



Beyond Accreditation:
Advocating for Lifelong
Learning through
Community Arts

Anne Reardon-James

About me

- MA(Ed), PGCE, Fellow of SET, Associate CIPD, EdD student
- Almost 20 years experience in education
- Community tutor, project leader, IQA, quality assurance manager
- Diverse experience – colleges, charities, training providers, university, prison and probation service
- Subjects – arts and crafts, psychology, sociology, employability skills, maths, English, ICT, learning and development





Early years...

- 'Cut my teeth' at WEA (Workers Educational Association)
- Social justice – democratic learner led approach
- Partnerships with MIND, Salvation Army, Age Connects, Stroke Association

Benefits of community arts education

- Community
- Non-judgemental space
- Friendships, laughter & joy
- Tackling loneliness and deprivation
- Providing structure and support
- Developing confidence and skills





Articles

Beyond Traditional Art Education: Transformative Lifelong Learning in Community-Based Settings with Older Adults

Pamela Harris Lawton  & Angela M. La Porte 

Pages 310-320 | Published online: 25 Nov 2015

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2013.11518905>

 References

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Abstract

Quality community-based art education programs for older adults over the age of 50 should exploit the broad range of interests and cognitive abilities of participants by utilizing adult education theory, brain research, and the best practices of adult art education programs. We consider a developing paradigm on the cognitive abilities of the mature mind and incorporate transformative learning theory to engage the creative potential of older adults participating in these art programs. Older adults have a wealth of knowledge and experience, a broad range of interests and cognitive abilities, and a unique vantage point: the wisdom acquired with age. The reinterpreting of past experiences and understanding them in a new way may provide meaningful creative inspiration. Transformative experiences can occur for adults across cultures and generations through activities such as storytelling, social interaction, and collaborative artmaking.

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Benefits of the arts

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00393541.2013.11518905>

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Participants' perspectives on the social bonding and well-being effects of creative arts adult education classes

Eiluned Pearce 

Pages 42-59 | Received 05 Jan 2016, Accepted 20 May 2016, Published online: 12 Jul 2016

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2016.1193550>



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Abstract

Background: Evidence suggests that adult education classes have a positive impact on well-being, but whether this is true for all course activities is unknown.

Methods: A UK adult education charity ran four singing classes, two craft classes and a creative writing class for the purpose of this study. Written responses to open questions about health, well-being and social lives were collected from participants at the end of the 7-month courses.

Results: The classes enhanced well-being by improving mood and providing a sense of belonging. The classes helped participants develop self-confidence, create and strengthen relationships, and encouraged more active lives. Participants valued meeting people from their community and used these ties to access information about local opportunities. However, some participants reported negative experiences linked to unfavourable self-other comparison.

Conclusions: These results highlight how regular adult education classes involving creativity can enhance well-being and help community integration regardless of the subject studied.

Keywords: [Self-efficacy](#) [social capital](#) [mental health](#)

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17533015.2016.1193550>

Original Articles

Impact of Arts Participation on Health Outcomes for Older Adults

Melissa Castora-Binkley , Linda Noelker, Thomas Prohaska & William Satariano

Pages 352-367 | Published online: 28 Dec 2010

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/19325614.2010.533396>

 Full Article

 Figures & data

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to present findings from a literature review on the documented health benefits of arts programs for older adults. A systematic literature review was conducted to examine research publications on participatory arts programs for older adults and their reported impact on health outcomes. A total of 2,205 articles were found. Of these, 11 were eligible for inclusion. The review describes the effects of participation in art programs on a variety of health outcomes. The small number of empirical studies documenting the health impact and limitations in their design prohibit broad generalizations, however, findings suggest there are physical and mental health benefits for older adults from arts participation.

Q Keywords: health promotion creative arts older adults health benefits participatory activity

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19325614.2010.533396>

Empowerment and arts participation for people with mental health needs

Jenny Secker, Helen Spandler, Sue Hacking, Lyn Kent, Jo Shenton ▾

Journal of Public Mental Health

ISSN: 1746-5729

Article publication date: 1 December 2007

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ALTMETRICS



Abstract

Empowerment has been described as the 'holy grail' of health promotion. This article describes an evaluation of arts participation for people with mental health needs that both measured empowerment outcomes and explored the processes by which positive outcomes were achieved, through six qualitative case studies. For the outcomes study, 62 arts and mental health project participants returned a questionnaire, including a measure of empowerment, soon after joining their project and again six months later. The follow-up questionnaire asked participants to rate the impact of their arts involvement on the issues addressed in the measure. Six diverse arts and mental health projects took part in the case studies. Interviews with project participants explored what they saw as the benefits of arts involvement and how these came about. Results from the outcomes study showed significant improvements in empowerment and were suggestive of a strong causal link with arts participation. Analysis of the case study interviews revealed five processes through which benefits relating to empowerment were brought about. We argue that psychological empowerment is in itself important for people with mental health needs. In addition, our case studies indicate that some arts and mental health projects do empower participants at a social as well as individual level.

Related articles

[Evaluation of edna: arts and dance for older people](#)
Ann Skingley et al., Working with Older People, 2016

[Creative practice in a group setting](#)
Elaine Argyle et al., Mental Health and Social Inclusion, 2015

[Promoting children's mental, emotional and social health through contact with nature: a model](#)
Cecily Jane Maller, Health Education, 2009

[The Phenomenology of Institutionalizing Change](#)
Dela Pena et al., Advanced Science Letters, 2017

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Benefits of the arts

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/17465729200700024/full/html>

Funding cuts...

- Between 2011/12 and 2016/17 the Welsh Government cut revenue grant funding to the FE sector by £22 million.
- In real terms, funding for part-time provision has seen a reduction of 71% over the same period.
- As a result, funding for part-time FE was reduced by 37.5% in 2014/15 and the remaining funding was cut again by a further 50% in 2015/16.
- [\(GSR 2022\)](#)

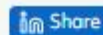


WEA responds to Institute for Fiscal Studies - Annual report on education spending in England: 2023

"The drastic decline in funding for community-based adult learning over the last decade is hitting the poorest hardest" says WEA CEO, Simon Parkinson in response to the latest report on education spending from the Institute for Fiscal Studies.



December 11th 2023 | 5 Minute read



2/5/2025

Funding cuts...



Bread and Roses

Suffrage – Helen Todd
Trade Union movement



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Call to action!



Thank you for
listening!

Any questions?



Let's stay in
touch!

areardonjames@gmail.com

X/Twitter @areardonjames

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www.linkedin.com/in/anne-reardon-james