that they left behind robust knowledge and mechanisms that enabled teachers to think anew about the possibilities for incorporating the arts into their own classroom practice.

I try to teach so that the teachers watching me can see it's possible for them to facilitate the same kind of structure. Some of my plans at the end of the year are to sit with the teachers who have observed me throughout the year and structure a plan where they can facilitate these creative tasks. It's not about them knowing the moves, it's about them setting up a framework for the children to explore creatively themselves. The aim is to sustain it... Even if it becomes 20 minutes in the classroom a week and then once they gain confidence it becomes an hour a week, it's about building the steps to this being integrated.

The idea of a cumulative, 'small steps' approach to transforming teacher pedagogies was echoed by one of the principals in the study, who emphasised that not everything offered by teaching artists has to be absorbed by teachers for knowledge transfer and transformation of pedagogy to begin to occur. This principal also noted that the process can take time because not only students but also teachers need to become acculturated to what TSR artists offer:

I think [TSR artists] leave some good ideas behind on how to do things, and I think teachers tend to take little bits of them – 'I can do this, so I'll do that for the kids. I think initially they were a bit hesitant, but now I think they've been through it – this is our [school's] third year – I think they're more familiar. It's that osmosis thing, you do it often enough, it'll transfer. I think [classroom] teachers are probably more confident now about doing music for children. (P)

Overall, teaching artists suggested during interviews and focus groups that the basic elements of sustainability and knowledge transfer between teaching artists and non-arts teachers involved a willingness to:

- Develop collaborative partnerships
- Engage in productive mentoring relationships
- Build teacher confidence in their own capacity to offer arts-based learning
- Share professional development resources and knowledge freely
- Acknowledge the different but complementary strengths that both teaching artists and teachers can learn from each other in producing arts-based outcomes for students
- Develop co-learning strategies that allow teachers to feel they are not only learning but also offering new knowledge to the teaching artists
- Maintain respect for each other's pedagogies and practices.

These insights relate to but also extend the DEECD (2009) report on partnerships between schools and the arts sector relating to the impact of partnerships for schools and the educational system as a whole.

Practical mechanisms for achieving these sustainability goals suggested by teaching artists included:

- Involving teachers in weekly class activities along with the artist and students
- Meeting with teachers at the beginning and the end of each TSR semester to prepare adaptive materials that incorporate arts-based learning techniques
- Recognising that not all teachers will benefit from mentoring relationships with teaching artists, and being selective in whom they mentor
- Approaching teacher receptiveness to incorporating arts-based learning as a series of cumulative, small steps, rather than asking teachers to absorb a whole new teaching paradigm at once
- Ensuring that the professionalism of teaching artists does not unintentionally intimidate teachers into feeling unable to risk trying out an arts-based activity with students
- Stressing the benefits of arts pedagogies for students in relation to sense of agency, enjoyment of learning and self-confidence in developing new skills through the arts, which can transfer to other learning and teaching domains.

The final insight offered by teaching artists around sustainability and knowledge transfer was the importance of school commitment as a whole to developing sustainability mechanisms and knowledge transfer between teaching artists and teachers:

In one of the schools last year, the principal made it really known to all the teachers that they had to teach art the next year. Once I'd gone, well, the commitment to the program was a hell of a lot more from [that point onward]. It was just like I was this huge resource, because they were going, 'Well, what can you give us? We have to do this'. So it was really backed by the principal. ...His commitment meant that their approach was different.

5.5.4.3 Challenges identified by teaching artists

In addition to perceptions and insights around the relationship between arts-based pedagogies and sense of wellbeing, belonging and engagement with learning for refugee background young people, teaching artists identified several challenges they had experienced in grappling with both day-to-day and longer term issues around the sustainable TSR programs they delivered into schools. These challenges included the following.

Legitimacy of arts-based learning in the eyes of students, parents and the general community

Teaching artists spoke of their perception that arts-based learning was not taken seriously by some students and parents because it is not seen as a legitimate form of school education, so that their classes are perceived as lower down the 'pecking order' than subjects involving, for example, literacy, numeracy and computers.

Time-poor teachers

The time restrictions on teachers, particularly in the English language schools, to engage fully over time with teaching artists was noted by several, and this was felt to impede successful transition and transfer of TSR-based skills and knowledge for classroom teachers, although most teaching artists remained optimistic about at least some knowledge and skills being taken up.

Behavioural management issues

Teaching artists at times felt unsure about how to cope with the behavioural issues presented by some refugee background students. They felt they did not possess the same level of skills and knowledge as experienced classroom teachers about how to maintain control when children lost control in class, for a variety of reasons.

Need for more context and knowledge around refugee issues and experiences

Finally, teaching artists said they wanted to know more about the social and cultural contexts of refugees and new arrivals before they began their teaching programs with students from these groups, which they believed would better support them in how they do their work in schools. In the words of one teaching artist:

I do feel like we enter into situations without a lot of background knowledge, and I would just like that sense of all that we've talked about today [in the focus group], all these stories responding to these questions – it's extraordinary that this exchange [can happen], given the way we walk into a school, we meet the principal once, we meet the teachers once, and then we go. And it all happens as you're working with these students. I would love, myself, to have had more information about refugees and new arrivals and the impacts, you know, to feel supported, and I wonder what that would do. But at the same time, we're still managing to offer so much through what we do bring.

In the same way that teaching artists focused above on the challenges of working with students and teachers to draw them out of and beyond their 'comfort zones' where arts-based learning and creativity are concerned, this final comment suggests that some teaching artists can also find themselves outside their 'comfort zones' when it comes to working with groups of students whose backgrounds and experiences they do not feel familiar with. The suggestion here is that teaching artists are interested in learning more so that they can offer more as teaching artists, as well as to helping them be compassionate and up to date about refugee students' contexts, possibilities and constraints as they set out to work with a new group of students who bring their own histories, knowledges, experiences and perceptions into the shared space of the TSR learning environment.

NEW MOVES

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS



6. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this study we understood the TSR program to be embedded within the broader social ecology of the school and community. It is within this broader context that the TSR program is offered and constructed as part of the schooling process, which in part aims to contribute to the development of the young people involved. Within this framework we sought to learn about students' experiences of their schools, but with a focus on their experiences of TSR programs. We also sought to learn about the insights and understandings of teachers, teaching artists, principals, parents and selected refugee community members to help triangulate the data that we analysed on TSR experiences from refugee background young people themselves.

6.1 Student voices about school

Our findings indicate that TSR needs to be understood within the broader context of the schooling experience. Refugee background young people across the six case study sites reported that being with friends; feeling well looked after (by other students and by teachers and/or the principal); and being known and feeling supported by teachers and older students was important to them. These factors all speak to the social relationships with both peers and teachers within the school context that contribute to students feeling a sense of school community. Importantly these social relationships also serve socially supportive functions when needed, and generally let students know that they are connected to a broader social network. These networks provide students with opportunities for belonging and validation (Pooley et al. 2002). For some of the students it was important both to be able to communicate in English together and to have peers around them with whom they could talk in a shared 'home' language other than English. The research literature has confirmed the role of similar origin social networks in providing support during settlement and beyond for immigrant communities. In the case of settling in at school, access to people from a similar language background may protect against isolation and aid in the settlement process.

6.1.2 Engagement with learning

English language learning played a vital role for these students in relation to their engagement with learning more broadly. Unsurprisingly, students in the English language schools involved in the study said that talking to friends in English and learning more English and communicating better with friends and teachers were critical for their own sense of engagement with education across the curriculum. Young people also cited the importance of role models such as specific teachers and teaching artists, who inspired them to stay engaged with particular areas of learning. In one school, students distinguished sharply between rigid forms of physical activity that they found boring and energy sapping (which the school said were designed primarily as behaviour management regimes) and creative forms of physical movement such as dance that left them feeling energised and happy.

6.1.3 Sense of wellbeing

For these participants, sense of wellbeing centred on two key areas: social relationships and the confidence and self-esteem acquired through learning new skills. In the area of social

relationships, making new friends, having fun with friends, and learning new social skills were commonly cited. In relation to confidence and self-esteem through learning new skills, students reported feeling less shy once they discovered they could master a particular skill or form of knowledge (e.g. maths, sport, music), and feeling good about themselves through new learning and accomplishments that could be shared with others (peers, teachers, parents). These findings suggest that engagement with learning is an important aspect of wellbeing as it contributes to individual efficacy, both in terms of acquiring new skills and knowledge, and the capacity to negotiate interpersonal relationships. The increased self-confidence and self-esteem they experience through feeling 'good at' one or more learning areas at school was thus linked in these students' comments to an enhanced sense of wellbeing in general.

6.2 How do refugee background young people experience the impacts of TSR programs?

Overall, students reported positive experiences about their involvement in TSR programs. These experiences complemented those reported by the students about their experiences at school more generally. However, in this research, by far the most significant findings by students and teaching staff, related to the opportunity to form, engage with and consolidate friendships, and the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge related to the arts program offered at their particular school. Both of these are important aspects of schooling as a whole, but through TSR participation, students were afforded the opportunity to consolidate friendships and also learn new things about their friends. For young people in general and for these young people in particular, the opportunities to form and negotiate peer networks were vitally important for their social development and settlement more broadly (see Fattore, Mason & Watson 2006). For these young people school belonging is experienced through friendship networks and also the opportunities offered for engagement in meaningful activities.

6.2.1 Engagement with learning through TSR

In addition to friendship consolidation, experiences of TSR centred on its capacity to promote positive and sustained engagement with learning. Key factors identified by children about how TSR programs enhanced their enjoyment of and desire to continue learning focused on the key areas of learning new things in new ways; novelty and new horizons; non-language dependent learning; participation; links between home and school; and inspiration. For the students, engagement in the TSR was experienced as fun. TSR classes provided an alternative learning environment that contrasted positively with their experience of the formal academic curriculum and was distinct from more regimented modes of learning and skills acquisition, including the intensity of learning a new language in formal classroom settings. This finding was well supported by the comments of teachers and teaching artists, who noted the ways in which English language learning occurs incidentally through participation in TSR in a non-imposed context.

6.2.1.1 Learning new things in new ways

The findings also showed that children relished the chance to learn new things and broaden their horizons through what they learned in TSR classes. They cited, in particular, new arts-based experiences not available in other classes or outside school, and emphasised the fact that TSR classes are 'fun' and provide a chance to learn 'new moves' in different arts genres (singing, dance, percussion). They expressed their pleasure in acquiring new skills, and some children

were eager to demonstrate these new-found skills in arts through impromptu performances for the researchers.

6.2.1.2 Non-language dependent learning

Children reported their enjoyment of learning in a TSR environment, which is not heavily language dependent (i.e. does not require good knowledge of English). They spoke of feeling more confident and of increased levels of enjoyment in learning activities that did not focus primarily on language skills, for example, physical movement or singing simple songs in different languages guided by the teaching artist. Again, this finding was strongly supported by data from teachers, teaching artists and school principals, echoing the importance of TSR.

6.2.1.3 Participation

Participation in groups and also as individuals was a key factor for these students in relation to feeling engaged in learning through TSR classes. Students reported valuing greatly increased opportunities for direct student participation. They emphasised, in particular, the importance for them of knowing that in TSR everyone gets a turn or has a role in trying out or practising an arts-based activity. Students also showed awareness of the ways in which TSR classes allowed for not only individual student strengths to be displayed, but also offered support for shyer children who prefer to participate as part of a group. The perception that all students get to 'have a go' and that each student is as important as another within TSR classes was also valued by these children.

6.2.1.4 Inspiration

Students spoke of feeling inspired on two levels in relation to engagement with learning through TSR: preparing for performance and feeling inspired by the talents of their peers and the teaching artist.

A number of children cited the goal of public performance, which is a cornerstone of TSR programs, as helping them feel inspired to stretch themselves (and possibly also to avoid letting down the group, a strong motivating factor for many children from community-oriented cultural backgrounds).

They also reported the importance of feeling inspired by others through preparing for performance and through performance itself. This inspiration came from both their class peers and also from watching teaching artists perform. Several students spoke of their aspiration to 'be like' the teaching artist or their perception of the teaching artist as a role model for a future in the arts.

6.2.1.5 Linking home and school

Finally, a number of students spoke positively of experiencing a link between what they were doing in TSR classes and their own cultural practices at home and in their community. This was based on their perception of the opportunities afforded by TSR to engage in sharing cross-cultural knowledge around arts forms and practices with their peers and with the teaching artists. Once again, this was echoed by teachers and teaching artists, who stressed the importance of entering into children's worlds through encouraging refugee background students to bring their own traditions and arts forms into TSR classes to enhance transcultural learning for all TSR participants.

6.2.2 Sense of wellbeing through TSR

Whereas sense of wellbeing at school in general for these students was linked to two key areas, as noted above – social relationships, and sense of self-confidence and self-esteem through acquisition of new skills – participation specifically in TSR was linked in more complex ways for these children to strengthening social relationships, sharing their culture with peers and sense of individual and cultural pride. Students reported feeling good about themselves through developing competencies and increased self-confidence by learning new skills specifically related to the arts. These findings suggest that there is a clear overlap between engagement with learning and sense of wellbeing for these students through associating sense of mastery both with increased confidence about learning and with enhanced social relationships more generally.

However, they also cited the importance of self-expression of ideas and emotions through TSR classes; the pleasure of being creative; the opportunity to maintain their own sense of cultural connection and identity through the arts; the chance to learn about the cultures of other students and to teach others about their own culture; the ways in which some students used their newly acquired arts skills in genres such as dance, drumming and music to forge new or stronger friendships; and using new skills as a form of social currency to help negotiate peer relationships.

This is an important finding because it demonstrates the role arts-focused learning in domains of affect (self-expression, pride), self-perception (cultural identity, being creative), and sense of connection with others through the arts (learning about others' cultures and sharing one's own culture with others), as well as the importance of the arts in developing and strengthening social relationships, particularly with peers. It shows the ways in which student participation in the arts through TSR can nourish aspects of a student's 'whole self', that is, other than learning knowledge and gaining mastery of skills.

In this sense, TSR programs can be viewed as specific activities within the broader school ecology that provide students with opportunities to develop and express competencies, which are also connected with aspects of self and relations to teachers and peers. Fattore and others (2006) highlight the importance of activities in the lives of young people and how these are central to young people's wellbeing. Other researchers (Gifford 2009; Sampson & Gifford 2010) also point to the significance of opportunities for meaningful engagement and its connection with wellbeing. In this sense, TSR provides young people with a space in which to negotiate and develop a range of personal and social competencies with others, and for refugee young people this includes an opportunity to translate cultural knowing acquired in a different context into the new context of resettlement. This is a significant insight that speaks to the importance of understanding both tangible and intangible forms of cultural property (e.g. musical instruments and symbolic practices and knowledge such as dance and song) and the roles these can play in negotiating the new socio-cultural context (Zittoun et al. 2003).

6.3 How do educators perceive the impact of TSR programs upon refugee background students?

In this summary we group the responses of classroom teachers, TSR teaching artists and school principals together under the general category of 'educators' – those who are responsible for designing, conducting and managing the teaching and learning activities and environments in which refugee background students participate in TSR programs and in school life generally.

The key findings from the data from those educators involved with school-based TSR programs and refugee background students across the six case study sites point to several salient factors informing their understanding of how TSR programs impact upon students from refugee backgrounds. They also indicate how these educators view TSR classes sitting more generally within schools' overall aims and objectives for this cohort of students.

The main themes for educators involved with the schools in the study revolve around the following:

- TSR as an arts-based learning environment
- Individual benefits of TSR programs for refugee background students
- Interpersonal impacts of TSR programs
- Institutional impacts of TSR programs for the school community as a whole
- Transformative effects of TSR program involvement for students, teachers and teaching artists
- Challenges and barriers experienced by educators in relation to TSR program delivery and its impacts.

6.3.1 TSR as a learning environment

An overwhelming emphasis that emerged from interview and focus group data with educators was on the ways in which TSR programs provide a *safe learning environment* for refugee background young people who may be socially and educationally vulnerable or who may be struggling with traditional learning models, for a number of interrelated reasons (see the literature review, Chapter 2, for greater elaboration of this). TSR was identified by these educators as providing a 'safe, caring space' in which refugee background children could negotiate the myriad pressures, tensions and demands that accompany settling into a new language, a new country, a new community and a new set of relationships and expectations about their own identities and development as individuals.

Arts activities offered through TSR were perceived by this group of educators as central to helping refugee background students cope with these stresses. In particular, TSR programs were identified by virtually all educators as a key mechanism for providing respite from the trauma and pressures associated with both the refugee and settlement experiences – what one principal called a 'safe haven' in which refugee background children 'can just be' themselves while experiencing the capacity to reconnect with pleasure, fun, creativity and self-expression.

Specifically, TSR was identified as a setting that provides *cultural safety* through validating the cultural traditions and backgrounds of these students. Examples cited were of the ways in which TSR promotes cross-cultural respect through using the native languages of students in music and singing classes, and eliciting stories from students from their countries or cultures of birth and incorporating them into TSR activities for all children.

Sensitivity to gender issues across cultures was identified by educators as another element of TSR's capacity for providing cultural safety for students, as was being sensitive and responsive to the different needs of individuals and groups of students based on cultural values and attitudes.

Helping students to *feel good about what they bring with them* into the learning environment, and showing that these offerings are valued and respected by teachers, teaching artists and other students, was seen as a vital element of the safe learning environment promoted by TSR programs.

Overall, TSR was perceived by educators as fostering what one teacher called ‘a caring learning space’ through its focus on providing fun, structured activity; valuing and respecting everyone; practising non-judgemental approaches to learning and skills development; setting clear goals and working toward them consistently; manifesting patience with students’ different skill levels and progress; and providing ‘the right people’ (i.e. arts professionals who can empathise with different students, including vulnerable students) for the job.

6.3.2 Empowering refugee background students through arts-based learning

Another key element of TSR’s impact as a learning environment reported by educators involved the opportunities TSR provides to draw on students’ strengths, interests and talents through arts-based learning. This was seen by educators as crucial in fostering greater appreciation of and encouragement and praise for students who may be struggling in traditional learning areas such as literacy and numeracy, but who shine when engaged in various arts-focused learning activities like drama, percussion, dance and music. Moreover, TSR was seen to enhance the opportunity for both classroom teachers and teaching artists to become involved in positive relationships with students, to the extent of altering teachers’ perceptions of students who performed less well in conventional classroom settings (both academically and in relation to behavioural issues). Mentoring and support from teachers was reported to be enhanced through opportunities provided by TSR, through a greater focus on student interests, talents and potential.

6.3.3 Individual impacts of TSR programs for refugee background students

The main impacts of the arts-based learning offered through TSR programs on individual students in this cohort were identified by educators in the study as involving key areas of personal development, learning and socialisation:

Personal development

Increased opportunities for self-expression; improved self-confidence and self-esteem; connection to and validation of own culture and history; new opportunities for self-knowledge and self-discovery (of interests, talents, skills)

Learning

Enhanced engagement with skills development; new or stronger language acquisition skills; improved comprehension and concentration skills; improved concentration and ‘tuning in’; increased enthusiasm about being at school in general through their enjoyment of TSR learning environments

Socialisation

Greater engagement with other students; increased social skills for ‘shy’ students; enhanced leadership capacity.

6.3.4 Interpersonal impacts of TSR programs for refugee background students

The main impacts of the arts-based learning offered through TSR programs for individual students in this cohort were identified by educators in the study as involving the key areas of sense of belonging across cultures and relationship building:

Sense of belonging across cultures

Ability to negotiate activities so that students from different cultural backgrounds feel and are included; emphasis on cultural exchange; sense of connectedness with others through arts-based learning; focus on group work in arts that builds on the existing sense of group identity and community and promotes teamwork and mutual responsibility

Relationship building

New or strengthened relationships between students, students and teachers, and teaching artist and teachers and teaching artists, particularly when teachers are involved alongside students in TSR classes and where strong mentoring and collaborative relationships exist between teachers and teaching artists; closer bonding between students, teachers and teaching artists through the focus on group performance and the sharing of common goals and achievements.

6.3.5 Institutional impacts of TSR programs for the whole school community

Perhaps the richest and most striking findings reported by the educators revolved around the many key impacts of TSR program delivery for the broader school community: both refugee- and non-refugee-background students, teachers, teaching artists, principals, parents, families and the local community in general. In the responses of educators to questions concerning how TSR affects the entire educational environment, it became clear that schools place enormous value on the positive impact of *alternative arts-based approaches to learning and development* as practised by TSR. Educators identified the following major impacts in their view of TSR programs for the school community as a whole:

6.3.5.1 Variety of and respite from conventional school curriculum

TSR was perceived to provide a combination of creative freedom of expression with routine and structure, which was seen as a valuable complement to more formal learning expectations and environments. It was also identified, as above, with the chance for students to experience a sense of respite from school-based pressures and demands that often characterise the day-to-day experience of some refugee background students who are struggling to fit in with traditional subjects and learning expectations, a finding that reinforces earlier research (Waldorf 2002). Educators also valued TSR's capacity to model different teaching and learning modalities, emphasising the ways in which these programs create a broadened landscape of pedagogical options and avenues for both teachers and students.

6.3.5.2 Enhanced participation and knowledge base for teachers through TSR programs with refugee background students

Educators commented on the ways in which TSR assisted both students and teaching staff in managing transitional settlement experiences more effectively through providing a structure and framework where these experiences could be explored and processed through arts forms such as drama, dance, singing, and drumming.

TSR was reported as offering the opportunity for teachers to learn new things about student capacities, skills and interests, which in turn promoted new teacher relationships with and perspectives on students through observing their participation in TSR arts programs. Significantly, the benefits of this were perceived by educators to flow into other classes outside the TSR

environment, as teachers tried to connect the arts-based learning experience of students through TSR to other subjects, such as English and maths.

As noted above, many educators commented on how TSR's emphasis on showcasing students' talents and abilities through performance means students who do not excel in the classroom might nevertheless shine in arts-based settings and the positive impacts this can have not only for students but for teachers as well.

In addition, educators felt that TSR programs sometimes offered new knowledge and techniques for engaging children who are shy or ill at ease in more formal educational settings by using novel strategies to get them involved and talking or participating in both arts-based and non-TSR classes. Several teachers and teaching artists described the revelation of seeing highly disengaged refugee background children 'come to life' during a TSR class, and working with this to extend their engagement with other teaching and learning activities outside the TSR setting.

A final insight from educators around the enhanced knowledge base created for teachers by having TSR programs in their schools involved the perception that teachers can become more attuned to their own vulnerability (e.g. by risking looking 'silly' or being inexperienced in an arts form) through participating in arts-based activities alongside their students. This was seen by educators as enhancing their empathy for student experiences and anxieties about learning new things. It was also seen as helping to demystify teachers as authority figures for students who may come from cultural backgrounds where the teacher is seen as a highly authoritarian and potentially frightening part of the school environment.

6.3.5.3 Increased opportunities to validate cultural experiences of students and learn from them

Educators spoke of the ways in which TSR embraced the cultural backgrounds and offerings of children from a range of different communities, viewing these as forms of capital to be built on. This was seen in positive contrast to an exclusive focus on learning about the cultural antecedents and practices of Australia or the arts in Western culture more broadly. They also commented on the value of learning more about children's own traditions and cultural practices made possible through teachers and principals being able to observe and participate in TSR classes.

6.3.5.4 Connecting with families and communities

Educators were passionate about the increased opportunity to connect with parents and families, the wider school community and the general community through their school's involvement in TSR. They saw TSR as giving children valuable new arts-based skills and knowledge to take home with them and share with friends and community members outside school.

They also emphasised the positive impacts of engaging parents through their children's learning in the arts, although it was not always easy to get parents to come along to performances, especially working parents, if performances were held during the day.

Other barriers to connecting with refugee background parents cited by educators included families with limited access to transport and those experiencing language difficulties. Educators also reported that while TSR offers a great chance for parents to learn more about and feel encouraged to embrace their children's aspirations and talents in the arts, not all parents are comfortable with or see the arts as a legitimate part of the school curriculum, especially compared to subjects such as English, maths and science.

Finally, TSR classes were perceived by educators to offer excellent opportunities for children to perform at local community festivals and events, as well as TSR-auspiced public performances. This was seen as a good way of increasing awareness and acceptance of refugee background children and their cultures within the broader community.

6.3.5.5 Managing behavioural issues through TSR arts-based learning

Educators noted that TSR classes can help to reduce the incidence of and manage more effectively some behavioural issues associated with a proportion of refugee background children. Some children were identified as having continuing problems in dealing with aspects of their experience as refugees or problems at home relating to the hardships and pressures of the settlement experience. TSR classes were seen as providing a constructive outlet for children's energy through their emphasis on freedom of expression and creative physical movement and their focus on creating something new. The different learning styles supported by arts-based learning – with their emphasis on process, group work, cumulative self-discovery and attainment of new skills with a strong aesthetic component – were seen as helpful for teachers and students in minimising the stresses and behavioural issues that some refugee background children deal with on a regular basis.

6.3.5.6 Professional artists and arts expertise

Of great importance to educators was the opportunity TSR programs gave them to draw on and learn from professional artists and their expertise. Many teachers spoke of the positive impact of having accomplished and experienced professional artists delivering classes to students, and of their own learning from teaching artists around particular skills that may be transferable by teachers to other classroom settings.

Educators stressed that it was vital for students to have consistent exposure to practising artists perceived by students as genuinely expert and with authoritative knowledge of arts forms rather than enthusiastic amateurs who do not really know what they are doing. Educators saw the professional expertise provided by TSR artists and the inspiration to continuously engage with arts-based learning that they foster among students as a key asset of TSR program delivery.

6.3.5.7 Professional development for teachers and sustainability of arts-based learning

Educators also saw a crucial positive impact for the whole school in the opportunity TSR affords teachers to engage in ongoing professional development through collaborative and mentoring relationships with teaching artists. Professional development opportunities were perceived as highly valuable by teachers, teaching artists and principals, and as a key component of the sustainability of arts-based learning for the school even after TSR programs have ceased. The main positive impacts identified by educators were the enhanced pedagogical repertoires for teachers that could be transferred beyond the TSR setting; teachers' increased confidence in offering basic arts learning as part of their curriculum; new teaching and learning strategies that could be incorporated into aspects of non-arts curriculum; and greater appreciation of and respect for the role the arts can play as part of an overall approach to education and curriculum development.

Educators also felt they learned new things about working specifically with refugee background students through collaborating with and seeing the impacts of arts-based learning for this group through their mutual involvement in TSR programs.

However, educators also identified some barriers in relation to professional development for teachers through TSR program involvement. These included lack of time for teachers to spend on professional development activities with TSR artists; lack of teacher confidence in building their arts-based skills; poor matching of TSR teaching artist mentors with mentee teachers; and the perception of TSR teaching artists that some teachers were not receptive to using arts-based learning in their teaching practice because they did not see it as a 'legitimate' form of academic learning or development.

6.4 The difference between teachers and teaching artists

Finally, a major impact of TSR programs for refugee background students identified by educators revolved around the liminal status of teaching artists, who are both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the school contexts in which TSR programs are delivered. This suggests that the ways in which teaching artists do not belong to the schools they teach in is just as important as the ways in which they are perceived to belong to these schools.

We have summarised the perceptions of educators concerning the value of having high-quality professional arts expertise brought into the school through TSR's experienced teaching artists. We turn now to the voices of teaching artists themselves, who offered additional insights into their experience of working in schools with refugee background students.

6.4.1 Positives and negatives for TSR teaching artists

Teaching artists stressed throughout the study that being – and being seen to be – an 'artist' rather than a 'teacher' had both positive and negative impacts.

On the positive side, teaching artists felt they had significant 'freedom to act' in relation to how they designed and delivered TSR classes. They valued this flexibility and the opportunities it gave them to explore different teaching and learning styles that were responsive to the particular needs and levels of refugee background students. They enjoyed the sense of not being constrained by the day-to-day demands of working with students across different subjects, which they felt characterised the experience of classroom teachers.

They also felt that they were artists first, and that this was perceived as important by both students and the schools in which they worked. Most importantly, they valued the sense that they were able to bring their students into new worlds and new domains of knowledge through their professional experience, knowledge and status. This sense of bringing new worlds and new horizons to others through the arts extended also to teachers. Teaching artists felt they were helping teachers move beyond their 'comfort zones' in relation to what they knew and what they could do in their own classrooms when working with refugee background students.

On the negative side, teaching artists expressed a need to work closely with teachers when it came to understanding how to translate arts practice into viable teaching techniques. While they felt confident in their expertise as arts professionals they felt they lacked some of the pedagogical training that would help them feel equally confident as teachers of the arts.

Some teaching artists also reported feeling insufficiently prepared or lacking in confidence and skills to manage the range of learning and behavioural management issues that can arise with vulnerable students who are dealing with many stressors and pressures in their school and home lives.

However, the teaching artists also indicated their sense that a major impact of TSR programs for

refugee background students was their ability to engage non-traditional learners in feeling more confident about their learning and more trusting of the educational environment in general.

6.4.2 Challenges identified by teaching artists

Teaching artists identified the following challenges for achieving positive impacts for refugee background students through TSR programs: combating the perception that arts-based learning is not 'legitimate' in the eyes of some students, parents, teachers and the general community; dealing with 'time-poor' teachers who may not be able to support or engage fully with TSR teaching artists; and (as above) feeling under-prepared in dealing with a range of behavioural management issues presented by refugee background students.

Most importantly, teaching artists stressed their need for more context and knowledge around refugee experiences and issues. They said that they, their students and the schools in which they teach would benefit from teaching artists receiving more extended, in-depth training and preparation before they begin TSR program delivery.

6.5 Sustainability and knowledge transfer

Sustainability and knowledge transfer are fundamental to the ethos and practice of TSR as an organisation. A major focus of this study was the issue of what gets left behind by TSR teaching artists and program delivery when TSR programs are no longer offered at a particular school and how arts pedagogies can continue to be used effectively within the classroom for the benefit of future students. Some teachers and teaching artists spoke of the success of TSR sustainability in terms of ongoing relationships that continued even after a teacher had changed schools, or a TSR program had ceased at a particular school. Also cited by educators as evidence of positive sustainability and knowledge transfer were the significant resources made available by TSR through its website for continuing professional development and training in arts-based teaching and learning. This was seen as a major asset by educators in the study and linked strongly to the success of some schools' efforts to embed the arts more comprehensively across the curriculum.

However, teaching artists themselves were ambivalent about the amount of time they were able to spend with each individual school before they commenced TSR delivery in a particular school setting. They said that a single meeting with the principal and teachers prior to starting their own program was insufficient. They wanted more contact with schools and more information from schools about the students they would be working with before commencing classes.

All of the educators emphasised the importance of the following factors in helping to embed sustainability and knowledge transfer as an outcome of TSR involvement in schools, both in relation to working with refugee background children and more generally:

- Developing collaborative partnerships between teaching artists and teachers, including both formal and informal mentoring relationships
- Building teachers' confidence in their own capacity to offer arts-based learning
- Sharing professional development resources and knowledge freely
- Explicitly acknowledging the different but complementary strengths of TSR teaching artists and classroom teachers and how they can learn from each other in relation to arts-based outcomes for students

- Understanding that teacher receptiveness to using arts-based learning is best approached through a series of 'small steps' rather than expecting teachers to absorb arts-based learning techniques and models all at once
- Developing co-learning strategies that allow teachers to feel they are not only learning from but offering new knowledge to teaching artists
- Maintaining respect for each other's pedagogies and practices.

Practical mechanisms for achieving these sustainability goals suggested by educators included:

- Routinely involving teachers in weekly class activities with students and teaching artists
- Meeting with teachers at the beginning and end of each TSR semester to prepare adaptive materials for non-TSR subjects that incorporate arts-based learning techniques
- Minimising any feelings of intimidation that teachers have of teaching artists' skills (which can lead to feeling unable to risk trying arts-based activities with students) by ensuring robust co-learning mechanisms are in place and are practised regularly throughout the semester
- Emphasising continuously the benefits of arts-based pedagogies for students in relation to sense of agency, engagement with learning and self-confidence in developing new skills that are transferable to non-TSR teaching and learning domains and outcomes
- Ensuring that the whole school, backed by the principal, is committed to developing sustainability mechanisms and knowledge transfer between teaching artists and teachers.

6.6 Best practice models

In many respects, TSR's current program design and delivery offers a successful best-practice model for embedding arts-based learning within the school curriculum as a means of promoting positive impacts and outcomes for refugee-background children in relation to sense of wellbeing, sense of belonging and, critically, engagement with learning of both arts and general academic knowledge and skills. Best practice in this context must specifically address a range of social, educational and settlement needs for refugee background children as they transition into new environments and communities. In assessing the impacts and outcomes of TSR's current programs through our multiple case study data and analysis, we have found that these programs align well with those features identified as best practice when considering the role of arts and culture in social change (Gould 2005), namely, programs that support refugee background young people in the early phases of settlement to:

- Feel safe from threats from other people
- Experience tolerance
- Feel welcome and experience friendliness
- Have a sense of belonging and feel part of the community
- Have friends
- Be able to maintain cultural practise and identity
- Develop an understanding of the cultural values of the destination society
- Have access to participation in the cultural life of the destination society
- Help destination communities gain an understanding and appreciation of the cultures and values of refugees/asylum seekers. (Gould 2005)

Moreover, our research has found that TSR programs produce outcomes and impacts that accord well with best-practice benchmarks identified in the research literature on the benefits of arts-based learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. This includes the evidence-based ability of TSR programs to:

- Positively influence children and adolescents' overall development (Bryce et al. 2004)
- Contribute to personal wellbeing and potentially have a positive impact on academic achievement (Bahri 2006)
- Engage members of lower socio-economic, small minority ethnic and otherwise 'hard-to-reach' groups in ways that more conventional educational organisations and state agencies often find extremely difficult (Bambridge, Gray & Thorne 2010)
- Improve outcomes for social learning; promote partnerships and problem-solving in learning contexts; promote partnerships and resolution and personalising learning (DEECD 2009)
- Incorporate social justice learning. (Risner & Stinson 2010)

Our own research suggests that the refugee background students participating in New Moves require most the balance of structure and freedom, challenge and support, and engagement of both new horizons and familiar forms of cultural practice that are essential for successful settlement and adaptation in a new social and cultural environment. The Song Room's model of arts-based learning successfully provides these key elements. We believe these models and approaches can be further developed to translate the positive benefits for refugee-background learners identified in this study into additional concrete initiatives, policies and programs that can enhance cross-cultural harmony, sense of social inclusion and broader community engagement of and by refugee-background students and communities through the arts.

6.7 Discussion

New Moves has shown that TSR programs in creative arts within a broader school curriculum are highly positive for refugee background children and young people. Young people themselves identified a range of positive experiences and outcomes from their own perspectives on participation in TSR activities and placed most emphasis on their engagement with learning, followed by a sense of belonging and a sense of wellbeing. They offered important insights into why TSR programs are effective in fostering increased self-confidence and self-esteem, a sense of mastery of skills and achievement, and a sense of engagement in learning, related to having fun while learning, freedom of self-expression, cultural continuity, cultural connectedness and sense of belonging through group activities and being well supported by teaching artists and teachers.

Similarly, educators provided valuable insights about the impacts of TSR programs for refugee background students, focusing significantly not only on the individual and interpersonal benefits for refugee background students, but also on the whole-of-school benefits that TSR programs offer in creating a culturally safe, dynamic and mutual learning and development environment around arts-based skills and knowledge for students, teaching artists, teachers, principals, parents, families and the broader community.

TSR teaching artists play a pivotal role in the world of TSR school-based arts programs, straddling both their professional communities of practice as artists and the communities of the schools in which they teach. Their role as both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' is valuable as much for their

'outsider' status as for the extent to which they are successfully integrated within relationships and structures during their time at these schools.

Teaching artists have a critical role to play in working with teachers to extend and transfer sustainable knowledge around arts-based learning into the broader curriculum. Similarly, teachers have a critical role to play in working with teaching artists to promote greater understanding and development of pedagogical skills and expertise in translating arts-based approaches into viable classroom learning environments, and in helping teaching artists understand and cope with the behavioural issues they may face when working with refugee background students.

A significant outcome for all those involved in arts-based learning with refugee background students through TSR programs is the extent to which forms of transculturation take place. Transculturation, which involves the mutual transformative effects of 'giving and taking' across cultures for both new arrivals and the community of destination, has been identified by the researchers as occurring at many levels within TSR environment at the six schools in this project. This means not only refugee background students being provided with the chance to broaden their cultural and knowledge horizons, but also teachers, teaching artists and parents learning new things from students about cultural traditions, values, knowledge and capital.

In this sense, the researchers discern in some of the data the beginnings of the 'new social reality' afforded by transcultural practices, one in which elements of different cultural orientations and ways of being occupying shared social spaces are fused in a new whole. TSR has the potential to be a major vehicle for enhancing the development of this new social reality in Australia through its emphasis on cross-cultural learning and sharing as a fundamental tenet of TSR activities, and its commitment to public arts performances by refugee background children.

Lastly, community members who were interviewed identified similar themes as those mentioned by students and staff. However, some of their comments were more developed and emphasised the role of the arts in ensuring cultural continuity and remembering valued aspects of their home countries. These participants also discussed the restorative potential of arts practices and the role arts can play in assisting settlement. Other issues included access to the arts and the challenges of affordability and not knowing how the system worked. Nevertheless, there was consensus about the positive roles of arts practice in the lives of the young people and their communities.

6.8 Limitations

This project was conducted within a community-based participatory framework and used multi-sited case studies as a methodology. Multiple researchers participated in the data gathering process, which also involved using different data sources. Various protocols were put in place to ensure that researchers had a shared understanding of the research aims, methodology and related processes for data gathering and analysis. We also endeavoured to work according to the framework to the extent that practical constraints (e.g. timeframes, resources) allowed this to happen. Although we were able to execute the program after initial changes were made in line with the recommendations arising from the consultations, some issues and challenges remained, as might be expected with community-based research. These issues were similar to those reported in other research on refugee background populations, and included the following:

- Difficulties accessing community members for interview for a host of reasons, including timing and limited understanding of the need for the research

- Difficulty pursuing in interviews some of the issues and topics under consideration with the younger cohort including the sophistication of some of the concepts; inherent difficulties with translation; assumptions about linguistic and conceptual equivalence in face-to-face interviews; and the power differentials suggested by this – all of which put limits on the depth of the interview data (partially offset by gathering additional data)
- Researchers' inability to feed back to the participants the findings of the project, although some feedback occurred with the young people around their photo-diaries.

While further research in this area with cohorts of refugee background children should be cognisant of and if possible work through some of the limitations identified above, we see the fact that the project gathered primarily qualitative data as one of its main strengths, rather than a limitation, since this allowed young people the opportunity to report on their own experiences, albeit with the assistance of a translator in some cases. This is a major strength of the project, for it is vitally important to hear from young people of refugee background about their experiences of settlement in their own voices.

NEW MOVES

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS



7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

7.1

This study provides the basis for further research into the impacts of TSR programs and activities for refugees and new arrivals across Australia. While New Moves has yielded valuable knowledge and insights and has offered a vehicle for hearing the voices of refugee background children themselves as one of the primary target groups for these programs, its focus and scope has necessarily been limited in providing an in-depth qualitative cross-case analysis in a bounded metropolitan location. More knowledge about comparative experiences of refugee background children in non-metropolitan settings, in other Australian states and of additional ethnic and language groups to those included in New Moves would be useful for confirming or challenging the findings presented here. Importantly, this will also mean giving attention to the kinds of processes and outcomes that refugee background young people value in their own lives, not only those dictated in education policy documents.

7.2

TSR program design and delivery offer a successful model for embedding arts-based learning within school curriculum as a means of promoting positive impacts and outcomes for refugee background children in relation to sense of wellbeing, sense of belonging and, critically, engagement with learning of both arts and general academic knowledge and skills. This group of students requires the balance of structure and freedom, challenge and support, and engagement of both new horizons and familiar forms of cultural practice that is essential for successful settlement and adaptation in a new social and cultural environment. TSR's model of arts-based learning successfully provides these key elements. We recommend that TSR seeks funding to translate the positive benefits for refugee background learners identified in this study into further concrete initiatives and programs that our research shows can enhance cross-cultural harmony, sense of social inclusion and broader community engagement of and by refugee background students and communities through the arts.

7.3

Key elements of best practice models in arts-based learning that both supplement and align with broader school curriculum, aims and objectives are evident in the design and delivery of existing TSR programs. These elements of best practice are primarily found at the level of successfully engaging in learning refugee background children at risk of educational and social disengagement. This is achieved through arts-based learning environments and activities that emphasise fun, creativity, artistic discipline and professionalism, collaboration, teamwork, personal development, respect for individual student needs and interests, respect for and inclusion of diverse cultural traditions and knowledge, and mutual co-learning models between students and teachers.

7.4

This study's outcomes support existing research on the benefits of arts-based learning, and specifically link this to positive educational and social impacts for refugee background children in the early stages of settlement. In particular, the elements of best practice in TSR programs relating to refugee background students identified above are potentially transferable both to other refugee-background cohorts and to other groups of socially disadvantaged and at risk students. The transferable nature of best practice elements in the TSR arts-based teaching and learning model should be further researched in order to develop sustainable arts-based programs for schools that locate the arts as a central, rather than peripheral, component of the overall curriculum.

7.5

Related to this, the benefits of TSR programs for the whole-of-school community at the institutional level have emerged as a key component of the study's findings. Consequently, systematic feedback and evaluation by school principals to supplement existing feedback from classroom teachers should form part of TSR's regular review and evaluation processes so as to further strengthen and provide insight into the institutional benefits of TSR arts-based learning programs. This should include consideration of whether the benefits of TSR programs for groups such as refugee background children flow into more general benefits for school communities in which refugee background children are a proportion rather than the totality of the student cohort.

7.6

The voices of refugee-background children are sometimes marginalised or simply not heard in research exploring their experience. Mechanisms for systematically collecting and analysing the experiences of refugee background students participating in TSR programs, and the incorporation of refugee background student voices and perspectives into the regular assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of TSR programs, should be implemented. This could include strategies such as drawing and photography that would enable students to capture their experiences in ways that are not dependent on English language skills. Including the systematic collection of student data in TSR's quality control and assessment processes would help further develop and refine the effectiveness of TSR programs for this target group of young people.

7.7

Our findings suggest that the unique 'insider/outsider' status of TSR teaching artists in school settings is highly valued by students, teachers and principals; extremely effective in promoting high-quality arts-based teaching and skills development; and critically important for teaching artists' own sense of professional wellbeing and worth. This status should be preserved, as our findings suggest its benefits are both clear and far-reaching.

Teaching artists need the freedom to use their arts-based experience and knowledge in innovative ways within the TSR curriculum and to have this recognised and valued. However, they and we have also identified a need for stronger support, training and development to advance and consolidate their pedagogical and student development skills base. The emphasis of TSR on supporting not just skills-based arts but 'whole-of-student' development across an interlocking

matrix of social, cultural, interpersonal, settlement and educational needs suggests that the role of TSR teaching artists is significantly more than that of 'artists-in-residence' on the one hand, while also differing significantly from standard classroom teaching practice on the other.

Teaching artists straddle the worlds of teaching expertise and professional artistic accomplishment in important ways related to their status as both insiders and outsiders within the school environments in which TSR programs are embedded. The balance between maintaining and promoting the benefits of both insider/outsider status and teacher/artist knowledge and skills is one of TSR's most unique and innovative program features, and this dynamic combination should be built on further through structured professional development for teaching artists that leads to clear outcomes in enhanced pedagogical expertise.

7.8

In this context, teaching artists themselves have identified a series of factors that would further support professional delivery of TSR programs in relation to the cohort of students considered in this study. These needs and the strategies to address them identified by the study's findings should be considered by TSR to further strengthen the effectiveness of TSR artists within schools with refugee background children. Chief amongst these are:

- a. Better resourcing of teaching artist training and development around critical factors and contexts related to the history, experience and needs of refugee background children
- b. Further pedagogical training, support and resources to enhance the capacity of teaching artists to pursue valuable alternative arts-based learning and teaching models and techniques
- c. Additional pre-service training for teaching artists around behavioural issues and management for students who have experienced significant trauma, dislocation and educational disruption, such as refugee background students
- d. More targeted matching of teaching artist mentors with mentee teachers to avoid teaching artists feeling they are working with unresponsive/unprepared teachers who will not significantly benefit from such mentoring
- e. More extended in-depth contact with teachers and schools where refugee background children are taught prior to the commencement of TSR programs.

7.9

Barriers to refugee-background parent and family involvement with TSR programs and performances were highlighted by a number of research participants. These included language barriers, limited access to transport to attend performances, and scheduling of public performances during the day when working parents and families are unable to attend. TSR should consider scheduling at least some of their annual public performances involving refugee background students and schools in the evening, when availability to attend will increase for many refugee background parents.

7.10

Consideration should be given to further extending and resourcing existing community liaison relationships between TSR and community representatives from refugee background communities. The benefits include greater access to and understanding of specific refugee background

community perspectives on the arts and how more robust links between schools and communities might be established using the arts as a vehicle for sustainable relationship building and participation.

7.11

A critical factor in ensuring sustainability and knowledge transfer involves a whole-of-school commitment to including arts-based learning as part of the general curriculum. Mechanisms and incentives that enhance whole-of-school involvement in the arts-based learning models promoted by TSR, and which ensure that teachers are provided with adequate time and resources for professional development to sustain arts-based learning once formal TSR program delivery ceases, should be developed in partnership with one or more 'flagship' schools as a pilot. Such a pilot could then be extended further to other schools.

7.12

There are clear benefits in collecting longitudinal data to further inform research into the impact and effectiveness of TSR programs for refugee background students. As a qualitative study, the impacts and outcomes dealt with in New Moves are those perceived 'in the moment' by students and with varying degrees of retrospectivity and reflection by educators. However, a number of educators described longer term impacts for refugee background students who had left the case-study schools in question but continued to use the arts-based learning and skills they acquired in TSR in new educational and community settings. TSR is well placed to track and monitor student development between English language schools and mainstream primary and secondary schools, for example, to better identify not only the short-term but also the medium- and long-term impacts of TSR program delivery and participation on sense of belonging and social inclusion, career development and pathways, engagement with learning, and cultural identity and connectedness.

7.13

Of the three domains explored in New Moves, the positive impacts of TSR for engagement with learning was the strongest domain reported by student participants from refugee background students, while the strongest domain for educators involved the institutional-level benefits of TSR programs for refugee background young people and also the educators who teach and work with them. The researchers recommend that these findings in particular be used to strengthen the case for increased funding from state and federal agencies on the basis that one of the highest risk factors for young people, including those from refugee backgrounds, relates to disengagement with learning and the accompanying social isolation and limited economic and employment opportunities such disengagement can generate. As noted in the key findings above, engagement with learning is itself inextricably bound up with a sense of wellbeing, a sense of belonging and thriving social relationships. This in turn impacts on whole-of-school and community wellbeing. TSR's role in promoting these intersections should be strongly supported.

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8. REFERENCES

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NEW MOVES

APPENDICES



9.1 ST BELVEDERE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Michele Grossman

The school context

St Belvedere¹ is an independent – (non-government) Catholic school for years P–6 (primary) in an inner-urban suburb of Melbourne. St Belvedere has a 98 per cent English as a Second or Further Language (ESL/EFL) student population. The school serves 152 students (75 girls and 77 boys). The largest two non-English speaking background student groups are Vietnamese and Sudanese background children. Attendance rates per annum are high at 92 per cent (My Schools website, accessed May 2010).

In addition to its core Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS)-based curriculum, St Belvedere also runs specialist literacy, numeracy, transition (Prep and Year 6) and Languages other than English (LOTE) programs, as well as support and activities aimed at new arrivals, special needs children and pastoral care and wellbeing. The school has strong links into the local community both through allied Catholic and non-denominational charitable associations such as the Brotherhood of St Laurence and The Smith Family, as well as stand-alone community programs such as the Breakfast Program and the Homework Club, which are run in partnership with the local council and the residents' association at the nearby public housing estate. St Belvedere also has an active parent-teacher association and regularly brings parents in for workshops and discussions around such issues as single-parent families, intergenerational relationships and other topics. The school's programs and activities are strongly informed by what it terms a 'Christian ethos' emphasising 'academic excellence and personal growth' (St Belvedere school brochure, June 2010).

TSR program at school

TSR has run teaching-artist programs at St Belvedere since 2008. Various teaching artists have worked at the school for the last two or so years, with TSR currently running both singing and dancing programs at the school. The twelve students for this case study in 2010 were drawn from a Year 5 group who are taking a TSR dance class run by Eleanor, a teaching artist and movement and dance professional.

The students

The twelve boys and girls who contributed to the St Belvedere case study were all from South Sudanese backgrounds (two-thirds Dinka and one-third Nuer). This reflects the major patterns of humanitarian refugee resettlement in Western countries from Sudan since the civil war began in 1983, with the vast majority of Australia's Sudanese refugee population arriving post-1996. Participants were between the ages of ten and twelve, in Years 5/6 at school, and had come as refugees to Australia. There were six male and six female participants (see Table 1). A number of these students had learned some English prior to arrival in Australia during their time at the UNHCR Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. Others, however, spoke no English at all when they arrived at St Belvedere. Several children also spoke Sudanese Arabic, the lingua franca used to

¹ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

facilitate communication between different tribal and ethnic groups within Sudan and the official language of Sudan as a nation. All children, together with the one Sudanese parent who participated in the case study interviews, were able to understand and speak English well, and no interpreters were required. The participants varied widely in terms of length of stay in Australia, ranging from one to seven years. Duration of enrolment at St Belvedere was between six months and five years.

Table 1: Selected demographics

Gender	Cultural background	Age	Years in Australia	Languages at home
Female	South Sudanese	11	3	Nuer, English, Sudanese Arabic
Female	South Sudanese	10	5	Dinka, English
Female	South Sudanese	11	6.5	Nuer, English
Male	South Sudanese	11	6.5	Dinka
Male	South Sudanese	10	5.75	Dinka
Female	South Sudanese	10	6.5	Dinka, English
Female	South Sudanese	11	7	Dinka
Male	South Sudanese	10	6	Mostly Dinka, some English
Female	South Sudanese	12	1	Nuer
Male	South Sudanese	10	6	English
Male	South Sudanese	11	6	English, Arabic, Nuer
Male	South Sudanese	11	2	Dinka

Data gathering procedures and sources

In addition to the twelve student interviews, the principal, a Year 5 teacher, the TSR teaching artist for the dance class, and a parent (the mother of one of the study's participating female students) were also interviewed. Interviews took place between June and August 2010. The case study also involved the researcher observing and making notes on one dance class offered by the TSR teaching artist during the second week of interviews. This class was distinctive in that it was the last class before the children in this group performed a dance routine as part of TSR's cross-school public performance program at BMW Edge in Melbourne's Federation Square on 23 June, so the emphasis was very much on fine-tuning the routine that had been prepared for the performance.

The St Belvedere case study involved the collation and analysis of data from the following sources at the school, as summarised below.

The teacher (T) is male and has been a primary school teacher for 34 years, with broad

experience at a number of schools. He was familiar with TSR programs at other schools before coming to St Belvedere, where he has taught middle primary classes for two years (beginning 2008). He currently teaches the Year 5 group that contributed the student sample for this case study. About three-fifths of this class are from refugee backgrounds.

The principal (P) is female and has been at St Belvedere since 2008. She teaches selected classes at the school in addition to her duties as principal. Her school has run TSR programs in dance, singing and choir since she arrived, and she is now negotiating a new program focusing on instrumental music tuition provided by TSR. She is active with colleagues in developing extra-curricular programs that draw local community organisations and parents into the life of the school, as well as overseeing pastoral care requirements for individual students. She has detailed knowledge of individual students' backgrounds and histories both at school and at home.

The TSR teaching artist (TA) is female and has been involved in delivering arts curriculum at St Belvedere and other schools through TSR since 2007. Graduating in 1996 from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, she is a professional dancer of eleven years' experience. Her pedagogical framework as a dance instructor is informed by a desire to 'find ways to empower [my students] physically, to unlock their imaginations in ways that get their bodies moving and draw a link between everyday movement and dance movement so that students can join those things together to create a dance or story or communication with emotion.'

The parent (Pa) is female, from a Dinka Sudanese background and has two children at St Belvedere: an eleven year old daughter in Year 5 currently in the TSR dance program, and a five year old son in Prep. She came to Australia in 2003 as a refugee from the UNHCR Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, where her daughter was born. Her son was born in Australia in 2004. She and her children live in a local public housing estate. This mother is active in her local community and runs traditional African dance classes for children, both Sudanese and non-Sudanese, who at times are sought out to perform at a range of Sudanese and other community based festivals and events.

Findings and interpretation

Student voices about the school

SENSE OF SCHOOL BELONGING

Sense of school belonging was ascertained in relation to participants' experiences of being at school, and in relation to making and being with friends and opportunities to learn new things together. In particular, participants reported the relative ease with which they made new friends and their sense that they had more friends now than when they first came to St Belvedere. They mentioned a program set up by the school that matches older students (such as those in Year 5), with prep-aged children who are just starting school, as well as with others who are new to St Belvedere but may be in later years of their schooling. This 'buddy' system means the older children derive a sense of being recognised and valued by other children at school and feel they have an important role and set of responsibilities to help newcomers ease into life in an unfamiliar school environment – a particularly important feature for young people who are themselves 'new arrivals' in the Australian context.

Like look[ing] after the preps year and play with them well and teach them how to write and we get to choose what they do. I like being with little kids and showing them around the whole school.

I have heaps of friends, absolutely lots of friends. Like when people are new, I show them around, just act nice.

Because when new people come we introduced them [to other kids], we helped them and then they say, 'Oh, you're really nice' and then we say, 'You can play with us at our lunchtime and we'll all play together'.

One participant said learning English was a key to developing friendships, saying she had more friends than when she started 'because I can speak English now. Last year I couldn't speak English properly'. Other comments related to the importance of being connected to social networks: 'Having friends around to help you feel comfortable'; 'My friends...never get angry with me'; 'How you get along with each other'; 'People that I know are related to me'.

Other children commented on the importance of managing the inward and outward flow of children who may shift to or arrive from other schools; the buddy system seems to ease the replacement of friends lost to different schools or suburbs.

Yet, belonging was not always reported as positive. Some students commented on the consequences that follow when children transgress norms and that this may undermine belonging. Participants also said that being excluded from a group and racialised, and kids not listening to the teacher or not following the rules set by the school, were the main reasons for feeling badly at school:

Like sometimes I get angry when people don't do [things] right. Some people do silly things and then they sit out, then it's all better again.

[Kids who talk when the teacher told them not to are] making our school bad, because they're not listening to the teacher...They kick them out...[I feel] sad for them.

Sometimes when we're playing sport, some kids cheat and that's what I don't like. When they hit me and then they say I'm out, and then I say okay and when I get back in they say there's only three people and they shout and then I say why are you shouting at me? Then they say because you're black. They said get out and then I just went out. [It made me feel] angry.

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND SAFETY

Many participants talked about the roles of teachers and peers in their school lives. They said it is important for them to feel safe and supported and to have someone to talk to about problems, as well as just being with their friends. Students said feeling safe and being in an environment with support and boundaries as important to their sense of wellbeing:

This school, it's a safe place to stay so I feel safe when I'm here.

Sometimes I get angry but I'll calm down because the teacher takes me to another room and that's how I'll calm down.

My principal, she's nice, she takes care of everything. She's, like, responsible.

Makes me feel comfortable and know that you're safe.

Virtually all the children (11/12) in the sample said they felt they had someone to talk to if they were having problems. They reported they would either go to a teacher (including the principal), their friends, or to a combination of teachers and friends, if they needed to talk to someone: 1

talk to my friends and my friends tell me to go and talk to the teacher. If that will be a good idea I'll go and talk to the teacher'; 'You can go and talk to different teachers'; 'I have one teacher that I like, which is nice, all the teachers are nice'; 'I go to [the principal] if I have a problem'; 'My friends'; 'Friends'. One student declined to answer this question.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

Responses to the question of what these students would like to learn more about included wanting to be a dance teacher like the TSR teaching artist; two students wanting to go on to study and become teachers; one student wanting to learn more about Australian history and Indigenous land claims, and two wanting to go on to be doctors. Two boys, who indicated a consistent preoccupation with sport throughout the interviews, said they most wanted to learn more about soccer.

When asked what they most liked to do at school, nine out of twelve children said things such as, 'Learning new stuff'; 'You can do different skills'; 'You can learn more'; 'Learning new things'. 'Learning maths'; 'Learning to do English' and 'Learning to write and read' were amongst their three favourite things about being at school.

Maths was the most commonly cited subject that students wanted most to learn more about. There was also considerable focus on the practical uses of maths knowledge to help students navigate the practical domains of work, shopping, measurements and commerce:

Because maybe you want to be a shop keeper and you have to know your times tables so when people give you \$50 and the food was only 44 cents, the change would be like...

Maths, because if you have a house and you want to measure how much area it is so you can go and put on the carpet but you need to learn maths first to do it.

Maths, because you need it more than everything and it will help you more.

DISENGAGING WITH LEARNING

Some students resented having to do circuit training as part of the curriculum, which they felt was imposed on them even when they were tired or unable to successfully complete the activity satisfactorily. As two students commented:

I don't like to run, because it's like using all energies to run a lot, you have to run two laps. [Interviewer: Do you have to do it? Yes. Why?] Because my teacher said that we have to run, we have to watch others running.

The circuit, because sometimes you get tired and the teacher still says [you have to do] one and if you...like the teacher says you have to run two laps in two minutes or three minutes or less and the teacher says if you do [it] in [over] three minutes I think you have to do another two laps.

The same students drew a strong distinction between the 'creative' physical energy and pleasure they felt they had during the TSR dance class and feeling drained during and after the circuit training session. Interestingly, when the researcher asked the teacher about the circuit training and drew his attention to the contrast sketched by some students between circuit training and dance class, his response indicated that the students' perception that this was not a part of the curriculum designed to stimulate or engage students with learning was correct:

Circuit training came out of a discussion that I had with the principal when I was really having great trouble in the classroom and circuit training was simply designed to tire them out. The general objective was, let's get some energy spent so hopefully they will be quiet during the classroom. (T)

Student voices about being in the TSR program

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Learning new things about their peers, helping kids to be less shy, and sharing new dance moves as a form of social currency were the three main themes that developed in relation to student experiences in the TSR program. One-third of the twelve students did not distinguish between new friends made specifically in the TSR dance class and new friends made at school more generally, particularly since the whole of their Year 5 group does Eleanor's TSR class. However, another one-third of participants said they did make one or more new friends through the TSR class from both their own and other cultural backgrounds.

Of more significance for the children than making new friends through TSR was the chance to discover unsuspected abilities in their friends and classmates:

Like some people, I didn't know they could dance.

I never see them dance, but it was my first time seeing them dance in dance class. It was good, I was laughing because it was funny and fun.

Like some people I don't know they could dance. I like them better [now] because they can dance.

HELPING OTHERS FEEL LESS SHY

They especially noted helping kids to feel less shy as one of the main outcomes of doing dance together, since everyone had to participate and they did many things as a group:

Like some of my friends, they're shy but in dance class they feel good and they can dance. I didn't know they could dance because they're usually shy.

I learned that my friends, sometimes they get shy, sometimes they don't because they feel happy when someone's around them.

Yes. They're not shy [in dance class] because everybody dances.

DANCE AS SOCIAL CAPITAL TO CREATE, EXPAND OR CEMENT RELATIONSHIPS

The ways in which students circulate and distribute their new-found knowledge of additional dance moves and styles as a form of *social currency* – performing for others, further cementing existing social bonds or creating new ones – deserves special mention. It was interesting to see how many of the children in the sample emphasised the importance of sharing new dance moves and teaching others what they had learned as part of their social lives both inside and outside of school, as the following comments indicate:

Like when I came [to this school] I showed my moves and that's how I became friends because they liked that and it was cool and then they told me to teach them.

I like doing all my moves and showing everyone...I like them to enjoy and laugh with each other and they like the moves that I do and stuff.

So when you move places [to another school or suburb] you could show your moves and how you could do them.

One female student whose mother runs African dance classes in the local community also reported that what she was learning in the TSR class formed a kind of additional dance capital that she and her mother used in their own community-based routines:

I will show my mum the dance we learn [in TSR class], I tell her about it, she says 'Good' and then she says, 'Why can't we use a bit of that dance with our dance'. Okay.

SOCIAL RELATIONS, SAFETY AND ENJOYMENT

Students' responses to the interview questions focusing on their experience of wellbeing in relation to their Song Room dance program suggests that the enjoyment of social relations, achieving with others and feeling safe are derived from being and doing things with others.

Participants said that when everyone worked together, the experience of being in a dance group; feeling like an individual who is acknowledged and supported by a group; and learning from others in the group contributed to their sense of wellbeing:

It's about all of us, that we can all be one and we can all understand things but we just have to work hard at it. [Interviewer: Are there ever times when you feel like you would like to be doing the dance just by yourself?] No. I feel like it's good with a group.

Like when we have everyone go in the circle and then everybody does a move inside, and then when I go inside the circle everybody gets happy and claps for me. It makes me feel proud, happy, like I am not alone.

Nobody can tease you because they're all doing the same dance.

When asked what they didn't like about dance class, one-third of the children cited not listening, disruption of the class, or 'being naughty' as problems in the TSR class, diminishing their enjoyment of being part of the group:

When people are naughty, then the dance goes wrong, like if one person does something wrong the whole dance goes wrong.

Students also reported that they felt good about themselves when they felt they were learning new skills and gaining new or more confidence in their abilities. This included performing for and learning from others performing around them:

I like that I've got the dance that we've been taught, I have to learn until I've got it in my head. ...The thing that makes me [feel] good is I'm concentrating and getting it.

I feel good. I feel more energetic, confident, like [to] dance in front of the whole class. [I feel more confident because] I know more people.

I like when other people perform because it's interesting and how they do it, and, like, I want to see how they do it. Sometimes we have a good laugh, sometimes it's cool.

Some of these students set high standards for themselves and feel unhappy when they perceive they are not mastering what they learn in TSR as well as they could. While most students said there was nothing they didn't like about the dance class, when asked if there was anything about the TSR class that made them feel not so good about themselves, one student said:

Messing stuff up, when I stop and sit down when [other] people are dancing. [Interviewer: And so you feel...?] Sad because people are dancing when I'm not.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

New skills, an expanded sense of ability, having fun while learning, and being inspired by others to learn more were the key themes that were identified in relation to student responses to questions about engagement with learning and TSR.

New skills

As noted above, learning 'new moves' in the TSR dance class was seen as a major element of engagement with learning for these students. They went into some detail about specific 'new moves' that they were mastering: 'Jump and turn around'; 'The one that we have to spin your hand...helicopter'; 'Splits'. Some students also linked what they learned in dance class as part of their overall experience of learning in school:

Because they teach you stuff and you don't go to school for no reason, you go to school to learn and they give you activities and stuff and that's good for you.

They teach you, not like just one thing, they teach you jazz, pop...It's just like a chance.

It's fun and you get to be in groups and create your own moves with your friends and laugh, have a good time.

Also evident in students' responses was the excitement of feeling that some students were gaining new knowledge about and confidence in their own abilities through participating in dance class:

I learned that I can do anything but you just have to work hard at it and earn it. And feel happy about yourself.

Once, we were playing, my friend stretched my legs and I'd just done the splits, I don't know how. I done the splits then he said, 'How did you do that?' I was like, 'I don't know'. [Interviewer: So you learned that you could do something that you didn't think you could do before?] Yeah.

Eleanor teaching us one by one and everyone knowing the dance.

Students emphasised the importance of *having fun* while learning, both through the physical pleasure of dancing and through being in a group with each other in the TSR class:

It's really, really fun. It's fun because you and your friends just get the dance move and get along and have conversations.

Fun. It's better than sitting down all day and just your hands on a book.

[In] dance class you move your body, maths class you just use your brain. You get to move around, you can do anything.

FEELING INSPIRED BY OTHERS TO LEARN MORE

A significant part of engagement with learning for students in the TSR dance class was feeling they were inspired by others, including the TSR teaching artist, to want to learn more:

[I liked learning this new move] because I didn't know how to do that. Every kid does it and I'm the only one who [didn't] know how to do it.

I really want to get it, I also want to get other movements that Eleanor has in her. I want to learn more about jazz, like not just those other movements we perform, but different things.

Trying to do this program, it's called capoeira, they try to teach us how to do back flips but [you] have to learn how to do this thing...you have to hold your hands on the floor and try and flip over but that's very hard for me. But some of my friends know how to do it.

Educator interviews about the impacts of TSR programs

Interviews were conducted with the teaching artist, classroom teacher, and principal at St Belvedere. Data from these sources relating to social inclusion, sense of wellbeing and engagement with learning is useful to triangulate with that provided by student participants in the study.

GENERAL ROLE OF TSR ARTS PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

The responses to this theme were fairly consistent across the teacher, teaching artist and principal at St Belvedere. They emphasised arts-based expertise, positive role modelling, increased opportunities for self-expression and success, enhancing connections with others and the broadening of horizons as some of the key functions of arts-based programs like that at St Belvedere. Comments included:

TSR brings in a level of expertise that none of us [as teachers] collectively or singularly have at this school. It really engages the children because you've got professional people who are experts in their field [leading these programs] and the children know that these people know how to dance. (T)

The children I work with in TSR haven't had a lot of exposure to the arts and haven't had a lot of exposure to expressing themselves through the arts. I hear a lot from teachers that students find themselves experiencing success through arts [whether or not they are academically engaged]. They find themselves having a successful situation that they might not otherwise in other areas of their learning. (TA)

It's [about] connection, it transcends language [differences amongst students]. (P)

THE ROLE OF ARTS PROGRAMS IN SETTLEMENT AND TRANSITION FOR YOUNG REFUGEES

Participants suggested that arts-based programs at the school play an especially valuable role in relation to helping refugee children maintain cultural continuity and a link between home and community that helps anchor their experience of new and unfamiliar environments and structures. They stressed that maintaining such continuity was conducive to helping refugee background children feel more comfortable and confident about learning new things and extending their horizons.

All participants valued the cultural capital that young people from refugee backgrounds already bring with them into the school environment and were interested in how they could capitalise on what these children already know:

I look at our kids and they're trying to learn how to be in a new environment and a new culture, and music – tribal music, drums, singing – has always been a part [of their own traditions]. It's tapping into those feelings and those rhythms once they come to Australia that they can connect with and transfer. (P)

The TSR teaching artist emphasised that the focus on group work in arts programs such as the dance class she runs sits well with the orientation toward an existing sense of community that she sees in the refugee background children she is working with:

Often that sense of coming to a new place and not quite knowing where you fit or difficulty settling and that sense of finding their way...A lot of the Sudanese kids do a lot of dancing with their families outside of [school]. So for them to be able to share that with me and with the class is a connection between what they have at home and what they have at school. (TA)

New environments and new structures can be threatening and difficult for young people who are not used to them. All three participants in this group of interviews said that dance classes helped provide a constructive outlet for children's energy and helped address behavioural management issues faced by some children from refugee backgrounds, both at school and in the community:

[At first] they really found it difficult to follow instructions, to even concentrate long enough for us to get anywhere. Because they're moving, the limbs are flying and they might speak and say something to each other and then someone throws a punch at someone and we've lost the class. So the school at one point was saying we don't know whether this class is ready for this. And what I've seen happen [over the course of running the TSR program] is their connection and their commitment to themselves and their focus and their want for this enjoyment. (TA)

I've got a couple of children who can be very, very volatile – go from calm to totally tantrum in a couple of seconds...I'll often at the beginning of a [TSR] lesson as the kids are coming in say, 'Good morning, Eleanor, they're a bit high this morning'. And we'll talk about, during the lesson, if they're doing something [related to behavioural concerns]; discuss how the children are participating and how they are going. We communicate very well together [on these issues]. (T)

Once kids are five and they are coming into school we institutionalise them and we make them sit and do all these things, yet here we've got all these kids with so much energy. We all see [the TSR] dance class an outlet for that. (P)

The parent interviewed at St Belvedere also felt that dance was valuable because it helped children in her community stay out of trouble and off the streets:

What the kid[s] do now in the street is not good. I start to involve the kid[s] in the community and in Sudanese celebrations [through dance classes]. I let them dance with traditional [dances].

The challenges posed by early settlement experiences and the role of TSR programs in providing respite and relief from these experiences were highlighted by St Belvedere's principal. She sees a strong positive role for programs such as dance and music in supporting new arrival students who are coping with the stresses and frustrations of settling in to a new environment:

The issues around settlement are massive, even for parents, and it takes such a long time. But I think [TSR programs] give them an in. I think when they first come it's language, it's trying to work out, 'I'm in a new place, I've got new food, my parents are dealing with me in a different way, I've got to go to this new school', and some of them may not have been in a structured, formal environment before. And we put them [in school year levels] by age, we don't put them by ability. (P)

And I think there's a lot of stress that comes with that, and that's where a lot of our frustration with the kids that they have with each other, comes from. I think TSR program actually gives our refugee background kids respite, I do, I honestly do. It is a lifting off of a burden for a time: 'I can be in there and I can just be, I can be, and I don't have to try and be anything else, I can use my talents or whatever I've got and just enjoy.' (P)

A number of these points were echoed by Eleanor, the teaching artist, in her interview. She noted:

Sometimes understanding yourself in another context will offer you a sense of place in an environment where you may not fit – the opportunity to be yourself...Because often in the ways that we all have to relate to institutions and social structures of various kinds, we're well aware of the limits of how much of ourselves we can be. Yet I think that areas like dancing, music as well, are places where you can be yourself perhaps in some fuller or different way. (TA)

The parent in this case study focused on the advantage she saw in her daughter being *allowed to explore and practice* something this child really enjoyed doing as part of her school experience, and drew contrasts between what she perceived was possible in Sudan and what was possible here. This mother noted that in Sudan it would not have been so easy for the child to be supported to engage in something perceived as 'non-essential' like the arts in a school environment, despite the importance within her own Sudanese Dinka community of music and dance as part of maintaining cultural heritage, links and traditions. In Australia, however, she said, she was eager to *embrace and support her daughter's learning and aspirations*:

In our country [children] don't have power to say, 'Mum I want to do what I want' because your parent is the person who says you do this and you do that. But when I come here...I see the way [my daughter] is moving and when we are in the house I see what [my children] like, and they like a lot of dancing and singing. So you let the child do it and you can't block them. Make the child happy. (Pa)

However, this mother pointed out that *not all parents are comfortable* as she is about allowing their children to participate in activities like music, dance and other arts programs at school. Although the issue is sometimes cast by parents within the Sudanese community as one of tradition and control over children, this parent sees it as more of an issue of needing to compensate for the absence of extended family by allowing their children to try new things and develop new support systems in the community through institutions like schools:

The parents say, 'When I am growing up I am in my mum's house. I didn't go and do this and now I am a woman'. I tell them now, 'Of course it is good, but the place you are growing up is different. You are growing up in Sudan and you got your aunty, your uncle and everyone next to you, but in this country it is [just] you with your kid'.

PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES IN TEACHING CHILDREN FROM REFUGEE AND NON-REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS

The teaching artist was the most concerned with this issue. She noted that she had to develop new and adapted strategies for working with children whose English language abilities are variable, especially when it comes to the *challenges of communicating conceptual or abstract ideas in English* that need to be translated into physical movement:

The first thing I notice is language and English as a second language. There is a very big difference in how I need to instruct and the assumptions of the understandings and meanings of words and things like that. Even though we're working with the body, the way that I set up the task for them to perform, I've now brought in language in a way. There's two levels going on...Sometimes I really have to watch if they're just following and if they are understanding. (TA)

The teacher did not feel that he distinguished significantly between his refugee and non-refugee background students, applying similar rules, boundaries, development strategies and support for the entire class. He did note as one difference the '*great gap educationally between those who*

are learning English and those who have been in the country for a long time', and he expressed some concern with how to cater for the needs of high-achieving students (against VELS benchmarks) because the needs of refugee background students, who dominate numbers in his Year 5 class, tend to take up a large amount of his time and attention:

[While] a lot of the class are below the VELS standard, I've got a number of students who are above the VELS standard but not getting the same amount of attention and input from the teacher. (T)

However, the teacher also made the valuable point that cohorts of refugee background students are not homogenous; they can be differentiated in terms of needs, challenges and capacities even when there is parity of age and cultural background:

Fifteen of the 25 children I've got would be classed as refugees. Of those fifteen, probably about eight or nine would have behavioural management problems, the others don't – they fit in quite well with the rest of the school and their learning doesn't have to be modified. So within that refugee group there's two groups. (T)

MAIN IMPACTS OF SCHOOL-BASED ARTS PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEE BACKGROUND YOUNG PEOPLE

The teacher, teaching artist and the principal were also asked about the impacts of the TSR music program. The main impacts they identified ranged from the individual level to the school and community level as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Impacts of school-based programs for refugee background young people

Category	Illustrative quotations
Improved self-esteem	<p><i>It allows some kids who don't achieve well in the classroom to be a leader. There was one of the boys who, in his group of four [in the TSR dance class], they had a set of things they had to do and [the other boys] were academically much better than him, but they were listening to him because they knew in this area [of dance], he was the expert. (T)</i></p> <p><i>That sense of self-esteem...The sense of achievement that can come from whether they're working alone, whether they're working in a group, learning new things, but it's also about their creativity, it's not connected to what someone else has taught them. (TA)</i></p> <p><i>A lot of our kids when they come in, it's that lack of self-esteem. I reckon the body language of our kids is better, there's not as much of the [head] down since TSR programs began at [St Belvedere]. And I think their self-esteem is growing. They've got a better perception of 'I can do this' or 'I'm good at this' or 'I'm not good at that but I'm good at this'. Sorting out what they're good at within the different programs that we've had. (P)</i></p> <p><i>It's one way of building their self-esteem, of giving them fun, entertainment, pure joy. (T)</i></p>

Enhanced confidence and sense of self

That transformation of seeing something that goes from in their heads through to their bodies into group work is a really fantastic thing. When I look at the faces of the children in the class and the joy that I see that comes from engaging physically in their bodies...we see them engage in a way that is quite free and that freedom of expression is precious to a child in their learning, and that sense of self that comes from engaging in a way that is really valuable. I would really advocate for the confidence [this builds]. (TA)

Extending horizons of knowledge about themselves and the world around them

[The Year 6 choir group, who took choir with TSR artist Gemma] were asked recently if they would go and perform for the launch of the multicultural document at the Immigration Museum, and they all went 'Yep, we'll do that'. And I just thought, 'Wow'. In the past they would have gone, 'Whoa, we don't want to do that'. (P)

The good thing for [my daughter], that is why I let her go [i.e. participate in dance class], to enjoy other groups... [I say to her] one day, one time you not living with me forever, you will be away, but when you do the good thing and if you be away from me I am not scared because I know how you go and take care by yourself. [Interviewer: So part of what you see your daughter getting out of dance class is the chance to be a little independent and to understand herself so that even when she is not with you she knows what she can do?] Yeah. (Pa)

Having fun and making friends

[My daughter] talks about what moves [she is learning in TSR dance class] and if you go into dancing and you want to start, how you relax your body first and how you move and how to have fun and have a lot of friends. Actually she talk about [dance class] and she love it. She say, 'I love it, mum. I love the dancing'. I say, 'Yeah, of course, as long as you did what you want to do.' (Pa)

Increased enthusiasm about being at school

Before [my daughter] started doing dancing class in the morning, I [was] the person waking [the children] up every morning. But when she get the dancing in the school in the morning, [my daughter] is the person who wake everyone up in the house. She said, 'Dad, wake up. We go quick'. She wake everyone up at seven o'clock. (Pa)

ENGAGING REFUGEE BACKGROUND FAMILIES THROUGH ARTS PROGRAMS

One of the aims of this study was to explore how arts-based programs foster enhanced engagement between refugee background parents or families and schools where arts-based programs are part of the curriculum. This is an important feature of early settlement, transition and integration experiences for new arrival communities in relation to sense of belonging and social inclusion.

There were mixed views among participants on this topic. The teacher felt that it was *not always easy to engage parents of refugee background students*; he felt that there were *language barriers* and also that parents tended to *focus on academic achievements* in subjects like English and maths during teacher/parent consultations.

However, he thought that performances based on arts programs at St Belvedere did draw at least some refugee background parents into stronger relationships between the community and the school:

The parents, it's very difficult for this school to engage parents and a lot of that comes back to language. I [also] get told that [some of the parents] look at it from the way school was in [their countries] – when the children are at home, they're the parents' responsibility, when they're at school they're the teacher's responsibility. The principal is gradually trying to change that attitude ...[But] when we have had things at school, performances, we've got groups in, parents have come. I know last year they did a performance for parents and quite a lot of parents came. (T)

The principal was positive and enthusiastic about the experience of using arts such as music and dance to *involve parents in the life of the school*:

Often if we have a family night – at the beginning of the year we had an African band that came, and in the end the women will get up and dance as well as the kids. Even the mothers, in the middle of the circle, the women will get in. And you just go 'Wow!' (P)

The Dinka parent interviewed for the St Belvedere case study said that various personal circumstances (her own studies, illness, pregnancy) had prevented her from coming to see her daughter dance in the TSR dance class or to attend the external performances. However, she is looking forward to attending school-based dance and music performances at the school after her new baby is born: *'When they do that I will be there.'* This mother is active in the parent groups run at St Belvedere. She thinks it is *important for parents to be involved with the school in general*:

I come here [to the] parent groups if they do something here and I have the time. It is very important for all of us to involve ourselves because we want to know exactly how the teachers teach the kid and how the kid learn at school and the behaviour of the kid. They teach the kid but we need to [offer] more help to them to let the kid learn properly and let the school be a strong school so that everyone loves it. So we need all of us to help. (Pa)

Summary

For the twelve children aged ten to twelve from Sudanese refugee backgrounds, the photos and text they produced for the photo journals that formed part of the data collection revealed that being with their friends is what most makes school a special place. Being with friends, not getting into fights, not having others fighting or swearing around them, themselves and others follow the rules and seeing that things are done fairly were cited as things that help them feel good about themselves.

The opportunity to learn new dance steps; to become more confident about dancing and physical activity; to share new dance movements with friends; and to be part of a group are what help make their TSR dance class special for them. Learning more about maths was the most common response when asked what they wanted to learn more about, followed by reading, English and computers. Other responses to this question included sport, for both male and female participants. The focus on maths and other academic subjects may reflect the strong emphasis on scholastic achievement and excellence at this independent Catholic school.

In relation to their general experience of school, the participants mentioned the buddy system and learning English with others as two important elements in fostering friendships and positive interactions with their peers. They also mentioned behaviours within different settings in the school that can undermine belonging, including practices of exclusion by peer groups. The participants also reported that they felt safe and supported when at school, and they valued having someone to talk to about problems and being with their friends. Female students in particular emphasised that it was important to feel safe at school, and said they did feel safe at this school. All participants said they had someone to talk to at school if they had a problem – either teachers or friends, or a combination of two.

In relation to the TSR program participants highlighted learning new things about their peers that they did not know before – believing that dance class helps kids to be less shy – and facilitating the sharing of new dance moves as a form of social currency where dance is used as social capital to create, expand or cement relationships at school, at home and in the community. Participation also offered the opportunity to feel that they were part of a group, enabling them to learn from other children in the same group, master physical movement and dance skills or ‘new moves’, feel more confident and, watching other children perform, feel better about their own performances in front of others.

For the teacher, principal, TSR teaching artist, and parent who were interviewed at St Belvedere, the main benefits for refugee background students of participating in TSR programs were improved self-esteem; enhanced confidence and sense of self; opportunities for new experiences beyond the school; extending horizons of knowledge about themselves and the world around them; having fun and making friends; and increased enthusiasm about being at school.

For these participants the key elements of arts programs in schools revolved around access to professional arts-based expertise; positive role modelling of arts professions as a career option for children; increased opportunities for self-expression and success; enhanced connections with others; and the broadening of educational and cultural horizons. Arts programs offered at their school supported the settlement and transition of young refugee background students by providing a means of cultural continuity between student’s own traditions and new arts traditions

encountered through TSR, which supported a link between home and community practices; provided a constructive outlet for children's energy and behavioural management issues; helped children stay out of trouble and off the streets; provided respite from the stress and frustrations of challenges faced by students and their families in the early phases of refugee resettlement; and, for the parent, allowed this mother to see her children pursue things they enjoy at school and to freely embrace her children's aspirations and goals.

In thinking about their experience of whether there are any differences between teaching refugee and non-refugee background children, the teaching artist focused on the challenges of communicating conceptual or abstract ideas in English for children of ESL background, while the classroom teacher emphasised the importance of understanding that even within a refugee background cohort, the students are not a homogenous group and may display different needs, challenges and capacities for teaching and learning within that same cohort.

In relation to engaging parents of refugee background students with school through TSR programs, participants reported that it was not always easy to engage refugee background parents because of language barriers and parents' focus on academic achievement and behavioural management and discipline. However, performances of arts-based programs at school did help draw parents into school life and allowed them to see their children shine in different ways. The participating parent said it was important for parents to be involved in school in general – both to support their children and to help the school better understand where refugee background students are coming from culturally and historically.

9.2 RANDALL ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Emma Sampson

The school context

Randall English Language School (RELS)² is located at a primary school west of Melbourne in one of the fastest growing and most diverse municipalities in Victoria which is also home to many newly arrived refugees. RELS Outpost provides intensive English language programs for newly arrived refugee students from a range of local primary schools.

ELS 'outpost' programs support primary students who are unable to access a full-time program at one of the main ELS campuses. Eligible students attend the outpost for up to four days a week. Students are grouped according to age, English language needs and available classes. Students remain enrolled in their host school and participate in its programs when not in the intensive outpost.

This outpost has a cluster of buildings, including classrooms, interview rooms, a kitchen and an office connected by a walkway within the primary school. While still part of the broader primary school, the outpost has its own unique space and culture, with the ESL teachers connecting at breaks and students using the area as their own.

The outpost has a very high Burmese (Karen) population, with approximately 90 per cent of students from Burmese backgrounds, although students nominate their country of origin as 'Thailand' due to the length of time they spent in refugee camps in Thailand (all of the students have spent most of their lives in refugee camps prior to arrival in Australia).

TSR program at school

TSR has worked at RELS since Term 3, 2007. Until the last term, a teaching artist conducted a music program (guitar, drumming and singing), and prior to that a dance program had also been implemented. In 2010 the school requested a change of program, as it believed a drama program would better suit the current group of students, as the coordinator noted:

Knowing our cohort of students are 90 per cent Karen and the culture is very quiet and they are very reserved...and so I was looking for a performing arts so that I could encourage them to be a bit louder and have fun and move fast and develop the confidence to speak, that's what we were looking for, and because we hear back from mainstream schools that our students 'don't speak in front of everyone else' – that's what we wanted performing arts to do. (Coord.)

The present term was the first involving the current teaching artist, who is providing a drama program. The primary objectives in introducing drama at RELS are to:

- Develop confidence, team building and a social conscience through drama
- Create a strong sense of identity
- Encourage individuals to be bold in working physically, vocally and imaginatively in the classroom and use these skills in their new lives in Australia.

² School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

The challenges for TSR in working with this group of students are many and include relating to each student with very little or no English skills, being able to pitch each class to cater for different skills sets and sustaining the right level of energy throughout the day. Drama provides a range of techniques to potentially engage newly arrived students;

Physical drama games seem to be the best way to engage and include all students. It is a common way of working understood by those who don't have basic English skills. Each class will begin with physical games and play to ensure everyone feels included and confident. Time will be taken to ensure each student feels safe and understands each exercise. Each child will be given the opportunity to perform/show their work at least once every class. (TA Program Plan)

Two upper primary classes (4/5/6) participate in the TSR drama program for a 50 minute period each week. The classes take place in a hall, which has chairs, tables, and walls colourfully decorated with student projects, photos and posters. The space provides a large area in which students can move about freely and work in small groups.

Participants

Students

A total of twelve students who were participating in Term 2 of the TSR drama program participated in the research. Classroom teachers and the outpost coordinator selected the students. All of the students took photographs of their experiences of the school and TSR, and participated in an interview about their experiences and perceptions of the arts class, aspects of learning and their aspirations for learning. An interpreter was used for all interviews, with one student responding in English.

All of the students were born in either Burma or Thailand, and all had spent all or most of their lives in a refugee camp. They had come to Australia with their families on a refugee visa. Students had been in Australia from three to six months, with most having been here for six months. Student ages ranged from 10 to 13. All had some education prior to arriving in Australia (an average of four years), and all spoke Karen at home. None spoke any English upon arrival (see Table 1). One student identified their religious background as Buddhist; all the others identified their religious background as Christian.

All of the students had been at the school for two to three terms, with most being there for three terms. Most students had participated in the TSR music program in Term 1 and all were participating in the TSR drama program in Term 2.

Teachers and parent

Three teachers were interviewed, including one teaching artist, one classroom teacher and the outpost coordinator. The teaching artist had been working at the school in the TSR program for one term, and the classroom teacher for one year, while the coordinator had worked for five years at RELS and had begun in the outpost coordinator role this year. One parent was also interviewed. He was of Burmese background and spoke Karen. An interpreter was used for this interview.

Data gathering procedures and sources

A range of data sources were used as part of the research, including photo-elicitation and

Table 1: Selected demographics

Sex	Age	Country of birth	Months in Australia	Years in refugee camp	Years of education
Female	11	Thailand	6	10	3
Female	12	Burma	3	10	4
Male	12	Thailand	6	12	4
Male	12	Thailand	6	11	4
Male	13	Thailand	6	12	5
Male	12	Burma	6	9	5
Female	11	Burma	6		4
Female	12	Thailand	6	11	2
Female	11	Thailand	3	10	4
Male	10	Thailand	6	9	2
Male	11	Thailand	6	10	don't know
Male	10	Thailand	6	10	don't know

diaries, and semi-structured interviews with students, teaching artists, classroom teachers and the coordinator. Participant observation was also a key data source, with formal observations of three TSR classes taking place and informal observation occurring during on-site interviewing.

Observations

The observational notes focused on describing the TSR setting, including the atmosphere, people, roles, interactions and activities. This was an important part of the process for understanding how the teaching artist and the students engaged in social and learning processes. This information was a key data source and provided 'thick descriptions' of TSR context, processes and interactions, which was particularly important in light of the limited responses obtained through the interview process and resultant 'thin' data. As well as providing a context, therefore, for understanding the students' responses to questions about participating in the drama program, it highlighted the nature of the relationship between teaching artist, class teacher and students, and provided evidence of the program's dynamics 'in action'.

Interviews

Twelve students were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. An interpreter was used for each interview, with three different interpreters used for the twelve students. The interpreters not only provided language translation, but also background cultural context, and assisted in re-phrasing questions and concepts that were difficult for students to understand. One student was able to respond mainly in English, so the use of the interpreter was limited in this interview. One

interview was stopped because the student became upset during the interview and the processes for assisting distressed students were followed (namely, the coordinator was notified and a range of listed supports provided).

The interpreter was introduced at the start of the interview with an explanation of their purpose and role. Most students said that they had not used an interpreter before and seemed all at the same time confused, concerned and intrigued by the process. Similarly, prior to interviewing, all the students were informed about the ethical requirements and a request was made to record the interviews. While all the students agreed to the interview being taped, they frequently looked at the tape recorder throughout the interview process. Notes were not taken as this was deemed to be too intrusive by the interviewer.

The coordinator, teacher and teaching artist were also interviewed. While a semi-structured interview guide had been developed and was used with the teaching artist, in practice the interviews with the teacher and coordinator were more unstructured. This was partly because of time constraints and the importance of following the lead of the teachers to gain the best data possible, and partly due to incorrect and incomplete interview schedules being used by the interviewer.

Photo-elicitation

The photo-elucidation process provided a rich data source for this case study. Students were invited to take photographs about aspects of their schooling and their participation in the TSR program. They were then asked to select pictures that captured those experiences and to complete a photo journal using the selected pictures. The photo journals were used in the initial part of the interview, where they assisted in establishing rapport and provided the most in-depth responses received in interviews. Both students and teachers commented that the young people had really enjoyed this part of the process, and that it had enabled teachers to learn more about individual students' preferences and goals for the future. Many of the photos provided a rich context for understanding student experiences, in light of the (mostly) one line responses, or frequent 'I don't know' responses provided by students in the interview.

Supporting documentation

In addition, the teaching artist program plan and evaluation was provided as background documentation and used to give a context to the case study.

Findings and interpretation

The following section provides a summary of the key findings and analysis of the data according to the themes that emerged around students' experiences of school and participation in TSR. Although the themes relating to the school and TSR are presented separately, these need to be understood within the broader school context, and particularly within the outpost program.

Student voices about the school

SCHOOL SENSE OF BELONGING

Overwhelmingly, students had very positive attitudes towards and experiences of school. Most students strongly expressed a deep appreciation for the opportunity to come to school and

displayed an eagerness to engage in all forms of learning. A common response of students when asked about what they liked most about school was 'Everything, I like everything'. To them, school was about friends, teachers, games, physical play and playtime, and about learning, particularly acquiring the English language. Friendships were perhaps highlighted as the most significant thing for the students, while teachers were observed to be a central part of each student's experience at school, constantly and consistently providing support and guidance to students throughout the day (in class, at playtime, in TSR).

Coming to school. Have opportunities so very fortunate and happy, and also learning English.

[Talking about a photo of friends] *Coming to school and meeting new friends...I come to school I make new friends because I want to learn English. I come to school I saw new friends.*

Students identified many things they liked about school, including friends and playing with friends, participation in activities such as reading, writing, drawing and maths, and listening to stories. Almost all students identified engaging in activities with friends as important, and indicated learning English was one of their priorities. Several students identified sport as their favourite activity, for example football, soccer and tee-ball, while one listed TSR as one of their favourite things about school. Several students reported how they enjoyed using the computer, for both games and for reading and writing.

First thing is to be able to speak and learn English. The second is to play soccer, and third is to have more friends and play with friends.

I come to school because I want to learn English. I read books with my friends. Very happy. [Holding up book:] I want to be able to read.

I like to play soccer at school. I play soccer very good. I play soccer with my friends. My friends play soccer very good.

In terms of making students *feel comfortable at school*, friends and teachers were highlighted by students as important. Several students identified the multicultural education aid (a Karen speaking teaching aid) as someone they felt comfortable talking to, while another student identified the TSR teaching artist as making him feel comfortable at school. One student reported that playing with other kids (from the mainstream school) made him feel comfortable at the school, while several students suggested there was nobody they would talk to if they needed to talk.

Teachers, if I see any teacher I will tell them.

Friends...the Karen teachers and also sometimes the English teacher.

Coming to school. If I don't understand English or speak, the friends help me.

Playing [playing with other kids] in the playground...playtime and lunchtime.

Most students said they found it easy to *make friends when they started at the school*, although several reported that it was difficult at the start. All but one student agreed that they had more friends now than when they started school. Several students mentioned that they had some Karen friends outside school, but that going to school had enabled them to broaden this network.

Yes, I make friends easily.

No, I was scared [when first starting school].

When I first entered this school, I already have other Karen families and we already make friends, so I started to make friends with them and then we spread it out.

It is evident from this data that school sense of belonging is experienced in relation to friendships and social relations and opportunities to engage in meaningful social activities. However, not all the experiences at school were positive for everyone all of the time.

While most students only identified positive aspects of their experience at school, several mentioned *aspects of school they disliked* or instances that had caused them discomfort. Primarily, these involved interactions with other students, some in the mainstream school, and others in their own class.

There's people there I don't like playing with, when you accidentally push them and they push you back...and there are some Australian kids who start teasing the Karen kids and I feel sad about that...I try to ignore them and walk away.

It's a Karen boy who is – every time I was going to go and sit down there he left, he said, 'Oh, don't come sit next to me, you are so proud'.

The interviews also provided some general insights into students' lives and the contexts in which they live and learn. Specifically, some of the barriers faced by students in their efforts to engage with learning and connect with friends were identified through the interview process. Travel distances meant that some students were unable to play with their friends outside of school, while one student referred to their parents as *'having no time'* to engage in games outside of school. These reinforce the importance of opportunities for both learning and fun at school, and may mean that for these children, school plays a particularly important role.

Student voices about being in the TSR program

SCHOOL BELONGING

When asked specifically about TSR, students discussed both the drumming and drama classes and *overwhelmingly provided positive responses*, as with their experience of school in general. This was supported by program observations and student photos, where their enthusiasm and excitement for TSR was evident. For example, at the beginning of TSR class, students would eagerly line up at the door and 'high five' the teaching artist on their way in. They would then quickly proceed in anticipation of the class beginning, and their attention would be sustained for the whole class. Most students said they liked 'everything' about TSR, and there was 'nothing' that they didn't like.

There is nothing [I don't like about TSR]...I don't have anything that's sad. As soon as I enter [TSR] I'm happy.

For the students, TSR drama classes were about *playing games and having fun*. They mentioned new games they had learned and said that they played these games outside TSR classes. Several identified their favourite game: *'Just playing games, anything. I like anything...my favorite game is where we go up in there and he looks like that and he's look there and he makes to stop'*. All agreed TSR classes were fun. There was a lot of laughing during classes, with students having an opportunity to laugh and be silly. In their words, they like: *'Playing games and making a clown'; 'Funny jokes, laughing'; 'Yes, I told them, yes, I was happy, making fun'*.

WAYS OF LEARNING

Several students said that they enjoyed TSR class because it was *not language dependent* (not as reliant on English as other activities, such as reading or maths). For them, it was an opportunity to engage in learning with their limited English skills, while learning English through the process of 'doing'. For example, one student reported that when the TSR teaching artist showed the class what to do (rather than telling them), she was able to understand what was required in class. Other students commented that their English had improved as a result of participating in TSR.

Epecially being in that class, we have been told to follow some instructions and especially we have been asked to tell our name as well, and we have been asked to do like the clapping, so yes, that one yes, I can do that one...Yes, Mr William³ show us something and then we follow him.

Yeah I would tell them that I like playing the games...I would tell them I can't speak English, but once you know a few words, you can try.

Many students commented on the *physical aspect* of TSR drama classes, and this was also noted in the program observation. Classes consisted of games in which students were required to work collaboratively to form objects with their bodies or create scenes through acting out. Students talked about using their bodies and engaging in movement, as well as working physically with other students in the class. While for most this physical aspect was something they liked, and complemented their enjoyment of other physical activities, such as sport and playing outside, for a couple of students there had been instances where the physical movement and contact had been uncomfortable experiences.

I like it because it feels like the movement and dancing.

You have to shake your body...Like PE [physical education], you have to move your body parts.

Don't like jumping.

Some of my friends, when we play games just pushing and pulling out hand.

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND FRIENDSHIPS

As students already knew each other through other ESL classes, TSR classes helped to *consolidate existing friendships* rather than create new friendships. Some students suggested their friends were mainly Karen, while others identified the diverse cultural and language backgrounds of their classmates. Many suggested that their friends helped them understand what was required of them in TSR by translating or showing them how to participate in the games. TSR also required students to work together in new ways and for some students this had resulted in them getting to know each other better.

We talk about how we play together, telling us stories and working together.

I have friends mainly speak Karen but I have some other friends who speak in English as well.

Yes I know them better [other students/friends].

If they have trouble learning we will help each other.

³ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

TRANSITIONS AND CULTURE SHARING

More broadly, TSR classes provided students with the opportunity to further connect with arts and culture. Students expressed enjoyment of arts more generally (singing, dancing, drawing, music) and mentioned TSR activities in relation to experiences within their own cultural context. TSR provided important opportunities for creative expression and enabled the acquisition of new artistic skills.

Because when we come to school we're doing singing time and I like it.

I like to play drum at school...dancing and playing the drum. Yeah, because in our Karen area, every time we celebrate we play, this is part of the tradition, the drum, and we dance.

I like to play drum at school with my friends. I can play drum because my teacher teach me.

This enjoyment of the arts and creative expression was again evidenced in students' aspirations for further learning, with the majority of students wanting to engage further in creative pursuits.

Yes [I would like to learn guitar]. I have never learned guitar before but I want to play. Sometimes I went to my uncle; my uncle can play very well.

I would like to learn more music at school. I sing with my friends [photo of student holding microphone pretending to sing].

Teacher, teaching artist, coordinator and parent interviews**ENGAGING STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS**

Teachers were asked about how they assist students from refugee backgrounds to engage with learning in the school environment. Table 2 provides a summary of the responses, grouped according to themes.

Teachers were also asked to identify particular challenges for engaging students from refugee backgrounds in learning. Their responses indicated that the main challenge is the transition for students from the ELS program to mainstream school. All three teachers identified this challenge, suggesting that there was limited time to prepare students for transition and that mainstream teachers and classroom methods were not always effective at engaging students from refugee backgrounds. Related to this challenge was students' lack of confidence speaking English and engaging in class after making the transition to mainstream school. A further challenge was managing the attitudes and behaviours of mainstream students towards refugee students when issues of racism and misunderstandings emerge.

The main challenge is for the student to feel the confidence to actually have a go at speaking the language. A lot of them can, will learn to read, and will learn to write, but to actually stand up in front of a group and talk out loud, or to have the confidence to put their hand up and answer a question, or just want to provide information is a real challenge, and the feedback that we get from our mainstream school is, 'These children can't exit, they don't talk.'...For us it's really to show the teacher that this child can speak English now, you just have to build a relationship with that child and know what makes the child feel comfortable in the classroom, and the singing is something that children can be involved with. (Coord.)

Some of the mainstream Grade 6 students come in and are working with our students...and that's been as a result [of] a bullying incident and trying to show the mainstream students that our students have a wealth of knowledge, it's just that they don't speak English. (T)

Table 2: Impacts of school-based programs for refugee background young people

Theme	Illustrative quotations
Creating a safe and welcoming environment	<i>Well, firstly, as a coordinator I'm encouraging teachers to ensure that their classrooms are friendly and that students feel safe and welcome. So we work on students working together as a group. So we play lots of games in our classrooms to make children feel relaxed and to understand that language of turn-taking and the expectations that are involved. Provide students with a lot of variety throughout the day...(Coord.)</i>
Collaboration among the class	<i>Lots of collaborative work...We want students to work together to help each other to get the end result...[It's] about collaboration more than cooperation. (Coord.)</i>
Using student strengths, talents and interests	<i>With these students we always, well, we find out what their needs are to make sure that we're catering for that and what interests they've got...So you just get them to try lots of different things and you find out where their strengths are and what they're interested in. So a lot of them here are interested in sports, arts, a lot of hands on activities, so we use a lot of that. (Coord.)</i>
Cultural exchange	<i>Even using their first language as well, because we don't want them to lose it. It's so important for their developing English as well as their identity and everything else. So we've got a global book box over there with bilingual books and a book from every country that the kids come from so they can share anything about themselves with the others. (T)</i>
Empowering students to be involved in the learning environment and process	<i>Even though they don't have a strong background with English at the moment or they're not that strong speaking or writing, you can't dismiss it. In their first language they could have been leaders in their classroom or things like that so they still get the opportunity to do it here and they have a say in what goes up in the room, what they want presented and how we're going to decorate the room or what work they think is important to have on the walls. (T)</i>
Creating routines and structured classes	<i>Also routines that we have, we always have a schedule on the board. If they finish something early they'll know what the next thing [is], like the expectation what's coming next and some of them will just go on and start with the next activity...just to reduce anxiety in the classroom. (T)</i>
Engagement and building relationships	<i>Also, ask questions that show he's interested in what they do, like 'What did you do at school yesterday?', 'How was camp?' 'What are you learning about?' So when he first gets the class he always asks them some questions that really show that he's really interested in what they're doing and that makes a big difference with these children. (T)</i>

FEATURES OF POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT IN TSR PROGRAMS

The interviews shed light on the processes and emerging outcomes of the TSR at RELS. Ingredients for success for TSR at this school were specifically identified to be a combination of:

- **Matching the TSR program to student needs and strengths:** Drama and performing arts provided an opportunity for Burmese refugee background students, who tend to be reserved, to build confidence and self-expression, as well as tapping into a desire to perform and have fun.
- **Characteristics of TSR teaching artist:** the combination of an understanding of the needs and strengths of students from refugee backgrounds, an engaging approach for students, an inclusive style, flexibility to adapt classes to the needs of the group and the ability to plan a structured class to maintain student interest, contributed to engaging experiences.
- **Resources:** the TSR drama program was not reliant on physical resources (such as musical instruments), and worked well as it was held in a large hall, which enabled students to fully participate in the games by moving about the space freely.

The quotations below illustrate the way in which the TSR teaching artist works as part of the drama program at RELS, as described above.

it's a big difference in that I have to be a little bit cleverer about my repertoire, my tool bag of tricks, with these kids because I can't go into talking about acting, I can't go into talking about 'Let's create a show or performance'. All of the stuff that we assume that we know, they don't have any of that repertoire or understanding [when they first arrive]...You actually have to work a lot harder physically. (TA)

If you're enthusiastic about what you're doing it's going to rub off onto the kids and he participates in what he's teaching and he gives them achievable tasks so they're not too difficult instructions but he builds on them so he has a really good sequence with what he does. So he gets all the kids because they can all do it and then he gauges what level they're at and goes from there. He's got a plan but you can see that within that plan he's flexible and reads off the kids. So if an activity's not working he's not going to stick at it for his ten minutes. He will move on, which is really, really a great skill. (T)

MAIN IMPACTS OF THE ARTS PROGRAMS AT SCHOOL FOR REFUGEE BACKGROUND YOUNG PEOPLE

Table 3 provides a summary of teacher and parent responses by theme to how TSR has functioned at RELS and what some of the preliminary impacts have been for students, teachers, the school and more generally.

Table 3: Impacts of TSR at School

Level	Theme	Illustrative quotations
Individual	Self-confidence	<i>I noticed that all of them at the beginning, there was a reservation, there was an introversion; there was all that sort of stuff. And by the end of the...well you saw them at the end of it; they're running around as if they're extroverted, screaming, yelling, physically bold, physically aware. And everyone is participating. (TA)</i>
	Sense of belonging	<i>So I really think it's just a facilitation into this new world. Sort of developing a common language for them all to feel confident and a sense of place and a sense of being part of something where they feel that they can express themselves in a bold and courageous way. (TA)</i>
	Self-esteem	<i>Yeah, and if they have a good experience they're going to want to do it. Then they feel good about themselves – 'well somebody else thinks I'm good at this'. (T)</i>
	Self-expression	<i>And I think drama especially and the stuff that I'm trying to do is really just about them opening their shell up so that they feel like they've really got a sense of belonging in their new situation...I'm not so much concerned about creating an outcome or a product in terms of drama, it's more about them really feeling a sense of confidence and a voice, I suppose, and really pushing that. (TA)</i>
	Fun and sense of freedom	<i>There are some students who have only been here for one term which we were quite concerned about, and there are welfare issues for those students, but when they go to song room, they light up, their faces light up, and in particular, with William doing the performing arts, where it's lots of fun, lots of happiness, lots of moving, these students, there's a couple of particular students that really do benefit from that difference. (Coord.)</i>
	Comprehension skills	<i>The way that students respond and understand these instructions – so they are listening and they are acting on those instructions and they know exactly what he's talking about – it's just incredible. (T)</i>
	Development of skills and talents	<i>One of the kids was fantastic...she'd never picked up a guitar before but she just naturally had it, or another girl was really good at singing...I can say to the parents these are their skills, these are their talents that I'm seeing now</i>

Interpersonal		<i>and maybe it's something that they can do outside of school, if they want to follow a hobby or something,. They are really good at this and it makes them feel good as well. (T)</i>
	Teamwork	<i>We've seen how the kids have come out of their shell, the shy ones, and how they've actually bonded together. We don't get that 'Oh I don't want to touch a boy or a girl' or something because all the activities are structured and just kids come from a different country, they just work together and they don't really think about I guess who it is that they've been partnered with. It's an activity; it's part of the lesson but it just really brings kids and brings another strength through that we need to see as well. (T)</i>
	Inclusion	<i>Yeah, and I've found actually the performing arts got more kids involved more quickly than the music...the music's a little bit more difficult if you don't have, it depends on what resources you have and if they have to wait while one group's practising one instrument and the others are sort of sitting there. [With] performing arts I've found all the kids get involved straight away and everyone's actively participating the whole time. (Coord.)</i>
Teacher and school level	Relationship development	<i>Because even though they're only at these schools for six months and they need someone that can relate to them on a human level so that they can then have the skills to survive in the other contexts that they're finding. If they didn't have someone, if they didn't have those drama and music and performance skills, the integration would just be, I reckon, near impossible. (TA)</i>
	Provision of arts expertise (outside teacher skill set)	<i>That's not our area so we'd have to get retrained if we're going to do music especially, or singing. I don't know if any of us are any good at any of that. Performing arts, we could do a couple of activities but there's so much more to it than just running a game or two. He's got all of this acting background and that really shows...You don't want to turn kids off it either. If we ran something and it wasn't great then their idea of that subject or that area is not going to be as good. (T)</i>
	Professional development (arts)	<i>William's lessons, they just remind you of what you can do and William is so fluid in the way that they move from activity to activity, it's really seamless and I'm amazed at how much he can actually get out of them, and the way he uses his voice is very powerful. (Coord.)</i>

Cultural exchange	Teacher as participant	<i>I loved learning it (drumming) myself ...we had a ball, and I was able to be really involved as a student. I wasn't there as a teacher, I was a part of that and I had to come in at my beat at the right time, and then we shared a lot of laughing, a lot of fun from that. (Coord.)</i>
	Opportunity for student observation	<i>I think it's really good to see the kids' personalities with another person because you're with them all day and every day and just to see how much they open up to a new person, like their limits as well with somebody else. (T)</i>
	Settlement process	<i>For me it's about a way of integrating them into the situation that they've found themselves in Australia. I think it's so important. It's about the confidence and development and the sense of self, and all of that sort of stuff. An assurance in terms of that sort of stuff. Once they have that, they can then work out where they want to educate themselves and where...all of those elements in terms of what's next in their education here in Australia. Then the skill sets that will be then folded back into society. (TA)</i>
	Performance and showcasing strengths	<i>We've invited the TSR teacher to our graduation where he's drummed and then we repeat back, it's like a response, a drumming response and they just loved it because they could demonstrate, 'Look, this is what we've learned, this is what we can do and we are proud of it'. (Coord.)</i>
	Connection to culture and past experiences	<i>A group of Karen parents are gathered waiting to pick up their children, they are playing instruments and singing as they wait...As you can hear, they love singing outside. The Karen groups, so they've got the guitar out and the kids are singing and doing traditional dances. So music's something that they're used to learning through. So whether it's in the performing arts or music, it's a way that they can connect with their past as well. (T)</i>
	Future aspirations	<i>Within the program I'm very happy that my child participates because in the future I can see [her being interested in] singing. It's very good. When we were in the camp she is very excited to be in the competition of singing...so it's something she is looking forward to and I think the program is good. (Pa)</i>

Summary

This case study has aimed to shed light on how TSR functions at Randall English Language School. The voices of twelve students from refugee backgrounds, as well as reflections from three teachers and a parent, form the basis of the case study, along with rich data provided through student photos and program observations. Overwhelmingly, students demonstrated an enthusiasm for all aspects of school, especially for learning English. For them, school is about friendships, teachers and the opportunity to engage in a diverse range of activities, such as reading, writing, arts and sport. Friends are particularly important for students in creating a sense of belonging and providing support within the settlement context. Students are equally positive about their participation in TSR. For students, it is about fun and enjoyment, a factor that also plays a potentially key role in the settlement process. TSR provides a sense of freedom and release that is not available to these students in other parts of their lives and backgrounds, and is a welcome break from the pressures of mainstream learning processes and expectations (such as maths and reading).

The TSR drama program is not language dependent. The TSR teaching artist demonstrates by doing, and physical games are universally understood and enjoyed by most children. This results in inclusive processes, whereby each and every student actively participates and is engaged in learning. Through this, students develop confidence in their ability to express themselves and are able to tap into particular strengths and talents. Students, teachers and the parent interviewed agreed that TSR provides a platform for students to develop their interests and skills in the arts. These skills can then be shared with and performed for the broader school community to highlight the particular strengths of students from refugee backgrounds and to start breaking down barriers to misunderstanding. Through the teaching artist, TSR not only contributes to student development and wellbeing, but also contributes to the broader school context. By providing skill development for participating teachers, as well as an opportunity for teachers to observe students engaging with another teacher, an important part of the transition to mainstream school, teaching skills and classroom processes can be enhanced. TSR, as a unique part of the school program, is an important potential bridge between students' home culture and experiences and settlement in a new context. It is in using TSR to assist students in the transition from ELS to mainstream school that TSR provides the greatest potential and challenge in the future.

9.3 SARAWOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Anne Harris

The school context

Sarawood English Language School (SELS)⁴ is a government school catering for students P–Year 10, providing an intensive English language course for young people who are newly arrived migrants or refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds. Currently it has a total enrolment of 256 students (119 girls, 127 boys), and a student attendance rate of 96 per cent. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage lists more than 77 per cent of students at this school as coming from a bottom or middle-bottom quarter (My School website). The student population is transient, but tuition is normally for six to twelve months. Students are grouped according to age and level of language comprehension, and the two classes this evaluation focuses on were both secondary classes with students from Burma (Karen and Chin) and Sudan (Dinka).

TSR program at school

There has been a TSR program at SELS since the beginning of 2007. Beginning in 2010, the teaching artist at SELS has offered a drama class. At the time of this case study it was the teaching artist's second term at the school. The researcher observed two classes, one more advanced (in literacy and numeracy skills) than the other, and interviewed students from both classes.

The students

Students who participated in Term 2 TSR drama class were interviewed about their photograph choices, experiences at school, and experiences and perceptions of the drama class. On average, the students had lived in Australia for about nine months, with the longest being in the country for ten months and the most recent about four months. The young people had been at the school for two to three terms. There were three female participants, one from Sudan and two from Burma (Myanmar).

Data gathering procedures and sources

Teachers and principal

One classroom teacher, the school principal and the teaching artist were interviewed at Sarawood, while the teaching artist was interviewed at another teaching site. The classroom teacher interviewed had only been on staff for about six months at the time of interview, but has been a trained art teacher for nine years.

Students

The students were interviewed using the project's semi-structured interview schedule. All the interviews were conducted with the assistance of an interpreter. The majority of the students

⁴ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

Table 1: Selected demographics

Gender	Country of birth	Age	Months in Australia	Languages
Male	Thailand	15	9	Karen
Female	Burma	13	6	Chin
Male	Burma	13	9	Chin
Male	Burma	16	10	Karen
Male	Burma	16	4	Chin
Male	Burma	15	8	Chin
Female	Burma	15	7	Lautu Chin
Female	Sudan	14	6	Dinka, Kiswahili

interviewed were from Burmese backgrounds (Karen and Chin), and were very reticent in the interviews. One male interpreter commented that even without the language barrier, there were difficult questions for boys of a certain age to have opinions about. The interviews were difficult to conduct for other reasons too, and yielded less rich data than expected.

Findings and interpretation

Student voices about the school

SENSE OF BELONGING

Her name is Vivi and she used to be my best friend, but she moved to Braybrook Secondary College.

There were several emergent themes from the photo-elicitation data gathering activity that indicated a variety of interests and concerns about life at SELS. These included images of activities, spaces and people that were seen to contribute to experiences of belonging at school. Photographs of sport (particularly soccer) demonstrated its importance to many of the young people. For one young woman the photos also served to memorialise a best friend who had since moved schools (a comment reflecting the transient nature of the student body, which is common to most language schools). Students commented upon friendship building in the playground and in drama class itself, a topic that was evident in the photos students took. These pictures included images of the library and the school canteen, which students saw as important.

The library is good because we learn about many things.

Everyone can eat here and also can drink. That's why I love – people come in and have something to eat and drink.

A majority of students identified friends/friendships and happy teachers as their main sources of comfort at the school. Almost all identified teachers – in some cases teachers from their own first language group – as the person they would go to if they needed someone to talk with. Only one

student named her 'best friend' as school confidant. They all agreed that it was initially difficult to make friends, but that it had become easier over time, and all but one had more friends now than in the beginning. Yet one student also offered the poignant reminder that, 'Now also it's a little difficult'.

Students all reported that they liked the 'fun' nature of the teacher and TSR activities. This is reflected in the following quotations:

This teacher is very fun...and like smiling.

I love the teacher.

In the room we can play...it is very funny.

Responses to question about what made students feel good about themselves at school included references to friendships and playing sport. One respondent expressed his need to 'find out more about...Australia', while his classmates identified language learning, computers, arts, sport and playing with friends as their favourite things about being at school. Students were reluctant to identify a least favourite thing, but some eventually named maths, science and dancing as some things to which they were averse.

Student voices about being in the TSR program

ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

Most of the students identified an improvement in pronunciation, confidence and levels of comfort in the class as a direct result of participating in TSR drama class. The acting (especially portraying Australian animals) was their favourite explicit activity within the class. And although one admitted that getting up in front of the class could be 'a little bit scary', they all still liked doing it. Most didn't bring stories of TSR back home to share with families, but two students shared their drama activities with younger siblings or parents, including how 'We've got a guy named Mr Funny, and they all started laughing' (mum and little sisters).

Most students stated that they would recommend TSR drama class to other, newer students:

I feel that it's not only fun, but it's a kind of learning, improving.

I encourage new students to attend this class. I will tell the new students that they should take [it]...because it's good for you, for your future, as well to learn the language at the same time.

It's helped me because I don't know the name of animal[s] in English.

I would say it's fun to be in drama class. You be comfortable and take your time to learn English and I know you will enjoy yourself.

Even with such limited time in Australian classrooms, students made clear links between this 'new' kind of learning (which included fun and participatory activities) and effective language learning. It was also learning with practical outcomes that spoke to students' immediate needs: to become more comfortable with friends, to try new things in the classroom, to learn the names of places and animals in Australia – all of which were identified as important for their futures, not simply for 'having fun' or for an enjoyable break from the 'real work' of literacy and numeracy.

SOCIAL RELATIONS

All of the students interviewed stated that they did not meet new friends in TSR class as they were with their regular class. Other comments suggest ways in which the drama activities seemed to impact upon alliances and friendships. However (and this was echoed by the teacher in her interview), alliances along language lines were productively broken down, with students becoming more willing to work collaboratively across cultural and linguistic borders.

Two students identified ways in which TSR classes impacted positively upon them. One said: *'Coordination with the other friends when we do the acting together...was enjoyable'* and another who recalled praise from her classmates for the first time ever said: *'I was surprised for my classmates to say that I am perfect...I felt better'*.

Teacher and teaching artist interviews about the TSR program

Once you start having a different kind of relationship with them they feel more relaxed. I don't know, something happens. (T)

Despite distinctions made by the principal between expert artists who enter this school through the TSR project and teachers at the school who don't have these skills and therefore are not able to engage the students in the same way (see below), the teacher identified herself primarily as an arts teacher who is nevertheless here serving as a 'classroom teacher', teaching ESL, about which she characterised herself as *'out of my depth...out of my area'*. She stated that her involvement in TSR was to participate with her class as though she too was a student, although she would *'become more involved when there's a disciplinary thing they deal with or when I feel like the kids aren't understanding something'*. This concurs with Galton's observation (2008) that students' make a clear distinction between artists (as experts) and classroom teachers (as behaviour managers). As a trained art teacher, this teacher felt passionately about the vital role of arts pedagogies in all classrooms and continues to advocate with both students and teaching colleagues the value of the arts for responding to the ways in which *'people learn in different ways'* (T).

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND BELONGING

The teacher spoke passionately about the benefits for students, and the positive impact TSR has had on her own engagement with teaching and learning at SELS. These included formation of friendships and a sense of belonging. She stated that *'the kids, they built up friendships quickly through TSR, which helped in the classroom because they became a lot more vocal and engaged'*. The teaching artist too sees his TSR drama class as primarily offering those new to Australia *'a sense of place and a sense of being part of something'*. Rather than developing skills specific to drama, TSR activities were seen to strive to foster in these students *'a sense of belonging in their new situation'*.

The teacher believed TSR activities had led the class members to *'bec(o)me a more close knit group'*, and so affirmed the social benefits of TSR: *'I thought it was great for their social aspect.'* She commented that the teaching artist used best practice strategies in this drama class to assist the students to become more willing to work with any classmate, irrespective of linguistic or cultural background. The TSR drama class, she reported, *'broke down barriers'*.

Her explanation of her own arts teaching values and practices meant she values the teacher's

inclusion as a collaborator, a vital aspect of current arts education practice (Harris 2010) that recognises the need for mutuality. The teacher observed:

They've enjoyed having me doing it. You also become more of a unit I guess, and because I have another lesson straight after TSR it kind of bleeds into that lesson as well because we kind of stay as a single unit. (T)

PERSONAL WELLBEING

The teacher acknowledged the change in her relationship with her students through working together in the arts program. She recognised that this relationship, and students' confidence, carried over into her science class once the teaching artist left. She said: *'They're more willing now to put their hands up, answer questions...they don't mind making mistakes'*. She attributes this to her willingness to show her own vulnerability in the TSR class: *'They've seen that I can be a fool as well.'* Recent research in arts education acknowledges the effectiveness of sharing such teacher vulnerability with students, as they 'openly acknowledge that they were learning along with the students' (Bryce et al. 2004, p. 10). Surprisingly, rather than undermine students' confidence in her effectiveness as a teacher, this allowed these students to relax and take other (more academic) risks in this teacher's classroom.

The teaching artist clearly focuses on inclusion and wellbeing as his main aims for these young people. He identified his primary goals as *'getting everyone involved and getting everyone feeling like they have a sense of worth'*, the success of which was clearly represented in the students' commentary. To this end, he has carefully chosen games and activities which *'never really are about competition or never really about one person having a better skill set than the other'*.

Teacher comments point to the specific benefits for girls that may come from participation, *'the confidence in a few of the girls'*, with previously rare formative outcomes including speaking in front of teachers, visitors and peers, including males; and *'everyone was fairly well involved every lesson in TSR'*, which was not so in other classes.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

For the teacher, *engagement with learning* is a shared activity: she identified her own need to *'engage with [the] background'* of her newly arrived students as a pedagogical strategy to *'excite them about things about this culture'*. This strategy is routinely identified as a best practice strategy in contemporary international arts (and non-arts) education research. One ongoing challenge named by the teacher was trying to *'identify individual needs'* despite language barriers. Being truthful with students about what she doesn't know, and a policy of *'ask the kids'* were two effective strategies. She also valued transparency and reciprocal learning with the students as seen in the statement: *'I'm learning from them at the same time as they're learning from me, which I am.'* She stated that they *'get excited'* when she admits to not knowing something, and they *'think it's funny'*. As a teacher, she recognises that students sharing their own stories can be empowering:

I see that they like giving me knowledge of theirs. I can see kind of a fire in them. (T)

She also saw the implications of this for their engagement in the classroom, not only with their peers, but in a new and different way in relation to their teachers: *'The kids that aren't necessarily doing well academically or who are a bit shy; it's a medium for them to express themselves'*. She

saw how TSR activities allowed her students to confidently or humorously comment upon the teachers. For example:

They were pretending to be teachers and they were very funny. That showed me that there's something else going on...they know what...the role the teacher is, what I'm up to...and it was very exciting seeing that. (T)

This kind of pedagogy offers students multiple entry points, multiple ways of expressing and acquiring knowledge, *'to experience learning in another way that might be more suited to them'*. The teacher described being challenged by some of her students (who have come from more traditional/rote learning customs), that arts-based pedagogies are not *'real learning'*, but she holds to her beliefs, which they can all see being enacted with great success in TSR classes: *'I give them the spiel of "people learn in different ways".'* What's more, she puts it into practice in her own classroom, and uses these techniques as a tool for assisting non-academically achieving students, and reminds them, *'I like to see the underdogs excelling'*. In this way, this teacher honours both teacher and student engagement with diverse learning styles and strategies, and advocates for the arts as one of those styles.

THE LANGUAGE OF KINAESTHETICS

The teaching artist had a slightly different view on engagement with learning, as he structured his activities around *'physical drama games that don't rely so much on language'*, despite the teacher's and students' view that these classes assist with language learning, and one student's request that more language skills be integrated into the drama class.

The teaching artist expressed a recognition that, for him, *'The key thing is that it's a physical kinaesthetic program'* because they do not share a common language, and he could not rely on language as a teaching tool. From day one he acknowledged kinaesthetic learning not just as a *'fallback'* pedagogical stance, but as a language. He noted that *'They were sharing the language that they understood'*, a *'common language'*, even from *'day one'* in Australia, and that this offered students a space of safety and confidence.

TEACHER VULNERABILITY

The teacher's comfort with her own *vulnerability*, as noted above, demonstrated to her students a powerful pedagogical tool that is a direct extension of the work of the teaching artist in TSR activities. With his presence and popularity with these students, they see his vulnerability and collaborating methods as more *'normal'*, and she as their classroom teacher complements and extends the work of the teaching artist. It seems significant that the teacher's training was as an arts teacher. The coincidence of her responses and those of the teaching artist is in contrast to the principal's commentary (see below).

The teacher also noted that her own sense of the students changed, which in turn enhanced the changes that might have been occurring in the students. The teacher commented about one student, for example:

I don't know whether it's got to do with me now knowing what she's capable of and drawing it more out in her...I thought 'I know what you're capable of it now!' (T)

Finally, she made the point in her closing comments that the students need to have more arts than just *'a little token drama class once every term'* or the one lesson a week they currently get

because, as she said, *'I think it's important for the students who need to learn in that way to be exposed to it'*. She recognises that the power of arts pedagogies is in their ability to cater to diverse learning needs, as well as a tool for *all* teachers to get to know their students, whoever they are. For this teacher, the arts becomes

...a tool for their teaching...I've worked out some of the kids who possibly were capable of more than I thought, and I've used that in class. (T)

'ARTISTS' VERSUS 'TEACHERS'

One emergent theme was around the differences between classroom teachers and visiting artists. While the teacher interviewed did not make a distinction in terms of her own self-image between being an artist and a teacher, both the principal and the teaching artist did. In the teaching artist's words:

I have a privileged situation in that I'm not a teacher and I don't want to come in as a teacher. I'm an artist and I want them to respond to what I'm doing with a sense of love and excitement and freedom. (T)

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

Not all of us are good at drama and not all of us can take a drumming class, not all of us can do...the things that the practitioners do. (P)

According to the principal, this school has been working with TSR for four years now, after a cold call from a TSR coordinator and the recommendation of another language school. She sees the power of the program in how it plugs into the students' cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge.

She identified the most significant aspect of its success as TSR *'choos[ing] their practitioners very well...people who can really bring kids out of their shell'*. Despite her overwhelmingly positive feedback, this principal stated that rather than advocating for arts programs in education, she felt that *'It's the singer, not the song'*, and any arts-based program (including TSR) hinges on its practitioners, who are *'passionate about what they do'*.

She feels that all the practitioners they have had from TSR have been *'top notch'* but that this is something for this program (and potentially future program and policy makers) to *'watch out for'* (be attentive to). She did not believe that the teaching artist's popularity or success was enhanced by the nature of a program coming in from outside, a break from the day-to-day activities of school-as-usual. Rather, she believed that if the quality of teachers was high enough, the students would respond the same way, whether it was a teaching artist or a regular classroom teacher, in any subject, and that it all hinged on what she calls *'the quality'* of the practitioner/teacher. She characterised this program as *'an enrichment'* which builds upon the skills (or lack of skills) of the teachers. She felt they had offered similar programs anyway, through their ongoing programming, and that the main benefit of TSR involvement was that the program sources excellent practitioners. She cited the fact that the practitioners they have had through TSR are all practising in their respective fields as a sign of their *'expert'* knowledge. Clearly this had traction for her, although it was not mentioned or indicated by the young people or the classroom teacher as important.

The principal identified TSR as socially inclusive because it capitalises on the prior abilities of newly arrived students, particularly those from oral cultures, who are *'used to expressing themselves through song and dance and it gives them a chance to shine in a way that straight academic learning doesn't'*. She saw it as an effective tool for collaboration between the students, building confidence levels and alternative ways of *'approaching literacy'*. She also saw its power in its ability to challenge previous notions of legitimate learning for those students who are used to rote learning. She commented that *'It's good for their social interaction'*.

Summary

The aim of this case study was to evaluate the TSR drama class as it has been conducted at SELS over Terms 1 and 2 in 2010. It also sought to examine the implications for future programming of TSR, similar projects, funders and policy makers. For the students, success can be understood as humour, English language learning and friendship building. For the teacher and teaching artist, the impact can be understood as engaging students in fun, inclusive and pedagogically useful ways in a safe and collaborative environment. These values can be compared and contrasted with the principal's measure of the impact of TSR as a 'value-added' activity that supplements the good work being done already at the school, but for which her staff are not sufficiently or appropriately trained; it is an opportunity to work alongside 'the experts', who infuse the learning environment with expertise, passion and love of their craft.

Even though the TSR students had been in Australian classrooms for only a short time, they made clear links between this 'new' kind of learning (which included fun and participatory activities) and effective language learning. Not only effective, but also language learning with practical outcomes that spoke to their immediate needs: to become more comfortable with friends, to try new things in the classroom, to learn the names of places and animals in Australia.

Both the teacher and the teaching artist saw this drama class as having implications for students' engagement in other classes, and not only with peers, but in new and different ways with their teachers. This included increased mutuality and vulnerability from their teacher and other adults (including the teaching artist), which they saw as a powerful pedagogical tool. Importantly, the teacher and teaching artist also noted the teacher's sense of their change in students, which they felt in turn enhanced the changes that were occurring in the students. Unlike the principal's view that teaching artists are specialists with expert knowledge, the teacher believed the arts to be a tool for all teachers, especially for getting to know students, and for diverse learning styles in any subject.

The principal's comments did not reflect the same sense of connection and pedagogical value between arts methods and core learning as did those of the teacher and teacher artist. Her comments were limited to praise of TSR practitioners and their ability to engage the students. She did not make any explicit link between the social inclusion experienced by newly arrived students and their literacy and numeracy learning.

In summary, TSR appears to have had a range of impacts for the different stakeholders in this school-arts partnership, including positive impacts for the social, pedagogical and emotional wellbeing of participating students at Sarawood ELS.

9.4 HAVERSEA ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Christopher Sonn

The school context

Haversea English Language School (HELS)⁵ is a P–12 school that provides an intensive English language course for young people from non-English speaking immigrant or refugee backgrounds. Currently the school has 304 enrolled students, 139 girls and 165 boys. The school has a high attendance rate of 93 per cent. The Index for Community Socio-Educational Advantage shows that many students are in the bottom quarter of the index.⁶

Secondary students are placed in classes according to age and English proficiency. English language is generally taught through a series of themes or topics under which reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are developed. The school's goals and priorities are:

- To provide an integrated intensive language development course which ensures that all students have access to effective English language experiences and exposure to ways of life within Australian society
- To prepare students for transition to mainstream schools and colleges
- To further develop and maintain a positive, safe learning environment and continue to provide a caring, secure environment that accepts and respects individual differences
- To ensure that management practices promote effective communication and decision-making processes and support staff to implement the goals and priorities of the school.

TSR program at school

At HELS the creative arts programs offered by TSR are integrated into the broader school curriculum amongst a series of electives that students can choose from, including soccer, cooking, dance/music and drumming. Students worked either with TSR teaching artists Zachary in the drumming program or Suzanne in the music/dance program.⁷

Zachary has been working with the TSR program in different schools since 2004. He says of the program:

I guess...it can encourage the school to see the importance of the arts in school situations, and there ha[ve] been schools that have employed me since I've been there and I'm now employed at two schools, and some of the schools go on to employ other artists or teachers in the arts area.

⁵ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

⁶ The basis of the curriculum is the study of the English language. However, the curriculum also aims to prepare students for life in Australia as many students have been displaced by war, economic hardship or political persecution. The school is committed to assisting students to regain trust in people and systems and to develop self-esteem and confidence required to face the challenges in a new country. At any given time up to 45 different language groups are represented. The school is committed to providing a secure and caring learning environment where staff and students respect and tolerate differences between cultures and religions and cater for individual differences in language acquisition. (My School website, accessed June 2010)

⁷ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

Suzanne commented:

It definitely helps them connect with each other and relax. It's a place where they can try something they have never tried before but actually come out of themselves and really start to shine; maybe kids that aren't so good at mathematics or something like that, might be really good at dancing. So it gives kids that may not often shine the space to shine.

In terms of the broader expectations, one of the teaching artists stated that the program was developed to:

Assist the students to integrate into this country and different styles of learning, to increase student participation, build confidence, assist English skills and give them another form of expression.

The more specific goals of the programs are to increase student confidence, improve language skills, and engage students in teamwork and arts-based activity and expression.

The students

Students at HELS who participated in the TSR creative arts activity offered in Term 2 were interviewed about their experiences at school, experiences and perceptions of the arts class, and aspects of learning and aspirations for learning. On average the students had lived in Australia for about six months, the longest period being twelve months and the shortest five months. The young people had been at the school for about two terms. There were three female participants, one from Sudan, one from Pakistan and one from Iraq. Most of the students identified Islam as their religion. Six of the students participated in the drumming class and three participated in the drama and dancing class. The student demographics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Selected demographics

Gender	Country of birth	Age	Months in Australia	Languages	Program
Male	Afghanistan	18	7	Dari, Pashtu	Drumming
Female	Afghanistan	16	11	Dari, Pashtu	Drumming
Male	Afghanistan	17	9	Dari, Irani	Drumming
Female	Sudan	17	6	Arabic, Shilluk	Drumming
Male	Iran	18	6	Dari	Drumming
Female	Iran	16	6	Persian	Dance/music
Male	Iran	14	6	Kurdish, Farsi	Dance/music
Male	Afghanistan	13	6	Dari	Dance/music

Data gathering procedures and sources

As detailed in the methodology section, data were collected using different strategies, including photo-elicitation and diaries, and semi-structured interviews with students, teaching artists, classroom teachers and the school principal. The two classes were also observed once and detailed notes were taken.

Observation

The observational notes focused on describing the classroom setting, including the people, roles, activities and practices. This was an important part of the process for understanding how the teaching artists and the students engaged in social and learning processes within the classroom. This was particularly helpful for clarifying the practices for modelling drumming rituals, the role of the teacher in the classroom, and the relationships between class members and the relationship between students and the teaching artist. This information provided context for understanding the students' responses to questions about participating in the drumming program, as well as the teaching artists' comments about the environment they created for participation and learning.

Teachers and principal

Two teaching artists and one classroom teacher were interviewed as well as the school principal. One teaching artist had been working at the school in the TSR program for more than five years and the other had been working at the school for one year. The classroom teacher had been at the school for a year, but had more than 30 years of experience as an ESL teacher in various Melbourne schools.

Students

Seven students were interviewed using the semi-structured interview guide. For three of these interviews a translator who spoke Dari was present and for one a translator who spoke Arabic was present to help with the communication process, providing contextual and cultural insights where possible. The other students were given the opportunity to be interviewed with a translator present but declined, feeling competent to speak in English. This was an important opportunity for these students to show their English language speaking competence in a formal context. Prior to interviewing, the students were informed of the ethical requirements and a request was made to record the interviews. One student did not want the interview to be recorded. Notes were taken by the interviewer for that interview.

Students were invited to take photographs about aspects of their schooling and their participation in the TSR program. They were then asked to select pictures that captured those experiences and to complete a photo journal using the selected pictures. The photo journals were used in the initial part of the interview, helping to establish rapport and giving students the chance to lead the discussion.

Data analysis

In the following section the interview data is summarised with a focus on the themes that characterise students' experiences of schooling and, in particular, participation in the TSR classes – drumming or dance and music. The analysis was focused on analysing students' responses to questions designed to gather information about personal and social wellbeing, sense of school belonging, and student engagement with learning and community. In our conceptualisation, learning, wellbeing and belonging are understood as social-psychological processes that must be understood within the broader context of person–environment transactions. To this end, the researcher was interested to know what students might say about their experiences of school and their involvement in the TSR program.

The data was recorded in a question-ordered matrix (Miles & Huberman 1994) and analysed for

recurring and unique responses to the questions. These responses were then organised with a view to understanding the main themes in the responses that captured students' experiences of school and the TSR program. The data is presented here according to the themes that best capture students' understandings and experiences of personal and social wellbeing, sense of school belonging and engagement with learning. The dominant themes relate to people, social relationships and the opportunity to acquire knowledge and competencies within a creative and supportive environment. These were the two dominant themes. The different factors that constitute these themes are presented in the following section. Although the themes relating to the school and TSR are presented separately, these need to be understood within the broader context of schooling.

Findings and interpretation

Student voices about the school

The atmosphere in the school [is the best thing about the school]. I feel comfortable with the teachers. They make us feel happy and they teach us well, and treat us well.

LANGUAGE, FRIENDSHIPS AND SETTLING

Although the students all mentioned friends as significant to their experiences at school, they all had to form friendships when they first arrived at the school. For many this was not an easy process because of language barriers, as indicated in the following quotations:

No, it was hard for me, because everyone was new. I did not see them before, I don't know...But I don't have any friend from my home country. I had just one friend. When I came here the first day, there weren't any of my friends. He leaves this school. At that time I feel bad and didn't have any friends and did not know how to make friends. But, now they have come.

It was not easy. It was a new country and I was unsettled.

It was hard because of language. I did not know English, just a little, but after one month my English was good.

No it was difficult. I could not find friends until one month. Then I found friends.

The significance of friendships was further highlighted when students were asked about who they could turn to when they needed help. Four students said they would turn to friends and five mentioned a teacher to whom they would turn when they needed help. One said that he would not turn to a teacher. One said that he would use an information source, 'a dictionary', to get help with self-expression.

For many of the students friendship networks were initially developed with the arrival of other Dari speakers. Although their networks became broader and now include people from diverse backgrounds for whom English is the medium of communication, other Dari speakers were vital for negotiating the process of settling into school and sharing their experiences of this transition process.

ENGAGING WITH LEARNING

The acquisition of language, knowledge and related skills contributed to feeling comfortable at school and engaging in different aspects of schooling. All of the students mentioned the importance of learning to speak and read well in English. This is reflected in the quotations below:

Starting good, starting well and improving my English [was important].

I did not have a picture for here. If I had a picture it would be about one person, one student studying English, always sitting at a table with his books in front of him.

This is for myself. Someday I want to read the book because I think it tell me about anything.

I want to learn to speak fluent English and use the computer.

One student said that they loved school because of: *'Dancing and sports. Library and science. Maybe because I went to the library and I read some book. It's good for my English.'*

In relation to aspirations, when students were asked about what they wanted to learn, most said to speak English and know Australian culture. One said that she wanted to learn *'how to cook'* because when she is by herself she will need to be able to look after herself.

Cooking, because if you are not under 18 you have to go other home, you are not with your parents, you have to cook.

Others mentioned that they wanted to *'learn more about drumming'* and two students spoke about specific units of study, *'maths and biology'*, they wanted to develop knowledge about. Arguably the students were appropriating the stories about the purpose of the school (language and culture learning), as well as what the teachers and teaching artist represented to them, that is, future social roles.

SCHOOL SENSE OF BELONGING

Participants were asked about what aspects of their school they liked and disliked. All of the students spoke very positively about the school and highlighted different aspects of it that were important to them. Some mentioned the teachers, some mentioned friends, while others mentioned the physical spaces in which they played and engaged in fun and meaningful social activity. For example, one student commented about the atmosphere of the school, stating:

I feel comfortable with the teachers. They make us feel happy and they teach us, and treat us well.

When the students were asked about things that were special about school, most mentioned engaging with friends, including playing soccer and being with friends. This is captured in the following quotations:

I like best about school my friends and drumming.

I like walking around school and talking with my friends.

It's the playground we play every day [play soccer]. This is the place we play every day. It is the secondary oval, it's very big. I play with my friends.

The *role of friends and supportive teachers* was mentioned in relation to students feeling comfortable at school and feeling that they belonged. Friends, in particular, were highlighted by three students in relation to feeling comfortable. These understandings are consistent with conceptions of a sense of belonging and positive social climate reported in the literature on schooling. In that literature school belonging is indicated by student assessment of different aspects of student and school relationships, including those with peers and teachers (e.g. Goodenow & Grady 1993; Libby 2004).

Student voices about being in the TSR program

I would tell them that the drumming class is good for me, for us. It is good if you like to play drums; really enjoy this class forever. You learn about the drumming and how to play.

I want to learn dancing. Maybe one day [I am] teacher dance. Yeah, one day I'm teacher.

ENGAGING AND LEARNING

Students were asked what was special to them about the TSR class. They all commented how much they loved the drumming class, while those who took drama and dancing said they loved that class. For one student the drumming class meant continuity and opportunity, as noted in the following quotation:

I really love the drums with Zachary. I like to play drums in my own country, but in my country I don't have a drum kit.

Students said about the drumming class:

It is my favourite class.

It is fun and the teacher is good. Very good. The students are good.

One student captured the overall responses from students: '*Come to this class. It's very fun. It's very good and you will enjoy drumming.*' For these students drumming was experienced as *fun* and as *enjoyable*, and this enhanced their learning experiences.

For all the students, participation literally meant learning new skills, such as drumming, dancing or body drumming.

I learnt different types of drumming.

I learnt dancing and drumming.

Yet, for one student, there was something deeper about the learning. The student commented: '*The teacher makes me feel what drummers feel.*' This student meant that drumming was much more than a skill, that there was a deeper sense of self-expression through drumming. Drumming becomes embodied – part of the self.

Responses to further questions about the drumming class indicate the different aspects of participation in the class that contributed to the experience and meaning of fun. For each student, engagement was the connection between the person and an activity (Russell, Ainley & Frydenberg 2005) and it was nuanced and different for each student. As noted above, for one student it meant *continuity*; for another it meant being *able to participate* in music, which she loved; for another student it was about being able to *learn and to work* with other students.

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND WORKING TOGETHER

As within the broader school context, two of the students placed an emphasis on *working together* and *collaboration*, which is required to perform successfully as a group. This is illustrated in the following quotations:

It's a drumming class, so the way we work together and the boys, we work together and we not want to make mistakes. We beat the drum. If someone makes a mistake it's difficult to continue.

The most important thing and special thing for me about drama is that students are sitting next to each other and work together on what their teacher said.

For the three students who participated in the drama class the experience was also mostly related to fun and enjoyment. For example, one student expressed it in this way: *'I like dancing because I think when you do some dancing it is exercise and you are happy and feel happy'*. Another said that *'dancing is good.'* He liked it and noted that in his country of origin there was no dancing at school. One student also said that he liked the body drumming aspect of the class and the image of the teacher symbolised his favourite class and his love of break dancing.

Learning drumming and dancing together is a dialogical process. It involves joint participation and acquiring new skills, and it results in the production of an outcome that can be shared with others. From this vantage point students learn about cooperation, different modalities for self expression, and the reward of a sense of achievement that is derived from the public performances (see also Hunter 2005).

SCHOOL BELONGING

The opportunity to participate in the drumming and drama classes played a role in helping to *consolidate friendships* students had formed with similar language speakers (e.g. Dari) in the first few months at school, as well with new students in the class. The students learnt about each other, acquiring new knowledge, including students' countries of origin, languages spoken and their strengths and aspirations. For example one student noted: *'I know that some of them are good at sports. The first one is Hakem. In this school he is good at volleyball. The other one... Charan is from Punjab. They are both...my friends. He is good at drumming. He loves it.'*

Teacher and teaching artist interviews about the TSR program

This section is a summary of the findings of the analysis of interview data with teachers, teaching artists and the school principal. The teachers were specifically asked for their views on the main function of drama and arts in the school, what they saw as crucial to successful student engagement and what advice they would give others about working with young people from refugee backgrounds. The teacher and teaching artist interviews offer different yet complementary insights from those of students.

CREATING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A key theme reported by the teachers and teaching artists related to student experiences of feeling comfortable and enjoying TSR in relation to the school and classroom climate or environment. Both teaching artists spoke about the importance of creating a caring space and community for learning within which young people could feel safe to engage, explore and develop their own potential – which captured the functions of the TSR program from their perspectives. The creation of caring spaces is based on valuing the potential of each person to learn and be creative. This was described in the following way by the teaching artists, the teacher and the school principal:

So the idea of creating the space – I have the intention and [know] that everyone is capable of doing something. I think that is really important and that a little bit is respected and valued. So, for example, we will do a dancing activity where I will get each child to do a dance move, and even if they just nod their head, that's enough and we will copy them, you know. It's kind of... its very welcoming. It's not too threatening. And what else? Yeah, I'm able to make mistakes. (TA1)

I will give them time at the start to just observe what's going on in the class and just not apply too much pressure for them to do it, so just let them observe for a while and then usually they'll join in themselves. Obviously, I'll encourage them but if they're reluctant to join in I'll leave them alone. But just having the group together in a class is good because they'll see the other students laughing and smiling and enjoying what they're doing and most of the time the students will just join in o[f] their own accord. (TA2)

The program provides something new for the students. It helps in building confidence and a belief in themselves. They are more confident and self-assured...they come into the room and they don't feel threatened or subdued. (T)

They come to school and school is a place that is safe. It is a place that is fun, where they are learning, where they all can participate. Everyone can offer something and everyone can succeed. (P)

The classroom teacher also mentioned the importance of making the students feel comfortable in the classroom. The teacher said, *'The most important thing is to make them feel comfortable, to build rapport with them and to build trust and mak[e] sure that the classroom is warm and friendly.'* The teacher said that her role in the teaching artists' class was mostly to provide support and observe students – a disciplinary function. Importantly, she highlighted the personal qualities of the teaching artists in creating a caring learning space. *'They are very warm, friendly people. They build up good rapport with the students and the students love them, and this makes my job easier as a teacher. There are lots of laughs and children are so ready to participate and do everything that's asked of them.'*

Some of the key features that teaching artists, the teacher and principal highlighted for constructing a caring learning space were:

- Fun and structured activity
- Everyone being valued and respected
- A non-judgemental setting
- Modelling and observation
- Goals and end production
- Patience
- Personnel.

These are in line with the features noted by Brown and Jeanneret (2007), who report similar factors for positive engagement in arts activities. It is within such a space that students are able to develop particular skills and competencies, explore creative capacities, form friendships, construct identities and develop a sense of comfort and belonging.

MAIN IMPACTS OF TSR ARTS PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEE BACKGROUND YOUNG PEOPLE

When the teacher and teaching artists were asked about the impacts of the arts programs, they offered similar insights. These are presented in Table 2. These categories reinforce the benefits of arts participation, as indicated in the 2008 literature review conducted for TSR by The University of Melbourne (Donelan & Jeanneret 2008). These benefits are also consistent with some of those expressed by the students in the section above, which were seen to flow from participation in the drumming and dancing programs. These benefits relate to more than individual competencies.

They also reflect the social processes in school settings through which students acquire the tools and symbolic resources for constructing identities, negotiating everyday life and learning about future possibilities.

The classroom teacher added comments about the impacts of participating in the arts program. The teacher said that it provided an opportunity for students to engage in a different kind of learning; to be expressive and uninhibited:

Here they are letting their hair down and you get to see these students...you think are so reserved having a great time. They look so sad or whatever. They have these worries in the classroom and here in TSR program they forget all their troubles and enjoy themselves. (T)

The teacher also mentioned that the program provides a break from intensive language learning. This point was echoed by the principal, who commented: *'Language learning can be really tiring...having an arts program creates a balance because although they are concentrating, it is a different type of concentrating...I think it creates something that the students can all achieve.'* However, this does not mean that they do not continue to learn language. They do, but they learn different aspects of communication: *'They are interacting, they're learning words, they are learning English, but in a fun way and they absolutely enjoy it.'* (T)

As noted in the table below, many of the impacts noted by the teaching artists and teacher reinforce those identified in student interviews. However, the teachers and teaching artists offered additional insights that the young people may not have been able to as a result of their experiences. These experiences relate to the role of the school and other activities in the lives of the young people negotiating this life transition. The teachers spoke of the novel ways in which students learn language, nuances of expression, and other informal cultural values and practices that exist in the creative classroom. In such contexts students are more freely able to express themselves and to share their own cultural stories – it is here that they are able to translate cultural practices and even try those that were forbidden in their previous country.

Table 2: Summary of impacts of TSR arts programs for refugee background young people

Domain	Category	Illustrative quotations
Personal wellbeing	Confidence	<i>So they build confidence to stand in front of other people. (TA)</i>
	Sense of pride	<i>So it gives kids that may not often shine...the space to shine. (TA)</i>
	Creativity	<i>I think it helps build up resilience. (T)</i> <i>When they have just come into a country after trauma, to have a program that incorporates something that is positive, enjoyable, that they can achieve in, is fantastic. (P)</i>
Learning	Language and culture	<i>Definitely it teaches them English; like you do English songs and they learn. (TA)</i> <i>They are interacting, they're learning words, they are learning English, but in a fun way and they absolutely enjoy it. (T)</i>

Belonging	<p>Friendships and Social relations</p> <p><i>It definitely helps them connect with each other and relax. (TA)</i></p> <p><i>If they are practising it for their concert, you know, they will get together with a friend. (T)</i></p> <p><i>We'll probably make them feel as if they are part of something just to even have that weekly activity as one group and it's almost as if they're the drummers of the school. (TA)</i></p>
School and community	<p>Connectedness and belonging</p> <p><i>It is very community orientated, group orientated, so it's very much that they create a belonging and they get to shine in a different way that they may not get to shine in other ways. (TA)</i></p> <p><i>They really look forward to the sessions through TSR so their connectedness to school, to their peers – they are sharing an activity together. (T)</i></p> <p><i>International day (concert) links school with community. (T)</i></p>
Cultural exchange	<p>Negotiation</p> <p><i>Sometimes yes, so we have done, we have written songs that describe their home country in English. That's been fantastic. Sometimes we get them to dance their own dances from their own cultures. (TA)</i></p> <p><i>I try to include Australian folk songs in some of my sessions, and I guess it lets them know that arts are popular in this culture and they are celebrated, rather than, I guess, in some other cultures the arts maybe shunned... (TA)</i></p> <p><i>The appreciation for the arts is something that is lifelong – music and dance they can carry with them forever. (T)</i></p>

Summary

The aim of this case study was to hear from students about their experiences of participating in the programs offered by TSR and the implications of these for sense of belonging, personal and social wellbeing and engagement with learning and belonging. Analysis of the interview data gathered from the students shows that engagement in TSR programs is constructed as meaningful; in particular, that it is experienced as fun and enjoyment. The findings suggest that students enjoyed the classes and that this enjoyment *fostered learning*. Learning drumming and dancing together is a dialogical process. It involves joint participation and acquiring new skills, and it results in the production of an outcome that can be shared with others. From this vantage point students learn about cooperation *and this generates an appreciation of creativity, as well as a sense of personal achievement*.

It can be argued that one of the outcomes relates to deeper values to do with learning to work together democratically. Students mentioned that they needed to rely on each other if the drumming was to work. This type of drumming was inherently social and required collaboration and turn-taking, and resulted in opportunities for a group performance.

The experiences within the TSR program also need to be understood within a broader school context in which most of the student body is in transition. The general experience of schooling for these students attests to the importance of language learning and the roles of friends and a supportive and caring teaching community. As indicated by the teachers and teaching artists, engaging in meaningful activities has different impacts for different students, including opportunities for developing individual competencies; feeling part of a group and the school community; building social relations; participating in the production of cultural performances; exposure to appropriate adult role models; and translating knowledge from the home culture to the new country.

9.5 TELBRIDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Craig Wallace

The school context

Telbridge English Language School (TELS)⁸ is an outpost of one of Melbourne's four main English language schools. Outpost programs are intensive programs delivered by ELS teachers at primary schools throughout the Western Region of Melbourne. These programs are provided to support primary students who are unable to access a full-time program at one of the main campuses. TELS is in Melbourne's northern suburbs, located at a small primary school with 133 students and a high proportion of families with CALD backgrounds and low socio-economic status. The school is located in close proximity to the local secondary college, on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people. The case study is of the TELS outpost as a site for the TSR program. Students were in two classes at TELS, with class teachers Miss Lisa (Levels 4–6) and Miss Sarah (Levels P–4).⁹ The students in this case were from Miss Lisa's class (Levels 4–6), but both classes were combined for the observation session.

TSR program at school

TSR has worked at the base campus for this English language school outpost since 2007. This is the first year TSR has worked at the Telbridge outpost, and at the time of the research the program had been running for one and a half terms. Students reported being at the TELS outpost from three weeks to one year and were all taking TSR classes, in this case a weekly singing class facilitated by teaching artist Callie¹⁰ during Terms 1 and 2 that culminated in the performance of three songs at the BMW Edge at Federation Square on 23 June 2010.

The students

Table 1: Selected demographics

Gender	Country of birth	Age	Months in Australia	Languages
Male	Iraq	10	6	Arabic, Assyrian
Female	Iraq	10	12	Arabic, Assyrian
Female	Iraq	12	12	Arabic, Assyrian
Male	Iraq	12	3	Arabic, Assyrian
Female	Iraq	11	6	Arabic, Assyrian
Male	Turkey	10	12	Turkish

The languages spoken with friends were as above, and also English for four of the six students.

⁸ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Data gathering procedures and sources

This case study comprises the collation and analysis of data from the following sources over four days in two weeks in June 2010 at the school and is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Data sources

Source	Details	Date
Semi-structured interviews	6 students 1 teaching artist 1 classroom teacher 1 principal	15 June–22 June
Observation	1 TSR session 1 TSR performance	15 June 23 June
Other	Creative artist program plan	Provided prior to researcher entering school
Evaluations	Creative artist program evaluation	Provided at end of program

Findings and interpretation

Student voices about the school

SENSE OF SCHOOL BELONGING

Friendship and harmony appeared to be of great importance. Two of the three female students and one of the three male students said it was not easy to make friends when they started at the school. All six said they had more friends now than when they started school. Photo-elicitation particularly showed the importance of friends:

It is important to me my friends look like funny, they are playing good, they are playing together, they are playing nice.

I like look at my friends play soccer. This is Turkish people and Arabic. They are playing with each other.

Students reported the importance of *feeling looked after*: ‘The teachers every time look after the students and they help the students and the children there’. Similarly, being *known and supported* by someone was important: ‘I like working with Miss Georgia. Miss Georgia knows me.’ The importance of receiving presents to feeling welcome at school was also noted:

Yesterday [at assembly] they [Commonwealth Bank] gave me a present and that was good. It was a yoyo, a money box and a drink bottle, pencils and rubbers, sharpeners...It is just a way of showing that when presents come, it is saying no bad things will happen.

When asked who they would turn to if they needed someone to talk to at school, one nominated

the classroom teacher, two nominated specific friends, two said friends in general, and one said the classroom teacher or friends. The language used to seek help was significant:

[If I need someone to talk to at my school] I speak with my friend Yasin, but I don't speak...the language we are talking now, I speak with him in English...we've been told by a teacher that it's not right to speak in our language...If we do we lose points. If we don't we get rewarded. You get presents.

Students had received help from other students and teachers. Being helped by others and helping others was rated highly: '[One of my favourite things at school is to] *help the small children here*'.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

Learning English was considered paramount, and as discussed above regarding having someone to talk to, *talking to friends in English* was a way of enhancing language learning.

The thing I like is my favourite thing in the school, is when I went to the school I wasn't talk good English but now I can talk because I learned here. When I came to here I learned quick, English.

I want [to] learn more about speaking English. Sometime I speak with my friend English because I want to learn to speak English.

Teachers appeared to be important role models and becoming a teacher was discussed:

I would like to become a teacher and the teacher becomes me, so teacher and student changing roles.

I like want learn about being a teacher.

One student noted the *importance of family* by including a photo of his father and brother on the school grounds in his photo journal.

Student voices about being in the TSR program

FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Five out of six students reported making 'new' friends in TSR. The other students did not differentiate between TSR and the other class, adding that it was the same group of students. The students reported having zero to four friends in TSR who spoke a different language to them and English was a common language for some of them.

Having fun together with friends was an important part of TSR:

I like this photo because everyone's faces look like funny the smile and...I put this picture because everybody smiling and singing to my favourite music...I like this photo because my friends are all together and the faces look like fun.

Learning social skills was also noted as a benefit of TSR:

I've learned to be good to people [in my TSR class].

As discussed above, helping others was an important part of some student's broader school experience, and receiving help in TSR was also important:

My friend Arif told me that you have to learn this, and he kept telling me how to do it until I learnt

Understanding the impacts of The Song Room programs for young people from refugee backgrounds

how to do it [and] I learn from Callie the things that she was telling us...When she tells something and I don't understand, he comes and tells me.

The offer of *helping others* was forthcoming and seems to hint that part of the benefit gained from participation in TSR is the opportunity to help others. This was also seen in mutual-aid or self-help:

[I would say to someone about TSR], I would tell them that if you want to learn this, you have to learn how to do it, and then I will teach you how to do it.

TSR is an opportunity for feeling good about yourself:

We do something and she says that's really good. You do a good job and it makes you all happy...if someone do something not really good, she tells them that's really good and now you can learn more about it and can do more things. You can do it...she'll say you can do very well. Then when you get bigger, you can do better. Now your job is really good.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

When asked what they would like to learn more about, two of the six students stated they would like to learn more about English. Other responses were maths, singing, soccer and '*nothing*'. However, there were several other comments that reflected engagement in with the TSR program. It was also an opportunity for appreciating the arts:

Song room teacher, Callie, I really enjoy her voice...very fine, soft voice.

You will like because this teacher is a very good singer and understand nice. Of course you like the music and you like this music...The Arabic people really like it because this music, Arabic music...and the singing very good...You will like it. The sound comes out very nice.

Skill development was important too:

[Something new that I have learnt is] when I am in TSR, when you are singing a song how to get the tone out in your voice and how to sing from the inside.

Students discussed the *open learning environment* of TSR class:

You just put your hand up and say 'Can I do this music?' and she do it. It is nice.

I just like Callie. She teaches everybody songs and learn differently what we can sing and hear something special for sing[ing].

They also discussed it as a place where *mistakes could be made safely*:

Don't go into [another specialist class]. I don't like [that class] so not going there...my teacher is very angry. When you do a little mistake she gets very upset...just sometimes.

TSR was contrasted to school in students' countries of birth:

I like everything in Callie's class. Ms Lisa and Ms Sarah and all the teachers there are really angry – how they were in Syria, the teachers. Because here [in TSR] the teachers are not really angry. I like Callie, how she teaches the children what songs.

When we sing really well, like 'Tomorrow tomorrow'. Everything I like. Only here I find these things. In Syria I didn't see anything like this. In Syria if you were doing something that they were

not happy with...we were punished with the cane. Even one had his finger broken. That's how they do it... Here we can move. We could just sit and she would ask us something, if you can't do it then you would get beaten.

A sense of relating to the personal attributes of teaching artists was mentioned:

[My classroom teacher] is very good singer...every time when it is coming from the inside. She sings from the inside.

Observation of TSR showed classroom teachers assisting with behaviour management, although the requirement for this was minimal – mainly regulation of turn taking when students were asking for songs. One student noted his preference for *space to listen to the artist*:

I don't like when students start talking, because I don't hear what she is saying.

IMPORTANCE OF PERFORMANCE OUTCOME

The TSR program culminated in a performance at Federation Square's BMW edge. Preparing for performance was considered an integral part of the TSR experience:

We need to learn and you are told that you have to learn because otherwise how will you perform on the stage.

Like now we're going to go for the concert in the city. We're going to sing there. And this is something we haven't done before so it's a new thing and I think it is very good.

Teacher and teaching artist interviews about the TSR program

Interviews were conducted with the teaching artist, classroom teacher and principal. Themes and sub-themes related to social inclusion, sense of wellbeing and engagement with learning are summarised in Table 3 below.

THEMES FROM TEACHING ARTIST, TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEWS

Table 3: Themes from teaching artist, teacher and principal interviews

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Safe learning environment	Safe learning environment	<i>I think the benefits for a program like this, is it takes them away from all that background, it gives them a safe haven to be able to participate in, joining in with the music, making something. (P)</i>
	Stories from country of birth/singing in first language	<i>It's good they have stories from their own country and their own experiences and being able to put that to music as well has being really great for them. (T)</i> <i>But actually music's in their soul over there too, so it's something that – they've come from one country, trauma or whatever else they've had in the background of their lives – and then come to Australia and there's a connection here, yes we did music over here, and yes there was music over here. (P)</i>

Individual-level benefits – students	Sensitivity to gender	<i>In some cases, girls find it really hard to feel free; to express themselves that way because there might be cultural reasons why singing is not necessarily approved of in girls; it draws unnecessary attention to them. (TA)</i>
	Teacher involvement	<i>We get involved with all the singing, all the dancing, all the actions, and I think that really made the kids want to be involved even more, seeing their teachers having a go as well, and I guess it encouraged them to have a go, seeing us participate as well. (T)</i> <i>It's really telling to me when the teachers are right there in the circle, learning the songs with the kids, executing them; talking; helping the kids; that's to me, that's really brilliant. That's what I love and then the teachers have got the legacy of that. They will be able to continue that work after I go. (TA)</i>
	Engagement	<i>That gets them involved, that actually increases their skills, and so if you take that away, as I said before, you will have a number of students who will really miss out because they'll be in that 20 per cent of children that won't learn the other way, that you need to cater for their interests and needs as well. (P)</i>
	Self-expression /language	<i>I think the songs that they chose were fantastic, especially for our kids. They've never had Song Room before, so doing songs about themselves and their feelings I think was really good, and they enjoyed singing them too, which was even better. (T)</i>
	Leadership and self-confidence	<i>I think there's two in particular in my class that I have noticed have really good leadership qualities and if some people aren't really paying attention in TSR they'll be the ones to say, 'Come on, let's listen to Callie and let's sing properly, let's not shout'. (T)</i>
Social and interpersonal	Cultural exchange	<i>Really just having an open mind to different songs from different cultures and knowing everybody is different as well is probably a big thing. (T)</i> <i>I learn new things all the time from the kids. I feel it's a big loop. (T)</i>
	Connectedness	<i>So they get two sides of the whole performing scenario and I think that that's a really lovely formula that they offer. I certainly think that it helps with their English work... I think it helps with their sense of social cohesion, as I said. (TA)</i>

Teamwork

The idea of the team, the musical team which to me is just as much a training as any other sporting event, the musical team is just as important as the sporting team. The results are there to be seen. When the group works beautifully as a team the results are all right there to see and hear. (TA)

There's also a communal aspect to it, so they're learning new instances of the language by doing it, and they're doing it together. (P)

SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The classroom teacher, teaching artist and the principal all commented on how TSR creates a safe space for learning:

I think in some cases the factor of bringing in an abstract medium like music which exists in the realm of the imagination, is that it creates a real level playing field for a lot of children that might be really struggling with the language as refugees; struggling to feel a sense that they can do things because they are so new with the language. They are so new with the whole routine of schooling in Australia that it can feel like there's just these huge hurdles that they have to constantly be jumping over, and music is often how they are instantly good at [something]. (TA)

I think the benefits for a program like this, is it takes them away from all that background; it gives them a safe haven to be able to participate in, joining in with the music; making something. (P)

TSR was also discussed as a safe space for stories from students' countries of birth:

It's good they have stories from their own country and their own experiences, and being able to put that to music as well has been really great for them. (T)

One thing I assume is that there might be a sense of alienation in the children so I really like to try and find songs from their culture, or from their cultural areas to do, so that there's a sense of home-coming in the music. For example, [for] the schools where there [are] a lot of Arabic speaking children, I've got this beautiful Arabic song which they really light up...it really makes them [feel] welcomed into the class, where there are things that are vestiges of their life back in their mother countries, [where they can see] that that is accepted and welcomed. It is not something that they had to leave behind. It doesn't belong here; but in fact it belongs here, and it enriches us that they can have their music still alive in their experience at school. (TA)

But actually music's in their soul over there too, so it's something that, [although] they've come from one country, trauma or whatever else, they've had in the background of their lives, and then com[ing] to Australia...there's a connection here: 'Yes, we did music over here, and yes, there was music over here'. (P)

The teaching artist's sensitivity to gender was part of the safety of the TSR space:

There might be a lot of shyness; there might be even a big reluctance to sing and be heard. In some cases, girls find it really hard to feel free, to express themselves that way because there might be cultural reasons why singing is not necessarily approved of in girls; it draws unnecessary attention to them. (TA)

Teacher involvement allowed TSR to more easily be part of the broader school context:

I mean we're not just going to sit there and watch. We get involved with all the singing, all the dancing, all the actions, and I think that really made the kids want to be involved even more, seeing their teachers having a go as well, and I guess it encouraged them to have a go, seeing us participate as well. (T)

It's really telling to me when the teachers are right there in the circle, learning the songs with the kids, executing them, talking, helping the kids:...that's really brilliant. That's what I love. And then the teachers have got the legacy of that. They will be able to continue that work after I go. (TA)

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

The principal, teacher and teaching artist all spoke of individual and interpersonal level benefits for students that flow from participation in TSR programs. These included self-expression, confidence, teamwork and connectedness.

The principal was particularly interested in different ways of learning and the implications for engagement:

To me, this is a vehicle. It's just like the computers and the video cameras – this is something that engages kids, that gets them involved, that actually increases their skills. And so if you take that away, as I said before, you will have a number of students who will really miss out because they'll be in that 20 per cent of children that won't learn the other way...you need to cater for their interests and needs as well. (P)

Fostering the capacity for self-expression was also an important aspect of the TSR space:

But on the other hand, it's all about expression. It's all about self-expression. So it's using tools that are themselves quite skilled and quite precise for the purpose of creating a sense of freedom and enjoyment and immersion in an art form. (TA)

I think the songs that they chose were fantastic, especially for our kids. They've never had Song Room before, so doing songs about themselves and their feelings – I think was really good, and they enjoyed singing them too, which was even better. (T)

The development of leadership and self-confidence in TSR was discussed:

I think there's two in particular in my class that...have really good leadership qualities and if some people aren't really paying attention in TSR they'll be the ones to say, 'Come on, let's listen to Bronwyn and let's sing properly. Let's not shout'. It's been really good to see that, because I know in a big group like that, things like Song Room can really bring out the leadership qualities in some students. (T)

They are really learning by example, by repetition, by response to the music, and they are achieving it and they are often achieving it so well that they become leaders of that. A lot of these children would be very reticent to take a leadership role in any other subject area because they are still so much behind the eight ball with their knowledge of English and our schooling. But I offer opportunities for leadership very early in the music in very simple ways. (TA)

Particular groups of children, or individual children, can be particularly shy, painfully shy in some cases, but by actually doing things with groups, it helps build their confidence and to be able

to...learn the words to songs and then join in, and then as I said, later on that confidence then turns into literacy, given the right support. (P)

INTERPERSONAL LEVEL BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

The potential for transculturation was noted by the classroom teacher, suggesting that for the students, *'really just having an open mind to different songs from different cultures and knowing everybody is different as well is probably a big thing'* (T), while the teaching artist noted the importance of cultural exchange: *'I learn new things all the time from the kids. I feel it's a big loop'* (TA).

Again, teamwork was noted by teacher, teaching artist and principal:

I think it has brought them together as a group. I know practising for the concert, they have to work as a team, and I guess singing as one group has brought them all together, which has been really good to see as well. (T)

The idea of the team, the musical team which to me is just as much a training as any other sporting event, the musical team is just as important as the sporting team. The results are there to be seen. When the group works beautifully as a team the results are all right there to see and hear. (TA)

There's also a communal aspect to it, so they're learning new instances of the language by doing it, and they're doing it together. (P)

On the question of connectedness, they said:

The children come and sing and perform, usually in groups of schools. Then they are offered a performance backed by a professional. So they get two sides of the whole performing scenario and I think that that's a really lovely formula that they offer. I certainly think that it helps with their English working. I think it helps with their sense of social cohesion, as I said. (TA)

So there's a whole heap of cultural things in there too, and belonging and having that – songs that you can get on a bus going somewhere on an excursion and everyone knows the words to and can sing. (P)

Curiosity, pride in performance and resilience were also noted as outcomes for children in the TSR program.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL BENEFITS FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

Building classroom teachers' confidence to use music in their classes is an important aspiration of the TSR program overall, and the effect of TSR in this area was noted in this school by the teacher, teaching artist and principal:

I think it made me more aware of how I can use music in the classroom. I've got quite a bit of a music background, but I hadn't really used it all that much. It gave me a little bit more confidence to actually bring the instruments out when Bronwyn wasn't here and to do a little bit of music with them myself, and just seeing how playing music and singing songs can really help their language. It's probably been the main thing that I've found...I think it's going to motivate me a bit more to maybe practise some of my instruments at home so I can actually come in and play for the kids, get them involved. It's been a good motivational tool for me. (T)

I worked with English language schools, worked with disadvantaged socio-economic areas, and

I suppose I just discovered that bringing music into these schools that really had no other music offered to them – or maybe just here and there, a smattering here and there and potentially from teachers that didn't feel particularly confident but wanted to use music – I realised it was like bringing a whole other form of nourishment into those schools that didn't really have it in that way. And there was in general a wonderful, positive reaction from the children. (TA)

So I think if you take away the programs, you take away the ability of some teachers to teach in a particular style that they are very good at, if you get my drift. So classroom teachers have – [like] kids are individual learners...have individual learning styles – teachers are the same. (P)

INTEGRATION INTO THE CURRICULUM

Integration into the curriculum was noted directly by the classroom teacher and was also outlined in the teaching artist's term plan. The need to provide a *rationale for the program* was noted by the teacher, teaching artist and principal, for example:

I know some of the parents...do question whether it's educational. Not directly to us, but I know some have possibly thought why are they singing? Why are they playing instruments? But we just have to explain that it is all part of their language learning, [that] it's a great way for them to get involved, and there is a benefit to it. (T)

Summary

Friends are important to the students at TELS outpost. Friends are people you can talk to, people you can practise English with, and people who can teach or help you, and who you can teach or help. Friends are people to have fun with. TSR is set up as a safe learning environment that allows young people to learn about other people, make friends and learn about music and singing through teamwork. TSR is a place where students see their classroom teacher singing and find out that she has a good voice, and that it is also a place where you can make mistakes safely. TSR is a space where students can sing in English and in languages other than English, and where they can ask excitedly for their favourite songs. In TSR students can develop curiosity and express themselves. The skills learnt in TSR, like 'singing from the inside', can be practised with their schoolmates and at home. TSR at TELS culminated in a performance at Federation Square, and this provided an opportunity for development of performance skills and great pride in their work.

9.6 TALOON EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Angela Utomo

The school context

Taloon East Primary¹¹ is a government P-6 school that has students from various countries (the majority of whom are from Afghani and African backgrounds) who collectively speak more than 50 languages. As evident in interactions amongst students, amongst teachers, and between students and teachers, the school's atmosphere was friendly, welcoming and supportive. Various programs and resources were used by the school to provide extra support to ESL children and children from refugee backgrounds. These included individualised learning plans, multicultural aides, ESL and transition programs.

TSR Program at school

Beginning in 2010, the school delivered a TSR music program to Year 4 and 6 students for the first time over two terms. No creative arts programs had been offered during the previous four years, with the exception of personal keyboard lessons by a private music company and short singing sessions with the welfare officer.

The students

The student sample consisted of three boys and four girls, with an average of age of eleven. The students had lived in Australia for an average of just over three and a half years. The students were born in four different countries: five were from the Middle East (Afghanistan); one from Africa (Ivory Coast); and two from Asia (China and Malaysia). Most of the students identified Islam as their religion. Additionally, most students are in Australia under Women at Risk visas or Temporary Protection visas (now referred to as Resolution of Status visas).

Table 1: Selected demographics

Gender	Country of birth	Age	Years in Australia	Languages
Male	Ivory Coast	13	5+	African language
Male	Afghanistan	13	2	Dari
Female	Afghanistan	11	4	Persian
Male	Afghanistan	13	2	Dari
Female	Malaysia	11	2	Malay
Female	Afghanistan	12	3	Dari
Female	Afghanistan	11	3	Dari
Female	China	11	2	Mandarin

¹¹ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

Data gathering procedures and sources

Observations

Two Year 6 classes were observed in the middle of term and in the last week of the ten weeks of the TSR program (i.e. four sessions in total were observed). The researcher also attended the students' public performance at the National Gallery of Victoria. During all TSR sessions, table and chair arrangements were identical to the standard classroom arrangement. However the students appeared to be engaged and to enjoy almost all of the observed activities, and teachers joined in with their students singing and making movements. It seemed that the teacher's role in the music class was also to monitor students' behaviour and be the 'discipliner'. The artist, in contrast, did not discipline any of the students. Rather, the teaching artist acted as an 'encourager'. Students seemed confident and proud when performing at the front of their own class, as well as at the National Gallery, where they performed in front of hundreds of students from other schools.

Teachers and principal

Two classroom teachers were interviewed – one who had been working in the school for five years and another who had been working there for almost two. The principal had been at the school for 28 years and had extensive experience working at different schools in different positions. The teaching artist had worked for TSR for two and a half years and had previous experience working with young refugees, especially from a Sudanese background. The school principal, classroom teachers, and teaching artists were asked to share their views regarding the best ways to engage students from refugee backgrounds in the school environment. Teachers and the principal were also asked what they thought were the merits and main functions of music in the school for this particular student group.

Students

Interviews with the students explored their everyday experiences at school and their participation in a TSR music program.

Data analysis

This section summarises emergent themes in the responses to interview questions and photo-elicitation in relation to three domains: social inclusion, sense of wellbeing, and engagement with learning and community. Although the themes related to the school experience and TSR experiences and impacts may be connected to one another, for the purpose of this summary, the themes related to school are outlined separately from those related to TSR.

Findings and interpretation

Student voices about the school

SENSE OF BELONGING

When asked what they liked and disliked about school, the students reported social relations as well as opportunities for self-expression and engaging with tasks as making school special and important. Specifically, most students mentioned friends (both from the same and different classes)

and teachers and the principal, while two students mentioned their 'buddies', assigned to them at the school. Students like 'friendly' and 'nice' friends to play with, engaging with them because they offered social support, acceptance/inclusion, and a sense of belonging.

When I'm sad they try to cheer me up.

We share secrets.

Like [when] some boys was bullying me, they help me...Like some boy bully me, they just tell the teacher...They just say, 'Leave my friend. Just go away'.

Because we're like a group...of children...Because each year you get different students, different classmates and every year you just learn what they're like and what they like and all that stuff.

Students mentioned teachers as providing them with resources ('teaching me lots of things'; 'trained me hard'; 'lend me her laptop') and emotional support (talking). Interestingly, two students commented that having 'buddies' made school special because they were able to help others by teaching them English.

My friends are special to me at school because they make me happy all the time. When I was boring they are really important, they can talk to me and play with me.

Students reported that social networks made them feel comfortable at school. They specifically mentioned having friends with whom they shared things in common – such as being the same gender or speaking the same language – as contributing to them feeling good at school. *Social competence*, reflected in the ability to make new friends and help others, also contributed to students feeling good about themselves at school. Many students also felt good when they were able to accomplish something (a project, school work, being good at sport, being selected for a school team). One student felt comfortable at school because of *special classes and additional help*, and another commented that her feeling of comfort was connected to others ('When seeing others [teacher and friends] at school we're happy').

The importance of friends was further highlighted when students were asked who they turned to when they needed help or to talk. Although many students mentioned certain teachers, such as the classroom teacher or transition program teachers, the majority mentioned or preferred friends or best friends as the people they would turn to. One student preferred her family (her mother and sisters) if she needed someone to talk to. She said she was taught to '*keep home secrets at home and school issues in school*'.

LANGUAGE, FRIENDSHIPS AND SETTLING

All the students reported having '*lots of friends*', both from inside school and outside school, and from both the same and different cultural backgrounds. Students had different opinions as to whether it was easy to form friendships. Half stated that it was a hard process making friends when they first arrived at the school because of the *language barriers*, being '*new*' (it takes time to know friends and be with friends), and because they were '*scared of everything*'. One student said that it was easy, and three commented that the process was '*not too easy not too hard*' or '*in the middle*'. Factors facilitating students' ability to form friendships, according to the majority of students, included being *approached by a teacher or other students* ('*they were nice and friendly*'; '*told me jokes*'; '*asked me to play*'), even without necessarily using English. One student

commented that having other students who shared the same situation helped her settle into the school (e.g. being with other students who were new).

ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Activities provided by the school were also important. Specifically, students stated that they liked having their own work and liked their favourite subjects (sports, arts, maths and literacy) because these allowed them to learn English, to create and produce, and to feel a sense of achievement.

Students reported differences as one thing they liked about school. One student liked the fact that the school was made up of people from different cultures, and another student liked that the fact that the school was different from schools in her country of origin in terms of facilities (having playgrounds) and educational style (less emphasis on formal tests).

Because all of these, school became not boring and students enjoyed simply being in school.

Although all of the students enjoyed school most of the time and talked positively about it, some reported several aspects of school that they disliked. More than half disliked *negative social interactions* such as fighting, rudeness and teasing. One also commented on being *'stressed out'* by other students when they were unable to understand her perspective. Three of the students disliked *'hard work'* as it made them confused. Two disliked physical education as it drained their energy.

Student voices about being in the TSR program

ENJOYMENT OF THE TSR PROGRAM

In interviews students were asked about what they liked and what they thought was special about the music class. All of them commented that they enjoyed the class and found it to be fun. Students, however, had different explanations for why music class was enjoyable. Most enjoyed the class simply because they liked the activities (singing, playing games and musical instruments). Half of the students reported that the music class meant engaging in *novel or new experiences*: (*'[It's something] you cannot get anywhere else'; 'something I have never seen before'*). The attributes of the teaching artist also contributed to half of the students' experiences of enjoyment (*'funny'; 'nice'; 'he never gets angry'*). For one student, the music class offered her a sense of peace.

It sounds like...sounds like peaceful. Last week when he say close your eyes and just imagine, and then he play that thing and it sounds like we are in rainforest because [of] the sound.

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Because students participating in the music class already knew each other as they were in the same Year 6 class, they did not necessarily make new friends through TSR. However, the most of them said that their participation in the program had *strengthened pre-existing social relationships*. Specifically, students had increased interactions with classmates they rarely interacted with and their awareness of others (learning what other students liked/disliked, what other students were able to do). The engaging and relaxed class environment (e.g. *'funny things happened'*) and the need for help from others gave students the chance to strengthen their relationships.

Students in the TSR program also acknowledged that music was a source of or contained a *'feel good'* factor. As with students feeling good about themselves at school in general, most felt good when they accomplished things (*'able to play well', 'I am a quick learner'; 'perform or play at*

the front of the class'). One student felt good because music class allowed her to 'see everyone in the class enjoying music and having fun'.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

Participating in the music class meant *acquiring new skills* such as 'how to play instruments'; 'create rhythms or songs' and, for all of the students, *building new knowledge* (theory and concepts of music). For a few, the music class meant a *continuation of learning*. For example, one student who had participated in a TSR program previously in another school had the opportunity to play and learn drums again and was interested in developing his skills further. Another who used to play music in her home country was able to continue her musical learning by being involved in TSR. A few students reported that they were able or would like to teach others what they had learned in the music class. Three of the students, however, raised concerns over not being able to do this outside school as they did not have musical instruments at home (e.g. a 'wrecked guitar'). Most students also commented that they were *inspired to learn more about music*. Some students wanted to learn how to play the ukulele and the tongue drum because it would be a challenge, and because they liked the sound of the instruments and the fact that you could take them anywhere. One student wanted to know more about how to read music and another wanted to try and play the piano.

Teacher, principal and teaching artist interviews about TSR programs

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAFE LEARNING ATMOSPHERE

The establishment of a *safe learning atmosphere* both in the school in general and in the TSR music class in particular is a key consideration in successfully engaging students. Almost all of the teachers mentioned that creating and fostering a safe environment was of particular significance to these students so that they could become more engaged and willing learners and feel more comfortable trying new things and expressing themselves. Students were helped to feel comfortable through interpersonal relationships (their treatment by teachers and peers), as well as through the structure and implementation of teaching. Three ways of establishing a safe learning environment emerged from the data. These were:

- Promoting a sense of belonging
- Acknowledging students' needs
- Valuing and encouraging students' interests, potential and achievement.

SENSE OF BELONGING

The first of these is related to ensuring students feel included and that they belong. Specifically, the teaching artist tried to include songs from different countries and languages to give students from refugee backgrounds a sense of inclusion and belonging:

Music is a very good cohesive force. I find it really puts everyone on the same level, and occasionally if you're singing songs in a different language – like Kye Kye Kule is one of the first songs that I did at this school here – straight away if you've got someone who is of a non-English speaking background, it's all of a sudden, 'Hang on, we're doing a song here that nobody else understands either'. So I believe that they feel more included straight away. I always try and include songs in another language when I'm working with people from non-English speaking backgrounds. (TA)

I'm covering repertoire in different languages; everything is to try and be inclusive. I don't want

Understanding the impacts of The Song Room programs for young people from refugee backgrounds

these people to feel like they're different. So in that respect I don't want to single them out either. I want everybody to feel on the same level. (TA)

Because all students are learning something new through exposure to songs from different cultures and in different languages, students from both refugee and non-refugee backgrounds can share a common experience and sense of engagement as learners.

[Music] keeps kids more engaged and involved in the class, to feel included, to feel we're all on the same wavelength, the same level of ability. (TA)

One of the primary ways in which teachers promoted inclusion and belonging was by adopting a set of school values. As one teacher mentioned:

We've established that here at this school, the sense of belonging and treating everybody with respect [is important]...we follow the 'four Cs' which [means to]...use care, courtesy, cooperation and common sense. That's what we need to do and that's what the children do here...whether [they're from] refugee backgrounds or not, they all sort of generally come in and follow that, and everyone is very accepting of each other no matter what country or where they have come from. (T)

ACKNOWLEDGING STUDENTS' NEEDS

The second way to foster a safe environment is for teachers to carefully consider refugee students' needs and adjust their teaching to meet those needs. Teachers tried to identify students' level of learning and be sensitive about students' previous experiences, taking into account language barriers and students' lack of comprehension of various concepts that local children often took for granted. Although the school itself provided special programs to assist students, as mentioned by the students, the principal and one of the teachers, the specific techniques teachers personally employed included: modelling; using multiple learning modalities; simplification; generating interest; and hands-on and interactive learning.

Table 2: Strategies for acknowledging student needs

Strategy	Illustrative quotations
Modelling	<p><i>I make sure they're watching me so that they can see what I'm doing. (T)</i></p> <p><i>Modelling the speech, modelling the speech singing, modelling the singing. (TA)</i></p>
Using multiple learning modalities	<p><i>I basically try and have multiple ways of conveying information, so I use my voice a lot. I use actions when I'm speaking. (T)</i></p>
Simplifying: breaking down instructions; simple and clearer explanations	<p><i>If I'm asking them to do something that has multiple steps, I'll get everyone together and have them actually watch me do it as I talk through each step, and then I'll revise through the steps with them orally. (T)</i></p> <p><i>I'm also, I guess, more aware that English might not be a strong point...so I think I'm more careful in my explanations. (P)</i></p>

Making it interesting

To make it so that...it's interesting for them.

Hands-on and interactive learning

We'll a lot of things we try to do is hands-on activities, really, when they first arrive, and just test them to see what it is that they do know. (T1)

[With] a computer or an interactive white board, you can see that they are focusing easier when it's something they see and have a go at doing. Yes, them being interactive, being a part of doing. (T)

VALUING AND ENCOURAGING STUDENTS' INTERESTS, POTENTIAL AND ACHIEVEMENT

The teaching artist, Robbie,¹³ also emphasised the importance of viewing the students as valuable individuals with important roles and potentials.

I'll always make sure that I don't force anybody, but make sure he feels welcome to join [in], and then actually show him that his part is valuable, that he's actually got a valuable part to play here. That's the thing that I think is really important. The music is a medium to do that, but it's all the other stuff that's happening beneath that – that act of showing how important you shaking your shaker is, it's very important. (TA)

Some of the refugee kids have played with the tongue drum. They realise I'm up at the front here. What I'm doing is really going to make or break the music. I think it's really good for kids to have that experience of realising how important they are. (TA)

Alan also viewed flexibility to be crucial so that students' interests can be valued and encouraged.

I've got a rough outline for my day but it will change depending on where the kids' interests are, and I really like that I can be that flexible. And it's good for them too. Why not? If someone out there in the class is saying 'I would like to try that thing again that we did...' I'll generally say, 'Fine I'll give a few minutes to that task', because it's sparking their interest and it's keeping them engaged. (TA)

As observed by the researcher, the teaching artist also asked the students what they thought they were good at and what they wanted to perform at the school concert. This not only valued students' interests, allowing flexibility, it also gave students the chance to exercise choice. To develop their potential, leadership was also encouraged, specifically by the teaching artist.

You can imagine, it was very hard to get them to come up, as I imagined it would be. I try and create a really safe environment for them. Generally people are shy to come up at first, but when they see how much fun the game is and that I actually really value their leadership, they're happier to come and do it and have a go at it, and you [see] that they all want to do it. (TA)

I encourage people to then be the leaders, and when they know the game well enough they're generally quite happy to do that. And your refugee kids, that's another great chance for them to realise how important they are and how much they're part of the group. (TA)

¹³ School, teaching artist, teacher, principal and student names are pseudonyms.

The researcher also observed that in TSR music classes endorsement and encouragement of each other helped to foster a safe learning atmosphere. For example, when a student was not feeling confident or had some difficulties playing an instrument, the other students tried to support him or her by giving clues like: *'Choose four notes, Kahill!'* The teaching artist often acknowledged students' efforts and achievements by saying things such as: *'That's good!'; 'Good start!'; 'You are doing well!'*

Complementing the students' perspectives, it was the view of the teachers and the principal that the teaching artist's characteristics and role helped students feel more comfortable and be more engaged in the TSR music class.

They have loved having Robbie in. They will be upset to see Robbie go and the program not here anymore. (T)

I think they'll miss Robbie because he's really good with them. He's got a good sense of humour and he works hard to show that he cares about them as kids and make music a fun part of their week for them. (T)

[Robbie is] able to engage kids in a very short space of time and I think to a large degree that the teacher he is responsible for that because he is a very good teacher and he knows what he is doing. You can have a program delivered by [any]body. It might be the same program but if the teacher can't form a relationship with kids and can't engage them and explain it properly and elaborate when needed then the program can fall over. (P)

TRANSFERRING TSR PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE CLASSROOM

The classroom teachers also acknowledged the benefits of the TSR program to their own teaching. Teachers were able to implement in their own classrooms what they had observed in TSR classes around engaging refugee students.

[I'm] just trying to make a reference with where they come from to try and reflect things back onto what they know, and implement that into the classroom and give them the opportunity to do that. (T1)

Because Robbie's given them that background with music, I can build on that in my own teaching. So we started doing a little bit of music in maths. (T2)

MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

In line with what students said in their interviews, the teachers and principal viewed the music program as providing new musical experiences for students from refugee backgrounds complementing existing musical knowledge and traditions that sometimes might be lost or missing in a student's life because of the settlement experience. The teaching artist emphasised that TSR's primary function was to offer the experience of music to students rather than to train them with musical skills.

I've been a singing teacher before where I'm trying to teach people musical skills, but in TSR it's really just about giving people access to a musical experience, and if we learn a few skills along the way that's a bonus. (TA)

The earlier that you can expose kids to musical experiences the better the chance that if they have particular talents they will be able to build on them...that's just one of the other losses that refugees experience. (P)

Then one day he decided that he would and he had a go at the ukulele and it turned out he's a natural. Just little things like that, seeing what they're capable of in music and how you can relate back to other things that you're teaching them, and give them that extra bit of encouragement and that extra bit of pride in themselves because they can do something special in music. (TA)

Participating in music-based activities helps students to express themselves, provides motivation and inspiration to develop their potential, and is a counterbalance to the demanding life situations that often surround the settlement experience.

MAIN IMPACTS OF THE TSR ARTS PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE BACKGROUND YOUNG PEOPLE

Teachers, the teaching artist and the principal were also asked about the impacts of the TSR music program. These are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Impacts of the TSR program for refugee background young people

Level	Categories	Illustrative quotations
Individual	Confidence	<p><i>I'm probably a little more inclined to use music, and a little more confident. (T)</i></p> <p><i>She was the one who started out very shy, didn't want to really say anything or do anything, and then she came out of her shell and she's doing the actions to the song. (TA)</i></p>
	Music skills	<p><i>Where it's at now, they fully know the song, they're singing it in pitch, they're able to keep a beat, they're able to improvise a beat, a drum beat by themselves.</i></p> <p><i>As long as you've got their attention which TSR program has done that and has done that successfully. Like Alan has been able to come in here and just gotten all those kids tuned into what he wants them to do and a lot of it is just through once again all that tuning in stuff and the hands on, the practicality of it all</i></p>
	Language acquisition	<p><i>I also believe that doing songs in English is good too because it helps with their English, it helps them to get a better grasp of the language.</i></p>
	Sense of pride	<p><i>That's the thing about music, it can really lift your confidence and your own abilities, and I can only hope that it does that for the refugee kids as well. I believe it does because you can see all the smiles, you can see the kind of how proud they are and how much they feel like they've done a good job.</i></p>

Interpersonal	Social relationship	<i>Getting to know their peers as well.</i>
	Teamwork	<i>There's a good emphasis on teamwork. Everyone in the class has to work together, they have to listen, they have to stop when they need to stop, and if you don't it spoils it. So as a team they had to work together</i>
	Classroom participation	<i>TSR program they are willing to participate more. They put their hand up.</i>
School and community	Sense of belonging at school and in the community	<i>When students, groups of students, do activity, common activities, or not necessarily even common activities but contribute to a common course by say playing an instrument, singing a part or performing a part, it builds teams and people do belong and they get a sense of joy as well as belonging.</i> <i>Having access to the outside performances is another really good thing for them. Not only has it taken them out of school and see how what they're doing fits into the wider community.</i>

Summary

Primary school students from refugee backgrounds were asked to share their experiences of participating in a TSR music program and to share what these experiences meant for them. Overall, students viewed the program as fun and enjoyable. This was mainly because the students liked the activities involved, such as singing, playing instruments and performing, and because it was a novel experience for them. The attributes of the teaching artist (e.g. his sense of humour, his non-disciplinary outlook) also contributed to the fun and enjoyment these students experienced. When asked how the program influenced them, students felt that it *strengthened pre-existing social relationships* as they were more likely to connect with their classmates, even if they had rarely interacted with them previously, as they were more aware of each other's interests and strengths. Moreover, the program was a source of '*feeling good*' for these students. Students felt good because they gained a sense of achievement ('*able to play well*', '*I am a quick learner*', developed confidence (they could perform or play at the front of the class), and experienced a collective sense of joy in participating in the program. In terms of their learning, students were able to *acquire new skills, discover new knowledge* and, for few students, the music class meant a *continuation of learning and transferring learning* to others. Students also experienced the motivation to learn more about music.

For the teachers, the principal and the teaching artist, the program had impacts on these students' lives both at an individual level (e.g. building confidence, sense of achievement, satisfaction and increased concentration) and at an interpersonal level (stronger social relationships, teamwork), as well as at the school and community level (a sense of belonging in the school and in the community). Beyond the content of the program, the experience of music itself also offered

students benefits. Firstly, it offered a medium for students in which they could express themselves and their feelings. Secondly, involvement in musical activities and new musical learning experiences inspired or sparked some students' interests in continuing to develop their potential. Finally, the TSR experience offered the students a pleasant break to counterbalance the demanding life circumstances that often form part of the settlement process. Most importantly, the TSR program gives students from refugee backgrounds the opportunity to explore and renegotiate their identity beyond that of being a 'refugee'.