Negotiating Effective Arts Education Partnerships: School and Industry Professionals and the High School Musical

Matthew Paul Aris
Murdoch University, Australia

Peter Wright
Murdoch University, Australia

Robin Pascoe
Murdoch University, Australia

Abstract

The landscape of arts education is changing, with an increased focus on collaborative partnerships between schools and arts sectors for the purpose of creating richer arts education – both process and products. Using a combination of phenomenology and autoethnography, this research explores how one particular form of arts education partnerships function in order to consider the enablers and constraints to working effectively together. The study draws on data from interviews of eight key education (School Professionals) and industry staff (Industry Professionals based at a professional

venue) and the first author's reflective journal conducted over a ten-day period during the staging of a high school musical. The findings reveal how traditional roles and practices are being re-visioned and reshaped to encompass both industry and education values connecting aesthetic quality with educational outcomes. The result of these partnerships at their best, produce not only richer experiences for students, and deep learning, but also closer industry and education relationships that are inclusive, productive and mutually beneficial.
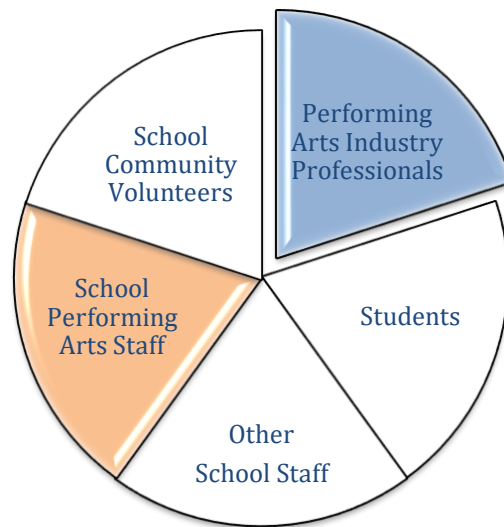
Introduction

As part of a push towards quality arts education, contemporary educational practice has witnessed a growth in partnerships between schools and the arts sector, both at a national and international level. In a report for UNESCO, Bamford (2006) asserts "quality arts education tends to be characterized by a strong partnership between the schools and the outside arts and community organisations" (p. 86). However, whilst there is general agreement that partnerships between schools and the arts sector are beneficial, tension exists around arts education partnerships between those that want the responsibility of arts education to be given to trained and qualified teaching specialists, and those that promote the use of arts industry professionals in the arts (commonly referred to as 'teaching artists') who, some argue, provide the most authentic kind of arts experience within educational contexts (Booth, 2003). Furthermore, the perceived benefits of partnerships, and the reality of creating and sustaining long term and mutually beneficial partnerships between these two groups is underdeveloped and theorised. This is evident in the lack of research initiated from within schools by teachers that specifically explores the experiences of arts education partnerships (Bamford, 2006) that this study, in part, aims to inform.

The staging of a high school musical (HSM) requires the collaborative contribution of significant numbers of performing arts staff, non-performing arts staff, students and volunteers filling many varied roles (Davey, 2010). Unlike the world of professional theatre, in which a specialized individual is assigned one leadership role, performing arts staff often assume multiple and combined roles (Robinson & Poole, 1990; Davey, 2010) that research suggests can place a significant burden on staff who report a lack of preparation and training. This 'burden' was highlighted in a study of music teachers required to take on technical and design roles, in addition to the combined role of Director (Music and Stage) and Producer (Williams, 2003).

Not surprisingly, lack of teacher expertise and training is one of the leading causes cited in a HSM not being able to successfully achieve its multiple aims and benefits (Janicki, 1982; Van Houten, 1999; Davey 2010). To combat this problem, a growing number of school groups

outsource/employ industry professionals in the performing arts to fill vital production roles (Davey, 2010). In this context, the involvement of industry professionals is becoming an increasingly important role amongst many in the HSM enterprise and the development of effective arts education partnerships; this being graphically represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Entry of the industry professional into a High School Musical production

Little is known about the ways that school performing arts staff (School Professionals, hereafter referred to as SP) and performing arts industry professionals (Industry Professionals—IP) work together in this context. As a consequence, this study contributes to our understanding of partnerships by exploring the experiences of one group of teachers and industry professionals during the staging of a HSM in an industry context, including how each different professional group functions, and the enablers and constraints to successful partnerships.

Method

This research followed a qualitative approach informed by the power of 'lived experience' in contributing to our understanding of every-day life (van Manen, 1997; 2014) and providing a framework to elicit rich descriptions (Geertz, 1973). The pluralistic research design used in this study draws on phenomenology and autoethnographic approaches (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) that acknowledge "multiple layers of consciousness and research reflexivity that connects the personal and the cultural" (p. 739). The reflexivity inherent in these approaches was crucial to ensure the researcher's pre-conceptions were transparent, and to deepen the understanding of the forces at work between two diverse and culturally configured groups (industry and

education). Autoethnography was used to deepen personal experience and to connect this experience to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings (Ellis et al., 2011). Furthermore, phenomenological reflection on the lived experience of participants—teachers and arts workers—was used in order to develop deeper understanding of how being and acting, self and other, interiorities and exteriorities, and who we are and act, can inform our personal and professional lives (van Manen, 2014).

Setting and Sample

The HSM in this study (staged within a professional venue) is set against an evolving arts education landscape in which partnerships between performing arts industry and performing arts education are increasing. The labelling of these two key groups as *The Occupiers* (IP-venue staff), and *The Foreigners* (SP-school staff[1]), represents the unusual, but increasingly common, education-to-arts partnership configuration and the industry setting for the HSM graphically represented in Figure 2.
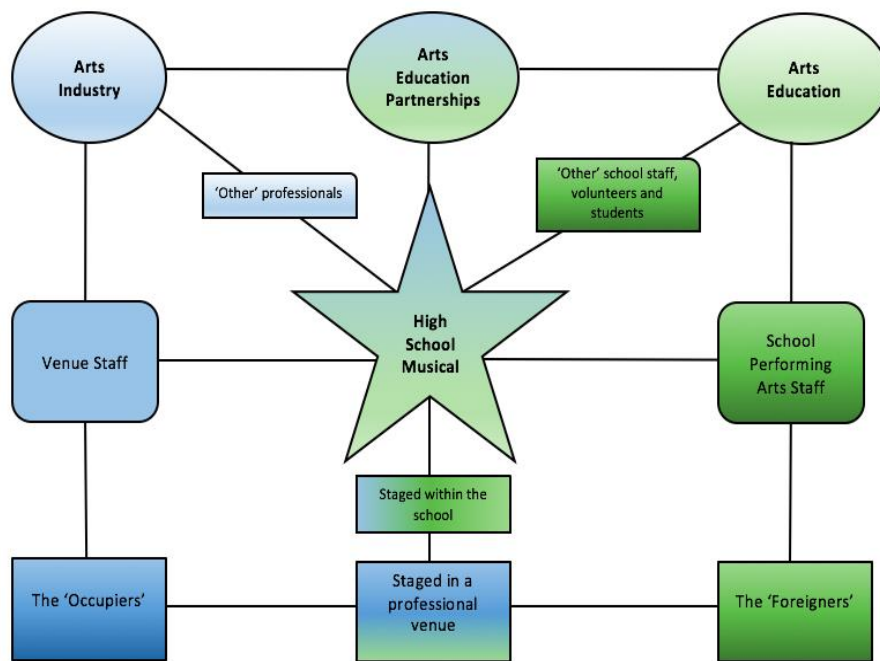

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for sampling and data collection

---

[1] These descriptors coming from the participants themselves.

The school (*The Foreigners*) from which the HSM emerged is an independent school for girls founded in 1907 with a tradition of staging annual musical productions in the school hall. However, because of the need for a larger venue, the school moved the production into a local professional theatre in 2010. In this study, the school group participants (all members of the performing arts department) exhibited pride in the quality of the productions they staged at the venue. It was clear there was a shared aspiration for their school show, in the words of one SP, to *"rise above the stereotypical kind of high school musical"* and that working in a professional venue in the words of staff was an opportunity to *"raise the bar"* and *"bring up that whole standard."*

The IP staff at the venue (*The Occupiers*) were split into two teams: the theatre management (which includes the front of house staff); and technical staff or backstage crew. Both teams interacted with a variety of school personnel prior, during, and beyond the venue hire period. However, the venue staff (technical) hosted the bulk of significant partnership interactions during the school's ten-day tenure in the venue. In addition to the continuity and specialised experience that technical staff brought into the school production, they also exhibited high levels of professional pride in their work. This characteristic was reflected in the following comments by the venue's technical manager, Bill:

> *Well, you definitely find in our industry that it is ego driven and I don't mean that in a negative way, I mean that people do want to do a good job – they don't want to fail. And the industry is full of those people … (and) most of them care.*

It was these two groups, and the text of their experiences along with the author's reflective journal that became data for the research and hence each were 'purposefully sampled' (Creswell, 2006). Potential participants were sent an email via a school administrator and invited to volunteer for the study. Consequently, there were eight participants for the study: five industry venue staff and three performing arts school staff, including the first author who had dual roles of director/production manager and participant observer. The sample represented a wide range of roles, and it was this range, including leadership and non-leadership roles, that allowed us to capture the complexities and subtleties inherent within these partnership experiences. 'Other' professionals, students, volunteers and 'other' school staff were omitted from the study because their experiences, being at one remove, although valuable, did not directly align with the nature and purpose of the research being undertaken. That is, my focus was on the enablers and constraints between the two education and industry professionals in their efforts to realize an effective arts education partnership itself. The study obtained university ethics approval, and all participants completed a written consent.

Data Collection

The data collection period coincided with the school's involvement within the professional venue including the 'bump in,' technical[2] and dress rehearsals, and five performances of the musical production over a period of ten-days in March 2016. The data consisted of the first author's reflective journal, and two in-depth individual interviews with each of the other participants. The reflective journal was used to document the first author's experiences of partnerships, including merging questions, insights, feelings and changes in perceptions prior to, during and following the staging of the HSM. This approach aimed to describe and systematically analyze the experiences as researcher and co-participant within the study and to pursue rigorous and multi-layered levels of reflexivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Employing the use of a reflective journal was an integral part of drawing together the research data, including how broader sociocultural experiences shaped the interpretation of the study (Street, 1997).

The seven remaining participants were interviewed at two points during the staging of the HSM. The first interview was conducted on Day One of the school's bump-in to the professional venue. The interviews were guided by a series of open-ended, reflective questions that stimulated a dialogical approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) capturing ways in which both groups made sense of the partnership experience. The focus of this first interview was on 'the past', identifying what participants bring with them into these partnership contexts (based on prior experiences), including values, attitudes and expectations. This element was key to understanding the way it highlighted expectations that helped to shape participant experience.

Many aspects of the experiences shared in the first interview were followed up during the second interview conducted on the final day of the school's residence in the venue. The questioning prompts in the second interview were designed to give participants the opportunity to reflect and re-experience (through their narratives of partnership experiences) by encouraging detailed and lived-through examples of the enablers and constraints of these types of inter-sectorial partnerships. These interviews were conducted by an external interviewer (with no previous relationship with participants) and audio-recorded; this distance between interviewer and participants was important due to the first author's dual role as co-participant and researcher.

---

[2] Technical rehearsal usually occurs during the final stages of the rehearsal period with a focus on lighting, sound, and set elements.

Data Analysis

We employed an emergent thematic analysis was to generate a list of key concepts, patterns and themes producing first cycle codes (Creswell, 2006). This process was further enhanced by the use of critical memoing that occurred before, during and following the data collection period as a way of "capturing thoughts that occur throughout data collection, data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, conclusion testing, and final reporting" (Miles et al., 2014, pp. 95-96). Following the initial first cycle coding, second cycle pattern coding highlighted the significant moments in the data, detecting patterns to compare and contrast with other relatable sections and finally, assigning these with more developed thematic codes (Miles et al., 2014).

In order to view the information systematically (Miles et al., 2014), we used a Matrix table to condense data into a representation framework ordering the codes from most significant first, a process Creswell (2006) refers to as "winnowing." From here, the framework developed a platform to arrange and re-arrange the final themes to elucidate the unique experiences of partnerships via a unifying metaphor.

The unifying metaphor used in this research was drawn from Theatre Director, Peter Brook's (1968) seminal work in which he uses the image of an 'empty space' to illuminate the essential nature of theatre;

> *I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged (p. 1).*

Defined simply as the place where these partnership experiences occur, the 'empty space' in the context of this research is a multidimensional space and refers interchangeably to the physical, emotional and socio-cultural levels of experience of partnerships shared by participants.

Beginning with an 'empty space' and finishing with the 'shared space' was a way of simplifying the complex data into a textual and visual representation that fulfilled three important functions. First, it highlighted the contrasting identities between the two socio-cultural configured groups (education and industry). Second, it underscored the challenges involved in these groups coming together (enablers and constraints). Third, and most important, it illustrated the partnership journey (from an 'empty' to a shared space) contained within the participants' experiences.

Central to the metaphor of the shared space is a fundamental understanding of the artistic interactions of drama and theatre themselves. Brook's concept of "holy theatre" is evoked in Hastrup (2004).

> *The stage constitutes a magic place or a sacred site where the world changes for the participants … theatre is a site of passage – a passage between separate worlds and viewpoints, between then and now, between this world and another. The artistry of acting implies that the players know how to turn the stage into the shared space. (p.111)*

As the findings to this research reveal, this can happen in so many powerful ways for the 'players' identified.

Findings

The findings describe two contrasting transformational points over the seven-year life span of these partnerships[3] that, analogous to the theatrical event being considered, are structured into three acts: bumping in; negotiating the space; and the shared space**.** These three acts work as conceptual organisers that contain the ten essential themes (shown in Table 1) with evidence in the form of the participants' voices.

Table 1

Thematic metaphors for partnerships

	Act	**Theme**
Act One	*Bumping in*	1. preparation: fitting an education model into an industry world 2. what we bring with us
Act Two	*Negotiating the Space*	3. communicating effectively 4. being realistic 5. making allowances 6. challenging experiences 6. finding your place

---

[3] The seven years referring to the established history between the venue and the school.

Act Three	*The Shared Space*	7. becoming familiar 8. earning respect 9. feeling invested 10. collaborative rewards

Act One - *'Bumping in'*

In the opening 'act,' Bumping in the school group enters into the 'foreign' industry space 'occupied' by the venue staff. This moment of 'invasion' on Day One of the partnership is represented in Figure 3. The researcher's reflective journal also describes this moment in the 'contact zone' as a place of displacement (Somerville et al, 2009) in the following way:

> *When I take a moment from my director/producer role and gaze out over the hive of activity in the theatre, I wonder how any of this works at all? I count 23 people working on and around the stage in various groups. Their activity looks disorganized – some people are busy at times while others stand motionless. There is constant banter between the industry personnel – all of whom seem to know each other. The school's truck has just arrived for the second time (The venues technical manager, Bill sent it away the first time because the orchestra pit [4]wasn't ready) with musical instruments and props for the show. The school's maintenance staff member is being careless as he transports a large prop across the stage. He clumsily knocks over some lights that were waiting to be hung. The large clatter is bookended with a shower of abuse from a lighting tech - 30 years his junior. Work stops for a moment – the lights are checked – no damage done. The machine rolls on. (Reflective Journal, Day One)*

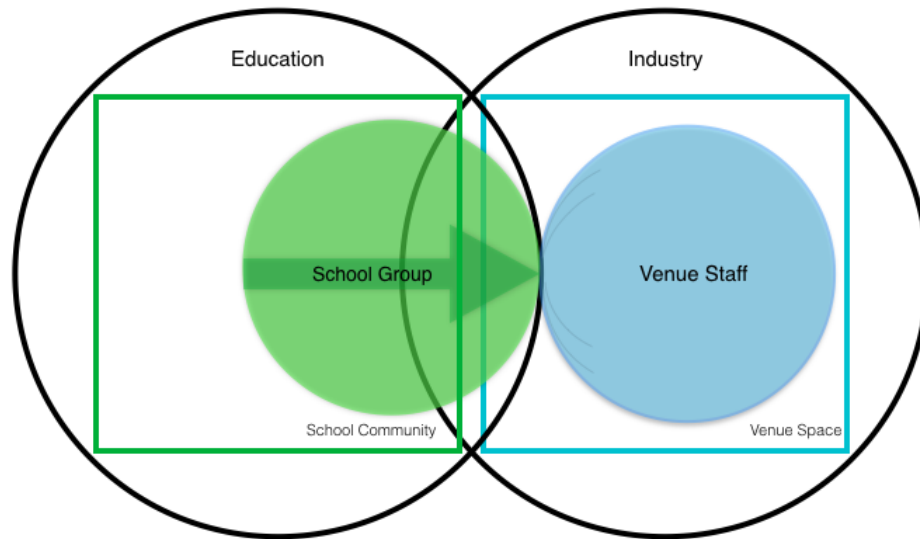[4] The space at the foot of the stage where the musicians play.

Figure 3. The Bump In

Two essential themes emerged in Act One*; what we bring with us (1) and the role that preparation; fitting an education model into an industry world (2)* plays in insulating both groups from challenging experiences, particularly in the early stages of the partnership.

The focus of the first interview was to uncover the forces at work during these types of arts education partnerships. To do so, we considered the past preconceptions that participants from both groups brought into the HSM and the ways that these attitudes shaped the experience for them.

From an industry perspective, three technical staff participants painted a mostly pessimistic picture of working with other school groups in similar working contexts. In some cases, teachers were labelled by the industry staff as '*frustrated artists*' who exhibited unhelpful and constraining behaviors. As Mark (IP) the head of audio noted:

> *I have worked with other schools that are run by a particular hard-headed person that is often the case that they haven't had the success they wanted in their professional life so they put it into their kids. Plenty of characters working in schools like that.*

When reflecting on their previous experiences, the three industry participants felt that "*unrealistic expectations*" held by teachers combined with limited knowledge of how to function in a professional venue were key reasons why these types of partnerships fail. These two constraining factors were also being viewed as disregard of industry staff's advice, which

they saw as the teacher's unwillingness to relinquish the role of expert. Teachers were advised by Mark (IP) to *"leave their teacher identity at the stage door because they were about to enter a world in which they will be taught a lot."* This contact zone was both a point of contestation, but also one of productive tension (Somerville et al, 2009).

The school participants' view of working with industry staff in professional venues painted a mixed picture; however, all three participants did agree that the opportunity to work in the venue—"*although challenging*" was worth the effort. Brian (SP), a drama teacher at the school who was also taking on a dual role as props manager and performer in the show remarked *"the venue itself lifts the professional level."* However, Sally (SP) the school's wardrobe manager and costume designer for the show was skeptical of industry staff, describing many of them as *"people who don't care about the school shows."*

The importance of appropriate and thorough preproduction and planning for the event was emphasized by all the participants, but especially the three venue (technical) staff who cited it as the most effective single element for "*successful outcomes to occur*" – especially during the *bump-in*[5] phase. This was typified by Bill (IP), the technical manager when he said:

> *But my big thing is definitely the preproduction and planning and knowing what's going on and where you are going to put it and is it going to fit and how big does it need to be. Everything flows from there because then you don't have people standing around wondering what's going to happen next.*

Mark (IP) agreed that it didn't really matter whether it was a *"school or professional production"* that *"everything is lost or won in pre-production and the more time you spend preparing accurately for when you are in the performance space."* Mark highlighted the importance of having *"systems"* already in place for pre-production as a *"work in progress,"* one way being to use *"your hall and/or gymnasium at school before you come in."* He stressed the importance of effective preparation as a way of dealing with *"misunderstandings"* because this is where you *"lose or win the battle"* and that the *"principle was always the same"* whether you are dealing with *"five-year olds or fifty-year olds."*

---

[5] Describes the day when technical aspects (set, lighting and sound) are loaded into a venue space.

Act Two - Negotiating the Space

The second act as a conceptual organizer explores the ways the seven participants and the first author *negotiated the partnership space* during the ten-days in the venue. Five essential themes emerged in this act: *communicating effectively (3); being realistic (4); making allowances (5); challenging experiences (6) and finding your place (7).* Each of these pointed to negotiating power, place and identity and the possibility of deep learning.

When asked to reflect on the elements required to create successful partnerships, the participants agreed that it was essential to communicate effectively. In contrast to the industry participant's negative experiences with other schools, they felt that this school group's willingness to ask for advice and be open to feedback were key factors in fostering an atmosphere of collaboration with the venue staff. Furthermore, the partnerships were enabled when the education client was realistic about what they were able to achieve in the theatre space. Bill (IP) expressed that most education clients held unrealistic expectations, with many having *"a million-dollar picture with a hundred-dollar budget."*

The industry participants agreed that when working with education groups, the venue staff needed to make allowances and adjust standard working patterns. This included being patient and slowing things down because school groups *"don't understand the business of theatre that well"* and *"the pace"* of these shows is different from a professional production. This is articulated by the head of lighting in the venue, Ronny:

> *The pace of their stuff works for them and once the kids are on stage [the work plan] is scheduled... it helps the actors have confidence with what they are doing on stage and have confidence with the crew who are running it. In both ways – technical and the acting side can be affected if the time isn't given and with education you need to give the time to nurture it.*

Communicating effectively, being realistic and making allowances was vital to the success of negotiating partnerships. However, as expressed in the first author's reflective journal, the findings also underlined the fluidity of an ever-evolving process:

> *The success we enjoy today has been a learning process for both sides that didn't occur over-night but rather was a relationship that had developed over many years of working together and refining systems and taking on board feedback.*

This learning was also evident in the current musical production, with most of the participants able to recall challenging experiences over the ten-days when things didn't work so well and

that *"even after seven years there is still a lot to learn from each other"* recognising the iterative nature of these relationships.

This was the case for Bill (IP) when asked by the interviewer "*how things are going?"* he recounted a situation that had only occurred minutes prior. The incident involved the scheduling of trucks arriving at the venue:

> *Well, there has already been a couple of things today that weren't ideal. It was to do with the orchestra pit coming out and the musical instruments being delivered. And the musical instruments were delivered well before the orchestra pit was ready.*

Bill felt that the school's scheduling was inadequate and that the *"annoying part"* for him was that *"the exact same thing happened last year."* As a result, the truck with the musical instruments was asked to come back later when the pit was ready. When asked what had caused the confusion, Bill added:

> *I think it's one of those things where maybe a little bit of inexperience meeting experienced.*

Bill's version of this incident was not the only one recounted. The other perspective came from the first author's reflective journal from the same day:

> *I just found out that the truck with the musical instruments was ordered to leave the theatre dock and come back later. I wonder if the production schedule that was sent out weeks in advance was read or did people just make assumptions about the manner that this would unfold? I can't help but question if these events would transpire differently if we were a professional company and not a school? (Reflective Journal, Day One)*

In examining the 'two sides of the same story' as presented here it is apparent that traditional pre-conceptions about working in these partnership contexts were being triggered. On the one hand, Bill was alluding to careless scheduling and the "*inexperience"* of school group members as being the cause of the problem on Day One. In contrast, the reflective journal entry alluded to a possible lack of care given by the industry professionals in not reading the schedule because *"we were only a school show;"* this further illuminating the role of beliefs, values, and prior experiences in shaping experience.

The final theme in Act Two, 'finding your place' is used to evoke an image of the 'professional journey' for both the school and venue participants as they negotiate traditional

roles and make meaning from new roles that emerged as a result of a seven-year partnership. This possibility of 'deep place learning' and the intersections of place, change, and pedagogy (Somerville et al, 2011) were highlighted in the following journal entry.

> *In the context of staging a musical in a professional venue we are defined by our role; in a space such as this it tells us where to stand, what to do, who to communicate with and what language to use when we do so. It tells us how to act and who to ask for directions. Without it or a good understanding of it, we float rudderless in a busy harbor. When we know our role and understand the expectations that go with it, we find our place in the musical machine. We sense that we are part of something bigger. (Reflective Journal)*

All three school participants filled multiple roles that they viewed as *"part of the landscape"* of producing these types of events. This was described by drama teacher Brian, who was juggling the role of props manager with that of being an actor in the production:

> *And I mean I'm not the only person that had to do you know dual, triple roles, there were other staff members that, that were doing that and as you say it's, that's kind of the nature of the beast when working in a school.*

Employing industry professionals eased the burden of filling multiple roles and was viewed as a positive progression by both school and venue participants because it encouraged a culture of collaboration and learning, and improved the quality of the production – both process and product. IP Ronny noted:

> *What (the school) have done is that they haven't just relied on what they have at the school. They have outsourced for lighting; they have outsourced for set. And what that has done is that they have recognized where they may have a weakness, where they don't know that area and they have covered that weakness with someone who does and that gives you such a broader spectrum.*

Industry participants' way of working and viewing themselves within the arts education context were also enhanced as a result of the seven-year partnership with the school because they were aligned with the 'pedagogical purpose' for staging the event. IP Mark indicated having a mixture of novices and professionals in the space required a *"completely different mindset"* that complemented and expanded his traditional role to include mentor and creative collaborator and in this way was significant learning for him. This was observed by the venue's technical manager Bill who articulated how he noticed a *"learning curve"* for the

venue staff *"to be trainers rather than be just workers,"* and as a result he felt that *"they can see more of a purpose in it."*

Act Three - The Shared Space

In Act Three, The Shared Space, the final conceptual organizer, we overview the four essential themes that emerged: *becoming familiar (7); earning respect (8); feeling invested (9) and collaborative rewards (10).* These themes revealed that as power is negotiated and shared, new roles emerge, transformation occurs, and shared value develops. Furthermore, that despite the challenges, the partnership between the venue and the school had evolved into a successful enterprise. This was captured in the reflective journal in the following way:

> *In time, the space they co-inhabit transforms once more. Tensions dissolve…what once was foreign becomes familiar. (Reflective Journal)*

The theme, as described by both school and industry participants, of 'becoming familiar' emerged as a result of learning and refining systems over a number of years and acts as evidence towards the key indicator of 'The Shared Space.' All participants agreed that there was a growing sense of familiarity that emerged as a result of *"seeing familiar faces as they come through the door… they are all friendly and there is a camaraderie–you are not starting from zero."* (IP Ronny). This sense of 'family' was mutually felt from the school participants. For example, SP Brian appreciated the *"supportive"* staff at the venue adding that *"there's a real sense of caring for each other."* As IP Ronny commented, it has taught them to "*know that system now*" and that for the first couple of years it was about *"trying to put the systems in place."* However, now the school staff and students *"know exactly who to come to"* with roles and practices becoming clearer and more familiar.

When asked to reflect on how the partnership has evolved, participants from both groups commonly referred to the emergence of *"trust and respect."* For the industry participants, respect was expressed as gratitude for the students and the school staff who were *"respecting our venue as our house"* (IP Ronny). Whereas for school participants it was about how *"the techie guys, care about the show... and the girls* (the students) *very much kind of respect that"* (SP Brian).

SP Sally, the school's wardrobe manager, valued the mutual feeling of respect that had emerged between the school and the venue staff: *"You know they appreciate us and we appreciate them."* However, she also added that there was a time when the two groups had to *"get to know the other."*

> *I think our first couple of years there were huge trust issues and you know they were,*
> *they didn't trust us, they thought we were a 'high school.' (SP Sally)*

This growing relationship whereby the school could now count on the venue staff to *"fulfill their role"* so the staff and the students *"get a successful season in the theatre"* demonstrates the gradual emergence of a trusting partnership based on mutual respect for, and learning about, each other's boundaries, needs and values.

Another feature of 'The Shared Space' was 'feeling invested' in the partnership process and the professional rewards (characterized by the aesthetic production quality) that came from working in a professional venue. This was important to the school's wardrobe manager, Sally because *"it's great to get feedback from people saying we didn't even know it was a high school show."* Drama teacher, Brian added that this was a *"massive benefit"* because *"it just raises the professional standard so much"*. From an industry perspective, Bill articulated a feeling of *"involvement"* with the HSM and venue staff *"actually enjoy working on the show"* because *"it's organized, it looks good, it sounds great."*

Finally, 'The Shared Space' is a place where 'collaborative rewards' flourish and that over time *"far outweigh the challenges."* For the venue staff, the presence of the students in the theatre created a collective and *"infectious energy:"*

> *The benefit to the theatre is that you get that energy coming in from the kids that filters*
> *through the whole establishment to the front house to the people in the bar to the, you*
> *know the car park attendants. (IP Bill)*

Encouraging students into the industry was a shared reward that made the partnership more meaningful *"when it encouraged some of those girls or even one of those girls to come into the industry."* Bill (IP) added:

> *I think it's good for the girls from the school to realize that there is a career in the*
> *theatre — either as an actor or a technician or a set designer or a lighting designer.*
> *(IP Bill)*

IP Ronny supported this view and agreed that the opportunity provided for students to experience the industry in a 'real life' setting encouraged *"some of them to go further and if they do that's great."* However, Ronny added that if they don't then they could well become *"the future audiences that generate and keep pushing this industry along."*

Another major benefit (as expressed by the school participants) is the wider community exposure that the school receives by staging the musical production in a professional venue. Drama teacher, Brian felt that the community exposure that the show receives would not be possible if the school staged the production in their own venue because *"it would be limited in terms of publicity,"* whereas for this show *"we put a massive banner on front of (the venue), advertise our show you know one to two months before that." SP* Sally pointed out that the students *"all wear their production t-shirts"* throughout the ten-days in the venue and *"it's like this massive advert walking through the streets all the time."*

Mapping the stories of the participants' experiences of partnerships and untangling the contextual complexities has revealed the ways that this site-specific inter-sectorial partnership has transformed into a mutually beneficial enterprise. With the use of rich descriptions and multilayered themes, many of the enablers and constraints (summarized in Table 2) to successful partnerships have been illuminated.

Table 2

Summary of enablers and constraints

Enablers	Constraints
A collective investment in quality (pedagogical and aesthetic) outcomes.	Limiting preconceptions brought in from past professional experiences of working in similar partnership contexts.
School group seeking advice and being open to feedback.	Unrealistic expectations (budgetary/time) of what can be achieved in a professional venue.
Venue staff making allowances and being patient when working with school groups.	Mishaps in scheduling and inadequate preparation.
School group outsourcing crucial production roles to industry professionals.	Unconscious 'triggers' caused by critical incidents or challenging experiences.
Enhanced roles (mentor and co-collaborator) for industry professionals.	
Time to grow into a mutually beneficial enterprise.	

Discussion

In this study, theatre was considered as a place of learning and the role of two seemingly disparate groups interrogated for the ways that effective arts education partnerships could be developed. For the school group in particular, 'fitting an education model into an industry world' was a challenge, while for the industry staff, having the school in the venue altered standard working patterns. Most arts education partnership literature focuses on the two groups (industry and education) configured in the reverse; arts industry – commonly 'foreigners' usually enter into education spaces (Hanley, 2003) through artists in residency programs in schools (Bamford, 2006). However, few of these programs are based on a shared model of sustainable development where there are mutually beneficial outcomes (Carlisle, 2011).

Further challenges to these partnerships included how limiting preconceptions based on unconscious cultural patterns or stereotypes (from both groups) were constraints to healthy working relationships. As Upitis (2005) describes, the longevity and popularity of these limiting views may be a contributing factor to why industry professionals still do not hold teachers of performing arts in high regard. Similarly, for the school staff, there was a preconception that industry staff didn't care about school shows in the same way they did when working on a professional show. These negative and often unexamined preconceptions from both industry and education may be the reason why these stereotypes still exist and partnership between these two different groups do not succeed.

The successful negotiation of this 'emergent' partnership of a school group in a professional venue described in this study was dependent on several key factors. First, the school group needed to prepare and adapt their traditional HSM practices and equip themselves as 'industry ready' to engage in a 'foreign' industry space. This was aided by adopting a fluid partnership process of role negotiation that encouraged the outsourcing of critical roles to industry professionals. From an industry perspective, theatre staff had to learn to adopt a different mindset and make allowances, including being patient and going at a slower pace to accommodate for the school group. However, working with education clients enhanced and expanded the industry professional's traditional roles through 'industry mentoring' and working as co-collaborators on a common artistic/pedagogical endeavor. Interestingly, it was these partnership experiences with the school group that provided potent professional learning not usually available to industry experts.

The findings from this study demonstrate how negative preconceptions (held by both groups) can be transformed through a positive partnership process if the school group is willing to thoroughly prepare, be realistic, listen and respond to industry advice and feedback. Similarly, the school group's view of working in partnership contexts with industry staff moved from a

place of mistrust to a place of trust and mutual respect because they felt the industry staff were aligned and supportive of the school group's pedagogical values.

The permeable boundaries (Bamford, 2006) between the two groups helped create a reciprocity of learning in which the pedagogical and aesthetic purpose of the event were running in tandem with each other and driving the partnership process (Seidel et al, 2009). This shared definition of 'quality' is highlighted in Bamford's (2006) work where she suggests connection between the aesthetic definition and educational one as being 'kin' in the realization of successful student outcomes. The enabling of these partnerships created 'The Shared Space' in which the outcomes were now being more realistically shared between two groups who normally respond to different imperatives. It is these combinations of factors that contribute to an enhanced arts education.

In this study, however, it was the element of 'time' that served as the greatest enabler for growth of these partnerships. Feelings of mistrust that had dominated early stages of the partnership process were replaced developmentally with an emerging sense of familiarity, trust and mutual respect. This finding is consistent with Maxine Greene's (2001) observation on the importance of taking time to get to know the individuals who inhabit these types of partnerships rather than just the institutions. The endurance of the seven-year partnership within this study provides an example of the quality that Bamford (2006) suggests is far more likely to result from a project that has occurred for at least two years. Unfortunately, most arts education research focuses on short term projects that are initiated from within arts industry and tertiary centers (Burnaford, 2001).

It is a recommendation of this study that provisions should be made by industry and education organisations to invest in long-term and sustained projects, for as this study has shown, given time, partnerships can potentially grow into positive, mutually beneficial enterprises. The provision of time has the potential to cultivate increased quality which may in turn facilitate the cultural change needed to shift dominant perceptions and the associated stereotypes of a 'high school' show, that engages the wider community to build social capital (Carslile, 2011) promoting healthier attitudes towards arts education through effective industry-education partnerships.

Conclusion

'The Shared Space' described in this study provides evidence of an emergent vision for art education partnerships where the responsibility for the overall quality of the event is shared by both groups in the partnerships' paradigm. We acknowledge that this research is one snapshot of the experiences of seven participants and the first author's reflections in "instances of social

action" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 290) collected during a ten-day period whilst staging a HSM in a professional venue. In addition, we also understand that in this research, the education and venue participants were from one homogeneous group representing one Australian high school and one professional venue. However, this approach allowed for richness and depth of the data. It is the richness and depth that Flyvberg (as cited in Riessman, 2004) outweighs any claims of transferability or generalizability in social science research. A wider set of participants (from multiple schools and industry settings) over a longer period of time, particularly research that outlines and defines the needs of education within these partnerships, is required for more substantial and mutually beneficial partnerships to occur in the future (Burnaford, 2001).

The aim of this study was to understand the ways that arts education partnerships function and to use these findings to add to the knowledge of effective arts education practice. This study found that–over time–imitating socio-cultural forces at work in these partnership contexts may be replaced with positive and effective working relationships that transcend traditional role classifications and are replaced with enhanced roles for both industry and education groups. These new roles see industry and education groups sharing the responsibility via a new vision for arts education partnerships in which industry and education values for quality (aesthetic and educational) are equally shared and negotiated amidst permeable boundaries. The mutual benefits that flowed in this study as a result of the two groups reaching 'The Shared Space' is only achievable when awareness and self-criticality is combined with open communication and a commitment over time from all key stakeholders in arts education partnerships.

References

Bamford, A. (2006). *The wow factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education.* Germany: Waxmann Verlag.

Booth, E. (2003). Seeking definition: What is a teaching artist? *Teaching Artist Journal*, 1(1), 5-12.

Brook, P. (1968). *The Empty Space*, New York.

Touchstone**.** Burnaford, G. (2001). Rethinking professional development: "Action research" to build collaborative arts programming. In *Charles Fowler Colloquium "Innovation in Arts Education: The Art of Partnership."* Retrieved January (Vol. 2, p. 2008).

Burnaford, G. (2001). Rethinking professional development: "Action research" to build collaborative arts programming. In *Charles Fowler Colloquium "Innovation in Arts Education: The Art of Partnership."* Retrieved January (Vol. 2, p. 2008).

Carlisle, K. (2011). Arts education partnerships: Informing policy through the development of

culture and creativity within a collaborative project approach. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 112 (3), 144-148.

Creswell, J. W. (2006). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Davey, D. J. (2010). *Musical Theatre in Secondary Education: Teacher* Preparation, *Responsibilities, and Attitudes,* (Doctoral dissertation). Arizona State University, Arizona, USA.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (3rd Ed.). California: Sage Publications.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An Overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 12*(1). Retrieved from:

http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095

Ellis, C. S., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject. In N. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Geertz, C. (1973). 'Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture'. In C. Geertz (Ed.). *The Interpretation of cultures.* New York: Basic books.

Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute lectures on aesthetic education*. Williston: Teachers College Press.

Hanley, B. (2003). The good, the bad, and the ugly—arts partnerships in Canadian elementary schools. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 104(6), 11-20.

Hastrup.K. (2004). *Action Anthropology in the Company of Shakespeare.* Copenhangen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen

Janicki, L. J. (1982). *Musical theatre in high school* (Doctoral dissertation). California State University, California, USA.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Riessman, C. K. (2007). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. California: Sage Publications.

Robinson, C. & Poole, G. (1990). Producing musical theater for high school. Retrieved from:
    http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED327890.pdf.

Seidel, S., Tishman, S., Winner, E., Hetlands, L. & Palmer, P. (2009). *The Qualities of*
    Quality: Understanding quality in Arts Education. Retrieved the Wallace Foundation:
    www.wallacefoundation.org

Somerville, M., Power, K., & de Carteret, P. (2009). *Landscapes and Learning: Place Studies*
    for a Global World. Rotterdam: Sense.

Somerville, M., Davies, B., Power, K., Gannon, S., & de Carteret, P. (2011). *Place,*
    Pedagogy, Change. Rotterdam: Sense.

Street, A. (1997). *The practice of journaling for teachers, nurses, adult educators and other*
    professionals (pp. 1-49). Adelaide: Flinders Institute for the study of Teaching.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2006). *Road Map for Arts*
    Education. Retrieved from**:**
    http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Arts_Edu_
    RoadMap_en.pdf

Upitis, R. (2005). Experiences of Artists and Artist-Teachers Involved in Teacher
    Professional Development Programs. *International Journal of Education & the Arts.*
    6(8), 1-12.

Van Houten, K. E. Z. (1999). *High school musical theatre and the meaning students give to*
    their involvement, (Doctoral dissertation). New York University, New York, USA.

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching Lived Experience* (2nd ed.). California: Left Cost Press.

Van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of Practice. Walnut Creek,* California: Left Cost
    Press.

Williams, T. S. (2003). *Responsibilities and preparation of public school secondary music*
    specialists in teaching musical theatre, (Doctoral dissertation). Kent State University.
    Ohio, USA.

About the Authors

Matthew Aris is a teacher, director, and researcher with extensive experience producing shows in a variety of education and industry contexts. As Director and co-founder at The Performing Arts Link, a new business aimed at bringing education and industry groups together in

working relationships, Matthew is helping to enhance the quality (both process and product) of school performance events.

Peter Wright is Associate Professor of Arts Education and Research Methods at Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia. He works across the Arts with a commitment to personal, social and cultural inquiry, agency, education and expression, health and wellbeing. Central to this work is an interest in socio-aesthetic pedagogy, social justice, and social inclusion, and ways they are mediated in and through the Arts. He is recently published in *Arts Education Policy Review, Arts & Health, IJEA,* and *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education.*

Robin Pascoe is Senior Lecturer in Arts and Drama Education, School of Education, Murdoch University, Perth Western Australia. He teaches Drama and the Curriculum (Secondary, Teaching the Arts (Early Childhood and Primary) and Engaging Communities through Drama. Robin's research interests include: arts and drama education, teacher education, curriculum and curriculum implementation, assessment in the arts and drama. Robin is also currently President of IDEA, International Drama/Theatre and Education Association. He has been a curriculum writer and worked as policy officer and Superintendent in the Arts, Department of Education Western Australia.