How do we improve the delivery of the Arts curriculum in our school?

An Action Research Project.

Sue Rose

Research submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Teaching and Learning
Christchurch College of Education
October 2002
Contents

Acknowledgements

1. Figures 4
2. Abstract 5
3. Chapter One 6
   Introduction; Context of the Project;
   Types of Action Research
   Organisation of the School and Planning in the Arts.
4. Chapter Two 11
   Participants in the Project;
   My Role Within this Project;
   Participants Group and Their Role;
   Ethical Approval.
5. Chapter Three 15
   The Process We Used To Set Up The Project;
   What is Action Research?
   Focus of the Study;
   Emancipatory Action Research;
   Research Question;
   Layers of Investigation of Action Research.
6. Chapter Four 23
   Process of Implementing the Action Research;
   Layer One-Devising the Long Term School Wide Plan;
   Reflection Stage for the Delivery of the Arts Long Term Plan;
   Layer Two for Professionals Development;
   Types of Professional Development Conducted in this Project;
   Reflection Stage for Professional Development;
   Layer Three- Unforeseen Opportunities;
   Reflection Stage for the Unforeseen Opportunities.
7. Chapter Five 53
   Summary
Acknowledgements

I thank my colleagues who participated in the research at school and Janinka Greenwood, from the Christchurch College of Education for her advice and encouragement.
Figures

Figure 1: Action Research Cycles
Figure 2: Documentation on the Visual Arts
Figure 3: Completion of First Cycle of Action Research – Long Term Planning
Figure 4: Avonhead School Visual Arts Topics 2000 and 2001
Figure 5: Cycle Two – Programme Planning for 2002
Figure 6: Year 1 and 2 The Arts Long Term Plan 2002
Figure 7: Year 3 and 4 The Arts Long Term Plan 2002
Figure 8: Year 5 and 6 The Arts Long Term Plan 2002
Figure 9: Year 7 and 8 The Arts Long Term Plan 2002
Figure 10: Completion of Another Layer of Action Research - Programme of Work
Figure 11: Completion of Another Layer of Action Research – Unit Plan in the Arts
Figure 12: Professional Development “Inside School” Facilitators
Figure 13: Professional Development “Outside School” Facilitators
Figure 14: Proposed Changes in Practice for 2003
Figure 15: Completed Action Research Cycle
Abstract

This study records an action research project undertaken with a group of colleagues who were members of the school Arts Committee. The study identifies how a school developed a team approach to improving our delivery of the Arts curriculum. The study explains how a school used action research methodology for the first time. It describes how decisions that had emerged from research process involved all teaching staff and also records the process to follow in the future to provide a basis for informed change in a school.
Chapter One

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to record a project in which a group of teachers in a school explored their understanding of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* and developed strategies for the delivery of programmes. This study traces how one school, using an action research model, functioned independently from the Ministry of Education professional development support in the Arts.

Context of the Project

When a new curriculum is introduced within the New Zealand educational setting, schools can apply for professional development. The person appointed to deliver the professional development is an external facilitator. These people are usually curriculum advisors, employed by Colleges of Education. Our school, a full primary school of over 570 pupils, found it necessary to rely on the current school resources to improve the delivery of the Arts in order to comply with the Ministry of Education policy.

Over the last few years teachers have faced many changes in the curriculum. These changes developed from updating numerous curriculum areas to meet the needs of
successive governments focussing on a knowledge based economy and globalisation. Teachers have been submerged in curriculum changes. What possible action could be taken to encourage teachers to participate in the improvement in the delivery of the Arts without feeling inundated with excessive professional development? A method of research was required which would involve the minimum amount of disruption and time for teachers.

**Action Research**

I advocated the use of an action research approach for the project. Zuber-Skerritt (1996) describes action research as a collaborative and self-critical inquiry by practitioners. In the case of our school the Arts Committee members would own the inquiry. As action research used a collaborative and a team approach, the Arts Committee would take responsibility to become accountable for exploring options to solve problems. Grundy (1987) and McKernan (1996) use similar descriptions to explain the three types of action research.

1. **Technical – Scientific view**

   This type of action research is instigated by teachers for more effective and efficient practice and can be associated with the external facilitator model of professional development. It is the new idea that is the source of power in this model.
2. **Practical - Deliberative**

   This method seeks to improve practice through the personal knowledge of participants. The power is shared between the group of equal participants, with the emphasis on the individual power for action.

3. **Critical - Emancipatory**

   Here power is shared within the group. It is the change of power relationships within the group that causes a shift from one approach to the next to create change.

In our project we aimed towards the emancipatory goals of the third category as this model provided an opportunity to work with a group to make shared decisions.

**Organisation of the School and Planning in The Arts**

Our teachers prepare a school-wide long-term plan for the following year in November. The school is divided into four syndicate areas for planning programmes

1. Year 1 and 2
2. Year 3 and 4
3. Year 5 and 6
4. Year 7 and 8.

Each teacher contributes to the curriculum planning for their area of the school, which also includes special school-wide activities planned at intervals during the
year. Syndicates provide their long-term plans which I collate and produce in a booklet ready for the following year.

In the planning of the 2001 School Wide Long-Term Plan each syndicate was encouraged to use integration techniques for the Arts. For the purpose of this study integration refers to the Arts integrated into other curriculum areas. Music, dance, drama and visual art make up the four areas in the Arts curriculum. Integration would allow these curriculum areas to be included within other unit plans for instance as part of a social studies unit. Some syndicates used the technique of the Arts integration with other subject areas, which reduced their planning and implementation workloads, while others still used the separation of curriculum areas.

In discussions in 2001 with teachers who separated each area of the Arts, a desire was expressed to change their focus of delivery to use integration. Such a change of delivery was seen as a reduction of their workload. At this time the action research project had not begun, but this decision to integrate was an example of teachers being in charge of their own decisions. It was also an example of reflection on earlier practice. Later this example was used to describe emancipatory action research to the Arts committee.
Another area of concern to teachers was the excessive amount of time required to assess each unit of work. A key issue for teachers was to identify methods of manageable assessment in music, dance, drama, and art. It was hoped this would alleviate the pressure of many different units to assess summatively. Although this desire for a change in assessment was discussed no decision was taken on this matter at this time.

In July 2001 the Ministry of Education introduced assessment against specific learning outcomes. This enabled greater use of an integrated approach to planning as well as further opportunities to use formative assessment. From general discussions with staff, assessment and integration were the initial, major issues in the delivery of the Arts curriculum. Teachers at our school and the Ministry of Education had both identified areas of concern in the delivery of the curriculum, so the Arts committee decided to use an integrated planning approach.
Chapter Two

Participants in the Project

There were two sets of participants in the project. The first were the members of the Arts Committee who represented each of the four syndicates within the school and the other was myself, as the researcher.

My Role Within This Project

My role had two aspects. One was the collaborative role of involving my colleagues, supporting their decisions and their needs. The other consisted of the research I did in preparation for the role to ensure I was providing sound advice. The aspect of leadership I consequently took was one of guiding the process. I was asking a question about real issues in a school to find possible solutions. I was also endeavouring to bring about change in the delivery of The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000). This dual role is in keeping with the model of action research in which the researcher is involved in the practical operation and the implementation of change.

As Deputy Principal within the political setting of a large urban school, I was able to facilitate the Arts Committee decisions through management. But the key role I played was involving the teachers in taking on their own roles of leaders within the
school and making the changes that grew out of reflection on their teaching experiences during this project. I was an encourager and a facilitator for change. According to Grundy (1982) there are three phases of change - theory, enlightenment, and action. Theory provides documentation and information as well as the process for finding further information as the need arises. Enlightenment is the new knowledge that is held by the participants and the action is the change they will implement to accommodate the new knowledge.

Another aspect of my role was to ensure the participants in the research process enjoyed the experience. To facilitate this and allow the participants to concentrate on the main issues, I took the researcher role in the project. This involved finding relevant information for the Arts Committee throughout the project. As part of the school’s normal curriculum organisation the participants in the project would have conducted their roles as members of the Arts Committee during 2002 without the intrusion of a researcher. I was therefore careful in ensuring their understanding of my role. I was there to:

- Encourage innovation and reflection on our practice in 2002;
- Be an avenue for change in 2003 based on research of our practice;
- Provide participants with information relating to The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000); and
- Facilitate change as directed by the committee.
The Participants and Their Roles

The Arts Committee members were the other participants in the research. This was a group of five experienced teachers from all levels of the school who held the responsibility of providing teachers with innovative methods for planning, delivery, assessment and professional development. At the beginning of the project I introduced the participants to action research and emancipatory action research using a series of charts. (Refer Appendix Two.) The charts described the project and the process required for completion. Careful consideration was given to the explanation of how we would use emancipatory action research.

The major expectation I had of the Arts Committee was emphasising it was the committee who held the power to improve practice. My role was to facilitate the work of the committee to identify future recommendations. It was therefore necessary for the Arts Committee to be familiar with the following:

- What we know already about the Arts?
- What do we need to find out?
- What support systems are available?
- What can we change?
- What can we not change?
Ethical Approval

Approval to proceed with the research was sought and granted from the College of Education and the School Principal. The Board of Trustees was notified that this research was being conducted. Each member of the Arts Committee for 2002 was invited to participate initially verbally, followed by a written permission form for him or her to complete. All participants had the right to withdraw at any time. (Refer Appendix One) Interviews with the committee were conducted at a suitable time for the participants. All the participants received a copy of the summary of the report and had access to the complete text.

The information provided would be stored in a secure location, available only to a college supervisor / examiners and myself, with all documents being kept for five years. All comments made by the participants would be made anonymous. To ensure accuracy of information I would use a tape recorder to collect some interview data.
Chapter Three

The Process We Used To Set Up The Project

The purpose of our project as I have stated previously, was to improve the delivery of the Arts curriculum. As an action research model was selected it was necessary to conduct preliminary research into action research process.

What is Action Research?

Action research development is attributed to Kurt Lewin who used this type of research after World War Two to study major social problems. Following Corey’s publication *Action Research to Improve School Practices* (1953) educationalists soon used the model of research in schools. Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) describe action research as supporting good practice, articulating the reasons for practice and providing evidence to support criticism, while monitoring current practice.

The goal of action research is to provide a change intervention to make an improvement in teaching practice using a cyclic approach. The cyclic approach involves planning, action, observation and reflection. Crebbin (2000) asks who has control and who owns the teaching and learning. Action research methodology
enables teachers to have control over the pace and type of change, while monitoring the effects of change as the process of the research methodology is closely linked to their teaching practise. Hopkin’s (1985) diagram demonstrates the cyclic approach to action research.

**Figure 1: Diagram of the Action Research Cycles**

Cycle One

Planning  
Reflecting  
Action  
Observing

**Cycle Two** is a repeat of first cycle, as are future cycles.

Within the school setting the idea of action research is to plan a course of action, carry out and observe the action with the reflection aspect of the cycle involving possible changes for the future. The idea is to work towards a final goal repeating the cycles until the process has an outcome.

Action research is a process of asking questions about one’s practice and deciding what to do. It enables teachers to live their questions (Battaglia, 1995).
It is a field of research closest to teaching practice that can be used in many situations within a school setting. Action research uses a qualitative approach with all participants contributing in the cycles. This process empowers the participants to become involved in change. MacIsaac (1996) describes action research as qualitative, formative, subjective, interpretive and reflective. This interpretation suggests encompassing an aspect of our practice in a cocoon of constant questioning where we are reflecting to confirm or form new ideas on our future teaching practice.

An element for teachers in action research is that it can manage change in the classroom setting with teachers directly involved in their own practice. Adult learners in a school need to be supported in change (Imel, 1998). The school climate must be encouraging of critical reflection and allow for the examination of traditional practices through self-review.

Although there are different interpretations in the definitions of action research there is a constant process of a spiral or cyclic approach. Situations are improved by continual use of the cycles of planning, action, observing and reflecting. However the paramount objective is what happens within the cycles, not the cycles themselves. Throughout the process there is constant reflection in the order of questioning, considering strengths, weaknesses, seeking alternatives and reflecting on the situation from different viewpoints.
Focus For the Study

From the perspective of a classroom teacher, the major issue in action research is the emphasis on reflection of practice, with the objective being on the outcome for future teaching practice. Geelan and Taylor (2000) refer to reflective practice using Grundy and McKernan's criteria for action research, (cited above), with an additional phrase included at the technical stage, "How can I do what I do already, but better?" These writers see the movement from the acceptance of current pedagogy to a critical thinking stage. "That's the way we have always done this task," to "These are my educational and personal values – how can I put these into practice?" The authors view practical and critical reflections as more difficult, but influential in transforming education. Action research requires teachers to examine their beliefs, attitudes and values and we also reflect on theory in relationship to our practical judgement. The next step in our project was to identify the best method of action research to suit our project. The technical – scientific type of action research which is associated with an external facilitator model of professional development, and the practical – deliberative associated with the personal knowledge of participants would not suit this type of project as a model was required where a group of teachers could make shared decisions.

Emancipatory Action Research

Grundy and McKernan's definition where the group shares the power suited the type of approach for the project. Action research requires reflection on theory in
relationship to practice by using reflective practice. Emancipatory action research enables teachers to work collaboratively as a group towards a goal with the new knowledge gained through this process owned by the practitioners. Action research methodology procedure enables both educational and managerial decisions as it asked teachers to consider options of current practice. It also asked teachers to consider restraints and oppression (Grundy, 1987) as it examines teachers’ beliefs and attitudes. This methodology would allow teachers to:

- Take control over their professional development in The Arts curriculum;
- Have autonomy in facilitating unforeseen opportunities; and
- Change some aspects of planning and assessment for the future.

The method of emancipatory action research provided the group of participants with a useful way of integrating work and learning (Retallick, 1997). It allowed the participants to collectively analyse the process of delivery. Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) believe the process of action research provides evidence to counter criticisms and future practice is informed. The choice of emancipatory action research methodology enabled the participants to share power and create future changes.

**Research Question**

The aim of the research was to provide a summary for the Arts Committee to use in delivery of the Arts in the future. To identify the items for the summary the
following question crystallised our ideas and forms the basis of this study. This question allowed us to use the knowledge gained in our teaching and reflection in the delivery of the Arts during 2002 to enhance our future programmes.

“How do we improve the delivery of the Arts curriculum in our school?”

Within the major question there emerged a number of sub questions.

1. What changes are required in the delivery of the Arts curriculum?
2. How can we provide further professional development?
3. How can innovation and unforeseen opportunities be accommodated?

These questions initiated the direction of the project and within the project our study examined a number of layers of action research resulting in our major research method of emancipatory action being intersected with instances of technical – scientific and practical - deliberative methods.

**Layers of Investigation of Action Research**

When we set about to answer our question we found ourselves working on a number of overlapping layers. These layers emerged at a meeting with the Arts Committee when they reflected on the 2001 school wide planning. There were three layers of action research cycles, each being different, yet overlapping.

1. Planning the school programme in the Arts for 2002.
2. Planning appropriate professional development.
3. Impromptu planning that arose through unforeseen opportunities.
This made our action research project multi-levelled and although the research contained many cycles incorporating these themes, it was still a linear process in that our objective was to improve the delivery of the Arts curriculum. Each of the above layers was considered as a separate issue in the cyclic process of the project. The following resources supported our project through all the layers.


   As a resource this site was invaluable. It provided direction, unit plans, professional reading, school policy, and enabled our school to function independently of the outside facilitator model of professional development. There was a wide range of reference information available from this site. But the major contribution to our project this site made, was in providing our teachers with current information and direction in delivery of the Arts.

2. **Personnel support systems.**

   The Ministry of Education Advisory Service in the Arts was not readily available because of their commitment to schools on the Ministry of Education initiative, but at the beginning of the project they were able to provide us with advice. This advice gave us direction and assisted in providing guidelines for the year. We also sought guidance from the College of Education.
3. **Ministry of Education Publications – Learning Media**

We were fortunate that these publications were available arriving at the school throughout the duration of the research. The videos and CD’s were invaluable to the Arts Committee. These sources provided teachers with high levels of support and assisted further innovation.

4. **Participants within the school sharing of ideas.**

People who were involved with our project provided our major source of information especially in professional development.

It was a combination of all these resources that supported our project.
Chapter Four

Process of Implementing the Action Research

The process itself was time consuming and required a year long programme in the Arts to implement the action research project. It involved layers of action research.

Layer One: Devising the Long Term School Wide Plan for 2002.

Layer Two: Professional Development

Layer Three: Allowing for Unforeseen Opportunities

Layer One in the Action Research

Devising The Long Term School Wide Plan.

The initial stage of this layer was discussion lead by members of the Arts Committee and held within each syndicate in 2001. The purpose was to establish the actual topics for the Arts long-term plan for 2002. Following these discussions another issue emerged which was discussed at a meeting of the Arts Curriculum Committee in December 2001. Teachers asked what constituted the key elements for a successful curriculum in the Arts. As the researcher within the action research process, I sought outside help through the College of Education on behalf of the Arts Committee. “You do it Sue. You find out and tell us, as you know what to ask,” was my directive. The information gained had an emphasis on visual arts. The
information gained was viewed by the Arts Committee and distributed to all teachers for discussion at a staff meeting.

Figure 2: Document on Visual Arts Presented to Staff in November 2001

There are four strands in the Arts.

1. Developing Practical Knowledge in Visual Arts (PK)
2. Developing Ideas in Visual Arts (DI)
3. Communicating and Interpreting Visual Arts (CI)
4. Understanding the Visual Arts in Context. (UC)

Other points to consider;
1. Learning about art is more than just doing the activities.
2. Developing Practical Knowledge and Developing Ideas the focus is on doing Art.
3. Communicating and Interpreting and Understanding in Context the focus is on learning about art.
   PK & DI = focus on doing
   CI & UC = learning about art.
   CI = interpretation of art
   UC = This includes how do the Visual Arts fit into society and purpose of art in cultures.
4. The Arts programme is over two years with a balance of 2D and 3D activities.
5. Drawing is part of everything and links into all topics so it continues throughout the two years.
6. Use up to three specific learning outcomes in a unit and include one each for the skills, understanding and attitudes.
   Attitudes and values have three main focuses in The Arts.
   i. Confidence
   ii. Positive comments about the work of others.
   iii. Perseverance.
7. Most students will not continue with art at the later stages of their schooling. Our function is to look at art in society. Look at the understanding and celebrate the differences in the Arts.
8. Specific Learning Outcomes – never use more than four when planning a unit with the normal number being three learning outcomes.

9. Assessment – Remember assessment is for better learning. Use self, peer or feedback techniques. Keep a portfolio for individuals. If you want to use a checklist use it. Remember a checklist takes a snap shot of a class for only a particular short time. It is best to choose one of the Arts activities and make pertinent comments in depth. Measure your comment using only one specific learning outcome.

10. The PK and DI assessment can be made from the portfolio and jotter book and could well be verbal feedback.

11. The portfolio should show progress and achievement. It is not a show case.

12. Use a written activity sheet to make the CI and UC assessment.
   e.g. name three different types of……., I have learned ……., Quiz etc.

13. Painting can be threaded through the two years.

14. When doing any art especially 3D the emphasis is on the quality of art.
    Do less, but better quality assessment.

15. Integrate, integrate, and integrate.


17. Analyse your programme over two years to incorporate the above suggestions.

18. Look for balance of activities over two years.

19. Make sure there is a combination of 2D and 3D experiences over the two years.
The staff discussion that followed allowed for all staff to become familiar with the direction of the Arts. This activity completed one cycle in the layer of action research in long term planning.

**Figure 3: Completion of the first Cycle in Long Term Planning**

Using the information gained on visual arts as a basis the Arts committee began the second cycle of action research by planning the school wide plan for 2002. I made a chart of the school wide Visual Arts plans for 2000 and 2001 for members of the Arts Committee to analyse and review to guide their future planning.
Figure 4: Avonhead School Art Programme 2000 and 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Syndicate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric &amp; Fibre</td>
<td>Fabric &amp; Fibre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Making</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Syndicate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Making</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fabric &amp; Fibre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblage</td>
<td></td>
<td>Print Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assemblage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate Syndicate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td></td>
<td>Design – computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Painting)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art History</td>
<td></td>
<td>Print Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabric &amp; Fibre</td>
<td></td>
<td>Painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Syndicate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Making</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drawing / Sketching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Computer art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td></td>
<td>Modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wearable Art) Fabric &amp; Fibre</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fabric &amp; Fibre (Wearable Art)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers were able to observe the patterns of topics and the balance of 2D and 3D topics before attempting the final programme for 2002.

By December 2001 teachers had completed a cycle of planning for 2002 by sourcing information relevant to the plan, comparing and analysing the Arts plan in relationship to integration of curriculum areas and had reflected on the strength of the final product through discussions within their syndicates.
The next cycle was the implementation of the Long Term Plan. This cycle was a long cycle involving the Arts Committee taking leadership positions within the school and syndicate areas in order to plan the Arts programme. Teachers decided to develop student skills and to experiment with a variety of approaches in integration.

**Figure 5: Cycle Two. Programme Implementation Cycle for 2002**

This action research cycle was a very long process, taking eleven months to complete. The following figures list the type of planning used through the school in the Arts for 2002. The long-term plans demonstrate greater use of the integration of the Arts into other curriculum areas, provided a balance of the four strands and linked the needs of the students to the different programmes planned throughout the four-syndicate areas.
Figure 6: Years 1 and 2 The Arts Long Term Plan 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
<th>Me, Myself &amp; I</th>
<th>Cinderella Y.1</th>
<th>Supermarket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Easter UC</td>
<td>Goldilocks Y.2</td>
<td>Construction DI, CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Banquet Food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Pastels &amp;</td>
<td>At the Three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Crayons</td>
<td>Bears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...........</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>Xmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles in the School PK</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>Tree, bells etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easter Songs UC</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>2D &amp; 3D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing PK UC</td>
<td>Cindelilla Y.1</td>
<td>UC, CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viewing</td>
<td>Goldilocks Y.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing/</td>
<td>Cindelilla at the Ball PK,DI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waitaas</td>
<td>At The Three Bears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P.K Rhythm,</td>
<td>DI Percussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pitch, Tempo</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>Role playing shop roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tone, Colour</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>CI UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dynamics</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Year 3 and 4 The Arts Long Term Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Mimes &amp; Skits PK</td>
<td>Role plays Food &amp; Nutrition CI Listening to National Anthems. UC</td>
<td>Dramatic Dance Hula UC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>Middle Ages</td>
<td></td>
<td>Village Life Loss &amp; Grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Singing Different Styles Sea Shanties PK</td>
<td></td>
<td>Role Plays UC Pacific Music &amp; songs CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Singing Playing Listening Orchestra Viewing Shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Playing Listening Orchestra Viewing Shows</td>
<td></td>
<td>Singing Playing Listening Orchestra Viewing Shows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 8: Year 5 and 6 The Arts Long Term Plan 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
<th>UC DI</th>
<th>PK, DI, CI</th>
<th>UC, DI, PK</th>
<th>UC, DI CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual Art</td>
<td>Leaders in art</td>
<td>Create a musical</td>
<td>Cultural Art</td>
<td>Portraits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>History of art –</td>
<td>using dance, drama</td>
<td>Paper Mache</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>painting</td>
<td>and art using</td>
<td>movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Sketching</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Anthems, Dances, Role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>Leaders in music</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>plays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders in drama</td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>Sketching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders in dance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sketching Diaries</td>
<td></td>
<td>Playing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DI Playing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td>Viewing Shows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
<td></td>
<td>Choirs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viewing Shows</td>
<td></td>
<td>Singing – Waiatas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choirs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Haka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing – Waiatas</td>
<td></td>
<td>………………….&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 9: Years 7 and 8 The Arts Long Term Plan 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
<th>PK</th>
<th>CI</th>
<th>DI</th>
<th>UC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual Art</td>
<td>Bridge to Terebeta</td>
<td>The Hobbit</td>
<td>Create dances for</td>
<td>Wearable Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sketching</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>The Hobbit</td>
<td>Fabric &amp; Fibre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drawing-&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>DI, UC, PK</td>
<td>Improvise movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvise movement</td>
<td>based on Sports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theme. Create a</td>
<td>Theme. Create a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>movement motif.</td>
<td>movement motif.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge to Terebeta</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>PK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role Plays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>DI UC PK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role of Music in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creating mood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syndicate singing,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir, Orchestra,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creative Music,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>performance……….&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Diagrams and visual representations are not included in this text-based format.
Our staff had demonstrated a cycle of action research with the incorporation of their initial ideas by taking these ideas to the individual syndicates for observation, reflecting of the proposed programmes for 2002 and making changes if required. This was a powerful example of emancipatory action research as the participants and other teachers had the power to create change.

**Figure 10: Completion of another layer of action research-Programme Planning**

- **Plan**
  The Arts committee member for syndicates prepares the programme based on the information available.

- **Reflection**
  Changes are made as required by the Syndicate.

- **Action**
  The Arts member presents and discusses the programme with the syndicate.

- **Observation**
  The syndicate views and assesses the programme based on the information provided by The Arts member.

The next step was the delivery of the curriculum, which began another action research cycle. This involved teachers teaching the planned curriculum in the Arts while making observations and reflecting on their programmes.
Reflection Stage for the Delivery of the Arts Long Term Plan

Teachers on the Arts Committee had increased the closeness between the actual problems with the theory of action research used to explain and resolve the problem. (Holter and Schwartz-Barcott, 1993). My next step was to gain data to present to the Arts Committee for decisions on our future direction in the Arts. I interviewed committee members in the school library and sought their views as part of the reflection stage of action research. Each participant was asked the following questions.

1. Have we integrated the Arts into other subject areas?
2. Have we decreased the amount of assessment?
3. Have we provided relevant professional development?

The following are complete transcripts from the interviews held with most of the participants.

1. **Do you think we have integrated the Arts into other subject areas?**

Teacher A: On reflection we integrated better in Term 4, 2001 when we had a theme. I do not think we have it right yet. We need to reduce the number of activities in a unit and give more time to the visual art.

Teacher B: We have concentrated on integration and this has been a key issue. We were over planning activities in units even though we used integration we still don’t seem to fit everything into the curriculum in the Arts. Next year we want to try a stand-alone focus particularly in music and visual arts. We want to have mini units cutting down on the activities in a unit and blocking out a week for our topic time to be used for music and visual arts. We would integrate dance and drama into our language topics. The question we are asking is who
owns the curriculum and who will it suit?

Our syndicate is only becoming very interested in integration this year. We didn’t really plan it into our units at all this year, but we will for next year. There was a little talk about drama integration throughout the year. There was very little talk about dance or music integration but art integration comes into all our topics and it always has done for a number of years. If we discussing the amount music integration—we have not got there yet.

**Researcher:** Did you integrate the arts?

Teacher C: I don’t really think we have got quite that far. It might be a direction we are working on because we are looking at integration by putting a focus for example the Antarctic, which we are going to do next year. And we are looking at music and we are looking at drama for (the study of) Shackleton or the drama for Robert Falcon Scott or role plays. We are taking the old thematic look at integration for next year. So we can’t say we have done a lot this year.

**Researcher:** Do you think you have begun the process of coming to use integration more this year?

Teacher C: I would say that we have looked at objective based learning which is what is in the New Zealand curriculum and then people have been talking about integration. All of a sudden we have thought, that is really what we wanted to do all along. So we would go from the thematic central point. You can still do an objective based unit, but you are allowing for all the aspects of the curriculum to meet in that central point.

You have just reminded me about “Junk It.” We have this activity in Term Four. This really does provide the linkage between all aspects of the Arts curriculum. We have been doing this for three or four years. This is dance, drama and art in a kind of a wearable way. The children provide their own tapes and CDs for the music so there are a lot of choices in this topic for our children.

Teacher D: Yes of course we have. We integrated with our operetta by involving all the aspects of the Arts.
Researcher: Have we decreased the amount of assessment?

Teacher A: No, not this year.

Teacher B: No, we haven't. We still do not have assessment in the Arts organised. We need to make a decision on how best to do this.

Teacher C: We have been instructed to make it manageable so there are certain lengths we have to go in assessment, but I am not going to stay up all night, and every night assessing absolutely everything my children do. So for me personally, I have tried to make it manageable. And now with the formative assessment I am getting my children to assess units at the end.

Teacher D: No. People feel we have to include dance and drama. So therefore assessment has not got better. But when we used one vehicle for assessment as we did in our operetta we provided as cross curricula assessment. We have to move in this direction.

These statements highlighted different issues, which arose from syndicate areas with some syndicates feeling more successful in improving the delivery and assessment of the Arts curriculum than others. The following are extracts from interviews, which focus on a broader range of issues in relationship to the delivery and assessment of the Arts.

Teacher A: We believe in the cyclic approach to teaching the skills in the Arts where our students meet activities through their time at our school on a number of occasions although the topic maybe different.

Teacher B: Our planning in drama and visual arts is effective and manageable. We could get outsiders for hands on work or even if they took students in our classes for us to observe.
We should collect more props for drama such as scarves and clothing, but not hats for hygiene reasons. The collections could be made through the school newsletter. Each syndicate could have a “props box” which could be shared. We would need parent support to wash clothes at appropriate times. In music we have an equity issue in the choice of our songs in assembly. We need to have songs from different ethnic groups to reflect our school population. We should get into the writing of the documentation. We could spend time on the TKI website and take some of the ideas and some units off and do them. This means we are not ignoring the resources that have been put in front of us. But I do think we should make time for it.

The outcomes of these issues are discussed in the summary section of the project.

Layer Two of the Action Research

Professional Development

Schools are in an environment of change for a number of reasons including curriculum changes. As teachers we need to understand the importance of change and adapt programmes to best suit the needs of our students for their future. In schools, professional development plays a crucial part in informing teachers. At the beginning of the project the following questions were formulated after consultation with teachers on the project.

a.) What type of professional development best suited the needs of the teachers in the Arts curriculum?

b.) Would the professional development be in-service at school or out of school?
I began the cycle by researching information on professional development to support my role as the researcher for the Arts Committee. Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) believe quality education is achieved by commitment to the professional learning of teachers that is ongoing, developmental and not necessarily restricted by particular problems currently faced. These words highlighted the importance of taking the opportunity to take charge of our own professional development with the assistance of action research.

In the past, curriculum changes have included long sessions of staff professional development where the emphasis has been on the knowledge of the teacher in understanding of Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, English, Technology curriculum statements and assessment. Also during this period Information and Communication Technology has impacted on teacher learning. Although the curriculum changes were considered necessary for the children of New Zealand, each of these areas required substantial time by teachers to gain individual knowledge of a curriculum area and write the appropriate school curriculum philosophies and/or policies. There was less professional development time, during this period of change, to focus on opportunities that directly influenced the activities for student learning in the classroom. Now our school was faced with another curriculum area to study, the Arts. How we created effective professional development was influenced by our school history with Information and Communication technology.
During 1999 we initiated a programme for professional development in Information and Communication Technology that would increase teachers' knowledge and have a direct relationship to the learning programmes in the classrooms. We initially organised the training of staff by forming groups made up of members who had approximately the same level of Information and Communication Technology skills. The group formations were decided upon by individual teachers, who placed themselves in a group according to their personal skills in Information and Communication Technology.

The staff set the pace of their learning with the outside school facilitator focussing on the needs of each learning group. Except at an initial meeting the whole staff did not participate in training at one time. This model enabled teachers to have control over their personal learning needs as the grouping of staff within this model reflected members with similar learning needs. Later in the training, syndicates worked for a time together and finally some syndicates were split into groups depending again on the ability of the members. The professional development lasted eighteen months with some groups completing the objectives at an earlier time, while others were provided with extra time depending on their needs. This method of professional development delivery was:

- A reasonably inexpensive financial outlay for the school;
- A collaborative and supportive culture in Information and Communication Technology; and
- A means of training staff to a consistent level.
From this experience developed an interest in how we could introduce the Arts curriculum without an outside facilitator. All previous professional development curriculum initiatives conducted in the school had used the “outsider” facilitator model for delivery. But our school, at this time, had an intensive professional development programme already running in literacy and numeracy. To put another initiative onto staff would increase their workload and possibly diminish the success of the Arts in the school.

There are various models of teacher development that have demonstrated effectiveness (McGee, 1997). But within our school setting there needed to be collaboration by teachers as to the style of professional development which best suits their personal needs and would reflect back into the classroom to increase student learning outcomes. Action research with its methodology for change would be the suitable method to use as it integrates work and learning, (Retallick, 1997). Retallick (1997) believes teachers must want to learn before there will be a change in their practice and teachers do not own ideas expressed by outsiders coming into the school setting until they have been tried and tested in the classroom. Retallick also refers to the process and product in professional development with the collaboration of teachers during the process to develop the product paramount. Holliday (1994)) views professional development as S.P.A.C.E. – self, personal meaning, action, collegiality and empowerment. Within his model there are the phases of conditions of learning, which are the learning process and the learning outcome.
Dadds (2001) suggests teachers with a sense of inner expertise and responsibilities are in an advantageous position to add their informed voice to the debate about quality education for students. Being able to interact with colleagues by learning by doing, with reflection on action, followed by action on reflection is an important part of workplace learning (Holliiday 1994). It also includes experimenting and making mistakes. This author confirms that empowerment happens when teachers feel ownership, control and self-direction with learning involving a change of values, knowledge, and skills.

The Arts Committee was aware of the needs of the staff to provide professional development, which would directly impact on student learning outcomes, but there needed to be conditions relevant to creating change.

1. The teachers had to see the relevance of the professional development in order to change in their practice.

2. The teachers does not own ideas expressed by outsiders coming into the school setting until they have been tried and tested in the classroom (Retallick, 1997).

3. The amount of professional development that occurs in a staff meeting will be irrelevant unless it is transformed into classroom practice.

4. How teachers transfer their new knowledge into practice will depend on the support and encouragement they receive, either from their colleagues or from resources.
Types of Professional Development Conducted in the Project

Hoban (1997) refers to three methods of professional development. The first method involves the “outside / inside” method, where the outside expert delivers the professional development in the school. Second, the “inside” model which draws upon teachers’ existing knowledge. The third method is the “inside/outside” model where teachers can go outside the school for professional development. The following methods describe types of professional development our school used in the project.

1. “Inside School” Model: The Arts Committee as Team Facilitators

At their individual syndicate level the Arts committee were the leaders in the delivery of the Arts curriculum. Unit plans were developed at syndicate level by the Arts Committee member for other teachers in their syndicate to use in their classrooms. Considerable collaborative discussion occurred when the unit plan was presented to the syndicate for approval. At this time plans were presented to syndicate meetings before teaching occurred. Collaboration provided the opportunity to make the units understood so all teachers within the syndicate had ownership on the information.
2. **Inside School Model: Classroom Practice and Peer Observations**

Teachers taught from a unit prepared by the “expert” within the syndicate. Again, collaboration occurred as our teachers taught new activities. This was followed by reflective practice before teaching with discussions on the pedagogy occurring within the syndicates. After collaboration agreed changes were incorporated into the unit plans. Once each syndicate member established ownership, the action that followed in the delivery of the curriculum was emancipatory. Each teacher had control over the information to be taught and was involved in any change prior to the teaching stage. Collaboration continued with the “expert” teacher providing support during the teaching of the unit. The following figure demonstrates how this method of professional development illustrates the action research model in relation to the planning of programmes.
Figure 11: Completion of another layer of action research – Unit Plans

2. “Inside School” Model: Facilitators Providing Professional Development

The Arts Committee members took up the challenge of delivering the professional development in the drama aspect of the Arts curriculum. The Arts committee owned the problem and worked collaboratively to solve the problem. Hoban (1997) views this as the “insider provider” where teachers draw upon expert knowledge within the school setting. Our school was fortunate to have two teachers who had spent many years involved in drama
within their profession and as a hobby. These teachers provided the professional development. Teachers made positive comments on the “in school” facilitators type of professional development and a decision was made to conduct staff meetings each term for the rest of the year. The emphasis in the professional development was on providing activities, which could be used immediately in the classroom setting by teachers. Notes were distributed for teachers to follow in their classrooms.

This type of professional development has an immediate influence on student learning outcomes. Teachers experienced the activities themselves so their personal learning experiences could be translated quickly into teaching activities pertaining to their class. The method of delivery also emphasised the opportunity for all our teachers to receive the same level of professional development. Further collaboration occurred after the professional development sessions when teachers discussed now activities had been delivered in their classroom.

This type of professional development was another example of emancipatory action research. Teachers took control of the problem, planned an action, observed and reflected on the action.
4. Outside the School Facilitators providing Professional Development

Another aspect of the action stage of the action research cycle was a spontaneous opportunity to accept into the school for four weeks three drama students from the Christchurch College of Education, Secondary Arts Faculty. While these students were attached to a particular classroom, other
teachers invited the drama students into their classrooms. Our teachers were able to observe the skills and expertise of the drama students as lessons were conducted with their own class.

One drama student from the College of Education summarised the Ministry of Education document *Drama in the New Zealand Curriculum* (2002) and *Dance in the New Zealand Curriculum* (2002) into headings. The drama students taught some classes the format for the skills required in dance and drama. These actions by the drama students enabled our students to understand the skills of dance and drama, with our teachers able to gain teaching strategies and become familiar with a new teaching resource.

The College of Education drama students used an integrated approach with drama and dance. Later many of our students created their own dances using skills taught in the drama sessions for a competition organised by our senior pupils.

By involving the “outside experts” to teach aspects of drama and dance over a four week period, teachers were able to observe many aspects of the Arts curriculum. These observations saved teachers considerable time in their professional development in the Arts. This is another example of action research “action” stage for the College of Education students provided the data for our teachers to develop new learning experiences for the future and
their input, although not part of the Long Term Plan, enabled new teaching strategies to occur in the classrooms.

Figure 13: Professional Development “Outside the School” Facilitators.

5. “Outside School” Model: Scaffolding

Scaffolding is supplying information or personnel to support others in their learning. I facilitated a staff meeting based on distance learning philosophy. Teachers were provided with a number of sites found on the
Te Kete Ipurangi site [www.TKI.org.nz](http://www.TKI.org.nz). (Refer to Appendix Three.) As part of their personal professional development the sites were emailed to teachers to view either in the designated staff meeting time or at a time convenient to them at a computer of their choice. The purpose of this activity was to expose teachers to the wide variety of resources available on the Te Kete Ipurangi site in the Arts and provide scaffolding for them in future planning. ([www.tki.org.nz/e/arts](http://www.tki.org.nz/e/arts)) The aim of this type of professional development was to provide a source of background research for teachers to make informed decisions in the teaching of the Arts in 2003.

**Reflection Stage for Professional Development**

Participants in the project planned relevant professional development opportunities, which had a direct impact on learning activities for our students. The next stage in the project was to interview some of the participants to collect data on their views of the professional development programme. The information collected would be used by the Arts Committee for planning for 2003

1. **Have we provided relevant professional development?**

   **Teacher A:** Yes. I chose to go to a course, which helped me with my planning for the syndicate. The web site is great and allows for a wide range of information to be available to teachers. This is a huge site with valuable information in the Arts to assist school wide obligations also. We have improved our practice through our drama workshops conducted each term.
These workshops have provided knowledge in drama that can be immediately used in the classroom. Resourcing is very important with people providing activities relevant to the students. We could have people talk to us at syndicate level on the Arts. We want practical sessions, not sessions where everyone sits around and listens to someone.

Teacher D: Yes. We need to allocate professional development funding for experts to come into the school and give presentations in the Arts for all staff.

Teacher B: We need more information on music and although we have very good resources from the Ministry of Education we still need to develop this area. Maybe we could plan according to the strengths of our syndicate members to have interchanges. We should continue to use the strengths of our own staff to provide professional development. Allocate funding to bring in experts to demonstrate to our students such as artists. This would encourage further our gifted and talented.

Teacher E: We need to have a session of viewing as a staff all the materials, which have come into the school to support the Arts curriculum. The resources from learning Media are excellent. We need more time to discuss and view how we can use these in future planning.

Teacher C: I really enjoyed the professional development we had in the Arts this year. We had various drama lessons from our two staff and in dance from the College of Education students. The dance sessions showed us how we can do dance in a more creative way rather than a structured way.

The TKI site (Te Kete Ipurangi www.tki.org.nz) staff meeting I liked a lot and I think we should have more staff meetings where I could go to find more information on sites. I liked how we could do it in our own time. I liked the handouts from the Ministry of Education.

There is the fantastic resource put out by the Ministry of Education, which is the video and book on drama. We took the video home and that is almost an in-service course taking the video home and looking at it. That has been very helpful as teachers can see how it has been done. I like the visual things teachers can see to help them in their work.

We all know where our weaknesses are in teaching. I felt drama was a weakness. We passed the video around to look at it in our own time. We still need support in music and dance for 2003. We all feel a lot more comfortable about drama having seen the video.
Researcher: Is this the first time you have incorporated drama in your planning?

Teacher C: No we have always done role plays but this time we have focussed on longer teaching sessions each week. Two half hour sessions to build up to a performance.

A number of issues arose from the interviews. One interesting issue was the view of integration. This appeared to have two approaches;

1. The integration of the Arts strands together.
2. The integration of the Arts with other curriculum areas.

The interviews were directed specifically to answer our research question – “Have we improved the delivery of the Arts?” The interviews enabled the Arts Committee to have data available for their group decision-making process. The Arts Committee identified the other issues that arose from the interview data for areas for change and these are dealt with in the summary section of this paper.
Layer Three of the Action Research

Unforeseen Opportunities

The unforeseen opportunities can be identified as events, which occurred in the Arts during the year that were not part of the school wide long-term plan in the Arts. Most of these events were organised by a teacher participating in the action research project. The teacher organised a number of performances from outside the school. Careful choices were made to provide opportunities for as many students across the school to attend with costs to parents kept to a minimum.

1. The local professional theatre presented a play for students Year 1 to 6. The play was followed up in the classroom with a critical thinking review appropriate to each class level.

2. An orchestra played on a number of occasions to the whole school. Each performance had an emphasis on a group of instruments. These concerts were followed in classrooms by critical thinking reviews and learning activities for the different instruments involved with each performance.

3. Different groups of students attended outside the school performances throughout the year.
These performances enabled the students to view high quality productions and provided teachers with opportunities to focus on understanding how the Arts are communicated in our society. This was another example of teachers having the emancipatory opportunities to change planning and created opportunities in the delivery of aspects of the Art curriculum by providing “experts” to deliver aspects of the Arts curriculum at the school.

4. The drama students from the Secondary Faulty of Drama at the College of Education described earlier can be included in the opportunity for unforeseen opportunities.

In the layer on unforeseen opportunities, these visits involved the planning, action and observation aspects of the action research process.

Reflection Stage for Unforeseen Opportunities

As part of the reflection stage of the action research cycle and after the orchestra visits were completed, I interviewed one member of the Arts Committee to collect data for the Arts Committee.

Researcher: Why did you organise the visits by the orchestra?

Teacher C: I thought that we would probably all enjoy it (the students) and that they would be very professional. I thought the performance would be of high quality and the students would learn. Many students did a reflection on the performance. Children (Year 5-8) filled out forms without too many questions as we did not want it to become a lesson in handwriting, but a reflection on the performance. We did not ask “Did you like the performance” because a lot of seniors (Year 7-8) would say “No”. We asked them to compare it with music they
would normally listen to and to choose something they did like about the performance.

**Researcher:** How did you think this would help the teachers?

**Teacher:** I probably was not thinking of the teachers. I was probably thinking about exposing the children to sounds they might not normally hear. A brass quintet makes the most wonderful sound. Sound has a huge effect on children. It is kind of calming. It's fascinating and they tune in and become alert to it. Whether or not they like it wasn’t really the main aim. It was to expose them to something that they probably had not listened to on a C.D or seen in a performance before.

Although there were a number of unforeseen opportunities during the year these highlighted the importance of flexibility in planning programmes. The unforeseen opportunities enhanced our long-term plan and provided our students with high quality performances.
Chapter Five

Summary

The process we followed in the action research allowed teachers to use research to support future change. During both the planning and the reflection aspects of the cycles the participants gave freely their personal thoughts and ideas, discussing their practice openly and providing their ideas freely.

The project highlighted the amount of professional development that occurs is relevant only when it is transformed into classroom practice. How well teachers transfer their new knowledge into practice depends on the support and encouragement they receive, either from their colleagues or from resources. The information collected throughout the project, both existing and new material that emerged from the reflection process, was used as data to inform our future practice.

Although the process of collecting the relevant data was time consuming, it was very worthwhile, especially from the Ministry of Education Te Kete Ipurangi website. This was easy to follow and provided careful direction. Having collected the data we could now address our research question, which was “How do we improve the delivery of the Arts curriculum in our school?” We were ready to inform future practice.
At the meeting of the Arts Committee in October 2002 the following items were agreed upon to present to the staff to change the practice of the delivery of the Arts in 2003. These decisions were based on observations and reflections of the Arts Committee in 2002 during the action research project.

**Figure 14: Proposed Changes in Practice for the Arts 2003**

1. Bring private facilitators into the school to conduct professional development in the documentation of the Visual Arts.

2. Encourage syndicates to use “cross curricular” techniques in planning for 2003 to incorporate considerable integration.

3. Make opportunities for greater use of formative assessment

4. Use examples of student’s work to complete two summative, qualitative assessments per year.

5. Trial no written assessment in the Arts until Year 3.

6. Concentrate on developing routines up to Year 3 focussing on practical knowledge and developing ideas with a focus on visual art, but integrate communicating and interpreting and understanding in context into other curriculum areas.

7. Bring into the school facilitators who can provide a specific expertise identified by the teachers in the Arts.

8. Consider the load of professional development already planned for 2003 and decline the use of a Ministry of Education initiative, but use the Advisors for the Arts for specific needs.
9. Accept the offer of professional development in dance for 2003 from two staff members, using the same format as 2002.

10. Advertise for props through the school newsletter.

11. Bring into the school “experts” who can demonstrate to students. E.g. College of Education drama students.

12. Incorporate in school assemblies a wider selection of songs, which reflect the ethnic groups of the school.

13. Make greater use of the resources, especially Te Kete Ipurangi site.

Staff agreed to these decisions, which answered our research question – how can we improve the delivery of the Arts. Within the project assessment and integration problems had been identified and solutions found. In 2003 we will monitor the decisions made to ensure the changes advocated have reduced the level of assessment and enhanced the delivery of the Arts curriculum. The agreeing to these decisions indicated the completion of the action research cycle.

The following figure demonstrates a one-year duration in a school for the completion of this action research project.
Figure 15. The Completed Action Research Cycle

**Plan**
Long term plan, professional development and unforeseen opportunities.

**Reflection**
Develop recommendations for 2003.

**Action**
Teach the long term plan, deliver the professional development Experience the unforeseen opportunities

**Observation**
Teachers observe and take notes on the delivery of the Arts in 2002 for future teaching experiences in 2003.
Chapter Six

Limitations of the research

This study records only part of the process of improving the delivery of the Arts in a school. The process will be continued over time in the future with an emphasis on visual arts, dance and music. Although teachers completed the set tasks in the long term plan, our school wide documentation on how we teach the Arts in our school was not completed. This documentation would be completed in 2003 with “outside the school” professional development.

Hancock (2001) describes action research as a friendly methodology for teachers. In this project I found the action research process took considerably greater time and involved many more layers than I first anticipated. Teachers also took time to understand the implications of the emancipatory action research model and I found I had spent time with individual participates discussing aspects of our research methodology. The participants in the project needed time to develop their individual ideas and to formulate their views as a group.

We aimed towards the emancipatory action research model but there were parts of the project that involved other types of action research. We included aspects of technical action research when we used drama students from the College of Education who demonstrated lessons and it was the new ideas in these lessons that
were the source of power in improving the delivery of the Arts. Aspects of practical action research were used when we had our own teachers conduct professional development as well as the activities included in unforeseen opportunities. Here we used the personal knowledge of people to improve practice of teachers in the delivery of the Arts.

In comparison to other methods of research this action research project illustrated how the researcher is involved in a collaborative environment, resulting in a situation where the control over the process and the outcomes of the research are based on the decisions of a group of people. I found, as the researcher, I was involved in collecting information and forwarding this information to the participants for decisions on the next part of the project.
Chapter Seven

Conclusions

The project provided our school with an opportunity to question our practice in the Arts and develop new knowledge. The knowledge was gained through the interaction between our current theory on the delivery of the Arts and classroom practice. Our project was driven by the action research methodology with the outcomes based on the professional judgements of our teachers who saw the value of changing some procedures to accommodate their values and beliefs. During the research process teachers were in charge, with issues important to them addressed, in particular the amount and type of assessment, and the style of future professional development. These issues were discussed and debated by the Arts Committee and the staff before a decision was found.

The use of action research methodology required us to build collaborative relationships with colleagues. We became according to Edwards and Brunton, (1993:156) "Active agents in the production of new pedagogical discourse rather than merely consumers of professional knowledge produced by academics and education researchers." This statement identifies, through the process of emancipatory action research, how the participants observed and analysed current
practice while holding the power to initiate change. The participants had a desire to increase learning opportunities for students in the Arts with constant collaboration occurring throughout the research between the participants in the project and other teachers.

A major outcome that influenced our informed change in our practice was at the reflection stage. This stage enabled the participants to question future practice through the use of emancipatory action research methodology as the participants had found a process where their involvement in the project had improved their practice. By using reflective practice there was little or no separation between research and practice (Maclissac, 1995). We were, according to Crebbin (2001), practitioners who were committed to changing our practice to become emancipatory, empowering and democratic in that we decided to make changes for the future. We needed to use the reflective stage of action research to reveal discrepancies between espoused theories (what we say we did) and theories-in-use (what we actually did) (Imel, 1992). Our data collected indicated our focus for the future was based on theories in use.

A comparison of school wide planning between 2001 and 2002 indicated our school had been successful in improving programmes in all areas of the Arts. Teachers were keen to provide our students with a variety of activities as evident in the Long Term Programme of Work. But there are areas of dance, music and visual arts that still require further professional development by the staff.
We know we can do it - the professional development. And we know we can enjoy it and therefore we are not afraid to carry on by ourselves. In a way we know we are at this stage with dance. Now we have got to give dance a go. We know we can do it. The kids will enjoy it so therefore we will do more. So it’s an evolving process. (Teacher C)

On reflection of the research I found teachers endeavoured to be;

- Innovative in their approach to the teaching of the Arts;
- In control of their professional learning;
- Able to identify areas of need and find solutions to fill those needs;
- Able to change their practice in the delivery of the Arts;
- Able to make professional judgements on assessment, which were contrary to current theory; and
- Able to be part of the action research process to make informed decisions for future teaching.

As the researcher, the exciting aspect of being involved in our emancipatory action research project was observing the way our teachers developed their own personal professional skills, assisted by a school culture of collaboration devoted to reflection and improvement. Lead teachers in each syndicate developed programmes and assisted colleagues in new learning situations. The sharing of and the development of new resources was a powerful component in our professional development. Our teachers are to be commended for their enthusiasm and innovation. I was been impressed with the depth of interest held by teachers in gaining professional development that involved them as learners first before the
activity was taught in the classroom.

The action research methodology had two major aspects in our project.

1. The cyclic approach.
2. The reflection stage.

Both these aspects were of equal importance for the cyclic approach was the process we travelled and the reflection was the outcome of the process.

At the completion of this project I have developed a greater understanding of the opportunities for empowerment to create change in a school through the use of the action research methodology. I would recommend the use of action research as a tool for making informed change in a school setting, because teachers are involved in the process of change through cycles of planning, deciding on an action, observing and reflecting on their actions. It is the close critical analysis by teachers of their practice that makes action research such a powerful research tool in the school setting.
Bibliography


Ministry of Education, Te Kete Ipurangi www.tki.org

Ministry of Education Te Kete Ipurangi www.tki.org.nz/e/arts/


Appendix One

Permission Letters
Sue Rose  
Email: suerose@xtra.co.nz

Project Title “How do we improve the delivery of the Arts curriculum in our school?”

Dear

I am in the Masters of Teaching degree programme at the Christchurch College of Education. I am seeking your consent to be interviewed as part of my Research Project. Participation in this research project is voluntary.

The general aim of the research is to look at ways we can use for professional development in The Arts, as we are not on a Ministry of Education contract in 2002. We need to look at innovative ways that will address the needs of our teachers and prepare our staff for the delivery of this curriculum in 2003.

All responses are confidential. At no time will individuals be identified. The information collected will be stored in a secure location, available to my college supervisor, examiners and myself. All documentations from the research will be kept for five years and securely stored. Any quotations used in the publication will not be attributed to any participants. I may need to use a tape recorder to ensure accuracy of information.

If for any reason you wish to withdraw from the study you may do so at any time. A copy of the final report will be available and a summary will be issued to you on the findings of the research.

My supervisor is Janinka Greenwood (ph 3437780) and she maybe contacted regarding any aspect of the project. Would you please sign and return the letter of agreement. I will be in touch to arrange a suitable time to talk with you.

Should you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Ethical Clearance Committee.

The Secretary
Ethical Clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
P O Box 31 –065
Christchurch 8030
Telephone: 343 7707
Fax: 343 7789

Thank you
Yours sincerely

Sue Rose
Email: suerose@xtra.co.nz

Dear Sue

I agree to participate in these interviews on the understanding the following conditions will be adhered to.

The general aim of the research is to identify innovative ways Avonhead School can provide professional development to teachers in The Arts for 2002.

All responses are confidential. The information provided will be stored in a secure location, available only to your college supervisor / examiners and yourself. All documents will be stored for five years in secure storage. Any quotations used in the publications will not be attributable. A tape recorder could be used to ensure accuracy of information.

If for any reason I may wish to withdraw from the research I may drop out at any time. A copy of the research will be available and I will receive a summary of the findings.

Participants Name.................................................................

Signed...........................................................

Date........................................
Date
The Principal
School
Christchurch

Dear

Action Research Project
Research Question: How do we improve the delivery of the Arts curriculum in our school?

Following discussions with you and as part of my Masters of Teaching and Learning study I would like your permission to research with the staff and in particular The Arts Committee innovative ways to deliver professional development in 2002.

I have included a copy of my Research Proposal and Academic and Ethical Approval that has been approved by the College of Education as a research project. I plan to talk with the Arts Committee at a time that is convenient to all members.

The outcomes of the research will give an indication of possible ways we can implement professional development in 2002 for preparation of for the delivery of the Arts curriculum in 2003.

The attached form is a copy of the Research Proposal agreed to by the College of Education ethical committee. I will provide you with a copy of the research and a summary of the findings.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Sue Rose
Appendix Two

Information for teachers

on

“What is Action Research?”
The Arts

Research Question

- How do we improve the delivery of the Arts Curriculum?

Reflective Practice

- Types
  - Technical (efficiency, & effectiveness)
  - "How can I do what I do already, but better?"
  - Practical (explaining or clarifying assumptions)
  - Critical (moral or ethical criteria about practice)

- Practical & critical reflection – more difficult, but more powerful in transforming what we see, and how we do, education.
- It is how we move from "That’s the way we have always done it," to "These are my educational, personal values - how can I put these into practice?"
  - Guba & Lincoln 2008

Questioning Practice

- Advantages
  - Leads to greater self awareness
  - Develops new knowledge

- Disadvantages
  - Time consuming
  - Personal risk
  - Requires practitioners to examine beliefs, values and feelings.

Action Research Types

- Scientific-technical view.
  - Inspired by teachers for more effective and efficient practice.
  - The new idea is the source of power.

- Practical - deliberative
  - Seeks to improve practice through the personal knowledge of participants.
  - Power is shared between group of equal participants, with the emphasis on the individual power for action.

- Critical - emancipatory
  - Power is shared within the group. It is the change in power relationships within the group that causes a shift from one mode to the next.
  - Guba (1985)

Why Use Action Research

- Good practice.
- Uses self reviewing.
- Provides evidence to criticism.
- Monitors current practice.
- Monitors the effects of change.
- Future practice is informed.
- Teachers have control over the pace and type of change.
- Teachers expect to change and are not intimidated.

What Type of Research to Use?

- Emancipatory action research
  - Why?

- Increase the closeness between the actual problems and assist practitioners to identify problems.
- This type of research is informed by theory and often is contradictory with theory.
What happens when we use emancipatory action research?

- Reflect on theory in relationship to praxis or practical judgement.
- This knowledge is personal knowledge.
- This interaction between theory and practical judgement is reflection.

Strategies for Action Research

- Describe
- Analyse
- Theorise
- Act

Question, seek alternatives, keep an open mind, consider consequences, view from various perspectives, gather other points of view or ideas.

Collecting Information

- From the Web
- School documentation
- Personnel

Data Collection Analysis

- Where are we at?
- What needs to change?
- (Integration)
- What can stay the same?
- What will be the future focus.

Sequence of Events for The Arts Committee

- Plan – possible changes.
- Action – trial possible changes.
- Observe – possible changes.
- Reflect – on possible changes.

Take the change process in the Arts to Syndicates.
Present to all staff.

Reflection

- Have we integrated?
- Have we decreased the amount of assessment?
- Have we provided appropriate professional development?
Appendix Three

Staff Meeting

Agenda

Visiting Websites
Staff Meeting October 2002

Agenda: Viewing Websites Associated with the Arts

Visit these sites at a time convenient to you.

www.tki.org.nz/e/tki/

Read this page, then move onto

www.tki.org.nz/e/community/

Count how many curriculum areas and associated sites available from this page.

Click onto The Arts basket.

www.tki.org.nz/e/arts/

Scroll down to this site. www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/dance/

Look at the Matrix. Although this is a draft it is done for us already.

Go back www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/dance/

Level 2,3,4 look at your level on this site for what to look for in dance.

www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/exemplars/arts/dance/

If you are Level 1 please go onto the next activity as there is nothing for you to see on this site.

www.tki.org.nz/e/arts/visarts/visarts_home.php

On this site find the shell on the right hand side of your screen. Click onto your level and view some activities.

www.tki.org.nz/e/arts/dance/dance_home.php

Click onto your level on the shell on the right hand side of the screen.
www.tki.org.nz/e/arts/music/music_home.php

Click onto your level on the shell on the right hand side of the screen.

www.tki.org.nz/e/arts/visarts/visarts_home.php

Click onto your level on the shell on the right hand side of the screen.

www.tki.org.nz/e/arts/drama/drama_home.php

Click onto your level on the shell on the right hand side of the screen.

www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/artspd/implementation/policy2_e.php

**Planning in The Arts**

www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/artspd/implementation/plans_e.php

There are a variety of plans here which you can down load.

Flick down the page and have a quick look at what is available.

www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/artspd/implementation/plans1_e.php

This site tells how things need to be done in relationship to the NAGs. If you are a curriculum leader this is a helpful site.

Well done

Sue
Appendix Four

Interview Transcripts
Researcher: Have we integrated?

Teacher A: On reflection we integrated better in Term 4, 2001 when we had a theme. I do not think we have it right yet. We need to reduce the number of activities in a unit and give more time to the visual art.

Researcher: Have we decreased the amount of assessment?

Teacher A: No, not this year

Teacher A: We believe in the cyclic approach to teaching the skills in the Arts where our students meet activities through their time at our school on a number of occasions although the topic maybe different.

Researcher Have we provided relevant professional development?

Teacher A: Yes. I chose to go to a course, which helped me with my planning for the syndicate. The web site is great and allows for a wide range of information to be available to teachers. This is a huge site with valuable information in the Arts to assist school wide obligations also. We have improved our practice through our drama workshops conducted each term.

These workshops have provided knowledge in drama that can be immediately used in the classroom. Resourcing is very important with people providing activities relevant to the students. We could have people talk to us at syndicate level on the Arts. We want practical sessions, not sessions where everyone sits around and listens to someone.
Teacher B: We have concentrated on integration and this has been a key issue. We were over planning activities in units even though we used integration we still don’t seem to fit everything into the curriculum in the Arts. Next year we want to try a stand-alone focus particularly in music and visual arts. We want to have mini units cutting down on the activities in a unit and blocking out a weeks for our topic time to be used for music and visual arts. We would integrate dance and drama into our language topics. The question we are asking is who owns the curriculum and who will it suit? Our syndicate is only becoming very interested in integration this year. We didn’t really plan it into our units at all this year, but we will for next year. There was a little talk about drama integration throughout the year. There was very little talk about dance or music integration but art integration comes into all our topics and it always has done for a number of years. If we talking amount music integration—we have not got there yet.

Teacher B: No, we haven’t. We still do not have assessment in the Arts organised. We need to make a decision on how best to do this.

Teacher B: Our planning in drama and visual arts is effective and manageable. We could get outsiders for hands on work or even if they took students in our classes for us to observe.

Teacher B: We need more information on music and although we have very good resources from the Ministry of Education we still need to develop this area. Maybe we could plan according to the strengths of our syndicate members to have interchanges. We should continue to use the strengths of our own staff to provided professional development. Allocate funding to bring in experts to demonstrate to our students such as artists. This would encourage further our gifted and talented.
Researcher: Have we integrated?

Teacher C: I done really think we have got quite that far. It might be a direction we are working on because we are looking at integration by putting a focus for example the Antarctic, which we are going to do next year. And we are looking at music and we are looking at drama for (the study of) Shackleton or the drama for Robert Falcon Scott or role plays. We are taking the old thematic look at integration for next year. So we can’t say we have done a lot this year.

Researcher: Do you think you have begun the process of coming to use integration more this year?

Teacher C: I would say that we have looked at objective based learning which is what is in the New Zealand curriculum and then people have been talking about integration. All of a sudden we have thought, that is really what we wanted to do all along. So we would go from the thematic central point. You can still do an objective based unit, but you are allowing for all the aspects of the curriculum to meet in that central point.

You have just reminded me about “Junk It.” We have this activity in Term Four. This really does provide the linkage between all aspects of the Arts curriculum. We have been doing this for three or four years. This is dance, drama and art in a kind of a wearable way. The children provide their own tapes and CDs for the music so there are a lot of choices in this topic for our children.

Researcher Have we provided relevant professional development?

Teacher C: I really enjoyed the professional development we had in the Arts this year. We had various drama lessons from our two staff and in dance from the College of Education students. The dance sessions showed us how we can do dance in a more creative way rather than a structured way.

The TKI sit (Te Kete Ipurangi www.tki.org.nz) staff meeting I liked a lot and I think we should have more staff meetings where I could go to find more on the computer. I liked how we could do it in our own time. I liked the hand outs from the Ministry of Education.

We also got into the document (drama section) and decided what we felt we would be comfortable with and so we did freeze frames.
and the hot seating and using the nursery rhymes to base little mini skits on. It was a process that built on the children’s skills of the previous lesson. We ended with really entertaining hour and a half with the best in each classroom, performing for the syndicate. It was hilarious. So at the end of that one of my pupils said, “Can we do more of that, as we really like drama?” That is how I know it was successful. They liked it and we will be doing more. There is the fantastic resource put out by the Ministry of Education, which is the video and book on drama. We took the video home and that is almost an in-service course taking the video home and looking at it. That has been very helpful as teachers can see how it has been done. I like the visual things teachers can see to help them in their work.

We all know where weaknesses are in teaching and I felt drama was a weakness and we passed the video around to look at it in our own time. We still need support in music and dance for 2003. We all feel a lot more comfortable about drama having seen the Video. We know we can do it - the professional development. And we know we can enjoy it and therefore we are not afraid to carry on by ourselves. In a way we know we are at this stage with dance. Now we have got to give dance a go. We know we can do it. The kids will enjoy it so therefore we will do more. So it’s an evolving process.

**Researcher:** Is this the first time you have incorporated drama in your planning?

**Teacher C:** No we have always done role plays but this time we have focussed on longer teaching sessions each week. Two half hour sessions to build up to a performance.

**Researcher:** Why did you organise the visits by the orchestra?

**Teacher: C** I thought that we would probably all enjoy it (the students) and, that they would be very professional. I thought the performance would be of high quality and the students would learn. Many students did a reflection on the performance. Children (Year 5-8) filled out forms without too many questions as we did not want it to become a lesson in handwriting, but a reflection on the performance. We did not ask “Did you like the performance” because a lot of seniors (Year 7-8) would say “No”. We asked them to compare it with music they would normally listen to and to choose something they did like about the performance.
Researcher: How did you think this would help the teachers?

Teacher: I probably was not thinking of the teachers. I was probably thinking about exposing the children to sounds they might not normally hear. A brass quintet makes the most wonderful sound. Sound has a huge effect on children. It is kind of calming. It's fascinating and they tune in and become alert to it. Whether or not they like it wasn't really the main aim. It was to expose them to something that they probably have
Researcher: Have we integrated?

Teacher D: Yes of course we have. We integrated with our operetta by involving all the aspects of the Arts.

Researcher: Have we decreased the amount of assessment?

Teacher D: No. People feel we have to include dance and drama. So therefore assessment has not got better. But when we used one vehicle for assessment as we did in our operetta we provided as cross curricula assessment. We have to more in this direction.

Teacher D: We should collect more props for drama such as scarves and clothing, but not hats for hygiene reasons. The collections could be made through the school newsletter. Each syndicate could have a “props box” which could be shared. We would need parent support to wash clothes at appropriate times.

In music we have an equity issue in the choice of our songs in assembly. We need to have songs from different ethnic groups to reflect our school population.

We should get into the writing of the documentation. We could spend time on the TKI website and take some of the ideas and some units off and do them. This means we are not ignoring the resources that have been put in front of us. But I do think we should make time for it.

Researcher: Have we provided relevant professional development?

Teacher D: Yes. We need to allocate professional development funding for experts to come into the school and give presentations in the Arts for all staff.
Researcher: Have we provided relevant professional development?

Teacher E: We need to have a session of viewing as a staff all the materials, which have come into the school to support the Arts curriculum. The resources from learning Media are excellent. We need more time to discuss and view how we can use these in future planning.