

Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

**Art
Works** | Developing
Practice in
Participatory
Settings

**ArtWorks: Training and Development
Providers and Opportunities**
Working Paper 5

Mary Schwarz
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Preface

ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings is a Special Initiative of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation established in 2011 and continuing to the end of 2014. It is a workforce development scheme that seeks to meet the needs of artists at different stages in their careers – from the aspiring young artist embarking on training, to experienced practitioners who wish to progress their output. It is seeking to build on good practice to enhance the existing development infrastructure.

The overall aim of ArtWorks is:

To support the initial training and continuous professional development of artists working in participatory settings. This will enhance the quality of people's engagement in arts-led activity and the arts, and create a more professional and confident sector whose work is valued and seen as important.

Key Objectives:

- To support partnership working and pathfinder projects to develop, pilot and embed training and continuous professional development opportunities for artists working in participatory settings at all stages in their careers and develop the support infrastructure.
- To develop a better understanding of what constitutes quality in the work through sharing good practice across art forms and demonstrating positive outcomes for participants engaged in arts-led activity and the arts.

- To gather, document and disseminate compelling evidence of positive impact as part of a wider strategy to achieve significant shifts, nationwide, through the facilitation of shared thinking across agencies and settings about workforce development issues for artists working in participatory settings.

Within the programmes of work undertaken by the five pathfinder partnerships, a large body of learning has accrued over the first 18 months of activity and we have commissioned six Working Papers that seek to crystallise this learning in clusters:

- Arts Practice in Participatory Settings
- Artists - Testing Professional Development Methodologies
- Artist Consultations
- Training and Development Providers and Opportunities
- Understanding Participant's Views
- Qualifications, Codes of Practice and Standards

This learning has been gained and reported in different ways that can be defined as follows:

- Those that have involved the pathfinders partnerships reflecting upon what they know.
- Those that have combined models (like peer mentoring, Action Learning sets) which are meant to have an outcome in their own right, and tweaked the design and used the output from those models to elucidate research questions.
- Those that have undertaken (with a range of approaches) straightforward research, expressed as such to those subjects who are contributing to it, framed formally by research questions, with data collection, analysis and synthesis in a typical format.

The ArtWorks website contains links to all of the material published to date.

The purpose of this suite of Working Papers is to assimilate and summarise this learning and extrapolate key messages so that the learning can inform not only the ArtWorks programme, but also the wider community of practice with an interest in this work. The papers were all commissioned at the mid-point in the ArtWorks programme and therefore provide a snapshot of the work and the learning at that stage.

Further reports supplement these papers and elucidate our work in different ways. These include the *ArtWorks Interim Evaluation Report* (dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012a) and the first Working Paper which provided an overview, *ArtWorks: learning from the research* (Kay, 2012).

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1 Introduction

This Working Paper focuses on the ArtWorks research and activity exploring the current situation in relation to training and continuing professional development provision in the field of arts practice in participatory settings. The *ArtWorks Evaluation Interim Report* notes that this is one of the most 'formal' clusters of research work. As well as recommending that overall learning is drawn out from across the research and other relevant ArtWorks activity, the report proposes it is important to share this learning, ensure that future solution design responds to it and to consider if, why and how the research should be updated in the future (dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012: 56).

The relevant documentation can be grouped into three areas:

- further and higher education course audits and case studies (Consilium, 2012 a, b and c; Sellers, 2011 and Smethurst, 2013)
- academics' perceptions of arts in participatory settings (Mitchell et al., 2012; Sellers, 2011)
- training and development provision and opportunities more generally (Consilium, 2012a; Deane, 2013; Johnston, 2013; Leatherdale, 2012; Lowe, 2001; Sellers, 2011 and 2012a and b)

2 Context

ArtWorks is a workforce development scheme established after initial research by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation into the 'arts in participatory settings' that examined the characteristics of, and challenges faced by, the sector (Burns, 2010). This research evidenced that work growing out of community arts practice in the 60s and now more commonly described as *participatory* has evolved over time and has had:

...profound effect on the arts establishment through the development of infrastructure and the growing professionalism of the field ... forty years on artists across all art forms are now engaging in a diverse range of practices and we can see an emerging body of practice in individual art forms that has now created a burgeoning sector of work for artists who wish to engage with people (ibid: 7).

The report goes on to estimate that between '200,000 and 250,000 might be a realistic estimate for the number of artists regularly engaging in work that requires them to facilitate the learning and creativity of others (ibid: 8).'

It concludes that:

... context is creating greater demand for artists to work in participatory settings... and it is arguable that artists are in greater demand than ever

before to make interventions in both formal and informal settings... Artists are being asked to work in a hugely diverse range of participatory settings...and are now playing an integral role in the learning experiences of people across the whole age spectrum (ref).

However, the sector is fragmented and there is a lack of both a robust evidence base and also recognised training routes for artists: factors which have contributed to variable experiences for participants.

The work of training and development providers, and the learning opportunities available, is therefore of great importance in meeting the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's ambition to enhance the quality of people's engagement in arts led activity by creating a more professional and confident sector whose work is valued and seen as important.

3 Learning to date

This paper focuses on ArtWorks commissioned research about further and higher education sector, and also references opportunities provided by arts and other organisations, including the work of ArtWorks pathfinders which have been testing and piloting professional development activity. The latter area is the detailed subject of *Working Paper 3* (Taylor, 2013) and there are also particular connections with *Working Paper 7* considering qualifications, codes of practice and standards (Salamon, 2013).

There are three broad types of training and development providers for arts practice in participatory settings:

- institutions in the further and higher education sectors
- arts organisations and others with a specialism or policy drive in the work, including those who may be employers or commissioners of artists
- artists themselves, as 'self-providers'

Training and development opportunities range across the formal, non-formal and informal. While the ArtWorks reports are not consistent in the use of this terminology, it is useful to note the definitions offered by OECD (2013) and used by many organisations, that formal learning is intentional, organised and structured, with clear learning objectives; non-formal learning is intentional and often gained through organised activity; and informal learning is not intentional or organised, but rather 'learning by experience' or just 'experience'.

Training and development opportunities in arts practice in participatory settings are provided in the form of:

- accredited and non-accredited courses of different durations and at various learning and qualification levels
- seminars and conferences
- distance and online teaching
- peer to peer networking and conversations
- project collaborations, including less experienced practitioners working alongside more experienced ones
- placements, 'live projects' and work experience
- internships and apprenticeships
- shadowing
- observation
- coaching and mentoring
- use of toolkits, research and online resources
- reflective and reflexive practice, including journal keeping, through which artists take learning directly from the project work in which they are engaged

3.1 Further and Higher Education Institutions

Three commissioned research projects give a picture of further and higher education institution providers on a national or cross-national scale: one covers Scotland (Consilium, 2012a and b), another Wales (Sellers, 2011) and the third the whole of the United Kingdom (Consilium, 2012c). These audits cover both undergraduate and

postgraduate provision. While postgraduate provision can be seen as continuing professional development (CPD) rather than initial training provision, the researchers did not explicitly report on other types of CPD that institutions may be offering, for example through knowledge exchange or public engagement programmes.

Factors such as varying methodologies, respondents' different interpretations of arts practice in participatory settings and potential overlap in relation to provision in Scotland and Wales mean these reports do not provide a consistent or complete picture of provision, but nevertheless represent useful snapshots in time, not least given the fluidity of provision in terms of courses starting, changing and ending. Consilium describe their UK mapping exercise as 'a barometer of the extent of the sector' (2012: 49).

The following are the numbers of arts courses identified that include at least some element of support for working in participatory settings, with the split between further education (FE) and higher education (HE) – undergraduate and postgraduate – as noted:

- Scotland: 16 FE; 38 HE comprising 31 at undergraduate level and seven at postgraduate level (Consilium, 2012a)
- Wales: 13 FE; 27 HE comprising 17 at undergraduate level and 10 at postgraduate level (Sellers, 2011)
- UK: 29 FE; 167 HE; three FE/HE (Consilium, 2012c)

When we consider the research data gathered about these courses in terms of content, art form, location and availability, two words are key: *variety* and *variation*.

Variety is apparent in terms of course content (both type and amount). In Wales, Sellers (op. cit.) found examples of modules which were skill based (e.g. dance pedagogy for educational and community settings, opera and voice teaching and workshop skills); modules that covered a more contextual approach (e.g. theatre work in participatory or educational settings; music and society module in a music technology course); and also specialist whole courses, in areas such as in arts in health and arts in educational settings.

In Scotland, Consilium (2012c: 57) noted that some courses provide foundation skills i.e. those generally transferable to the world of work, such as communication and group work skills, rather than specialist skills relating to working in participatory settings. The work of Mitchell et al. in the North East of England also evidences courses where ‘a minimum set’ (2012: 5) of skills relevant to facilitating art work are taught within professional studies modules.

The majority of courses audited in Scotland (Consilium, 2012a) include practical training (e.g. workshops with visiting practitioners) and placements, which vary across institutions in terms of set up, structure, duration and support mechanisms. Placements can be voluntary or mandatory elements of courses and take place in a wide range of settings. Some institutions offer students the opportunity to experience a number of placements in different settings. In the North East of England, some courses also offer practical opportunities for engaging in participatory work through placements and internships, although challenges are noted in terms of setting up these sorts of experiences, for example because of institutional bureaucracy (Mitchell et al., op.cit: 16) or the situation of partner organisations, as experienced by one London-based institution:

Central [School of Speech and Drama, University of London] remain alert to the impact of the current funding climate on cultural sector organisations. Some host organisations may struggle to survive as we move towards a scenario of further cuts (Smethurst, 2013: 11).

In Consilium’s larger mapping across the United Kingdom (2012c), mini-case studies emphasise the varying course ‘offers’: from individual modules to specific course strands to whole specialist courses, where content includes the political, social and economic contexts of work in participatory settings, as well as the facilitation and arts skills required. The report states:

Just over two fifths (43%) of those respondents providing a rating stated their course had a primary focus on supporting artists to work in participatory settings, 12% a secondary focus and 45% a partial focus. Of those

respondents to the survey able/willing to provide a percentage value as to the degree to which their course focused in supporting artists to work in participatory settings, values ranged from 1% to 100% with just under one quarter (24%) of provision recording the highest possible value (i.e. a total focus). The average focus on supporting artists to work in participatory settings amongst respondents to date is 51% (ibid: 36).

The reports all evidence *variation* in provision in terms of art form. In Wales (Sellers, op.cit.), there are no circus/carnival further or higher education arts courses at all and no craft, visual arts, photography, writing, illustration or animation courses offer skills development in participative practice. Overall, opportunities are limited, with performing arts subjects the best represented (37% theatre/drama and 23% music) and the only dance course available also offering participatory training.

Consilium's study for ArtWorks Scotland (2012a) shows theatre courses again providing the greatest number of opportunities providing some level of skills support for artists working in participatory settings (14 courses across FE and HE), followed by music and visual arts (nine courses each). Their larger study (2012c) similarly showed theatre to be the art form with the highest percentage of identified courses (39%) followed by music and visual arts (each at 33%).

In Wales, variation in provision is also evident on a geographical basis, with a concentration in South West Wales, where 78% of participatory skills development is offered (31 out of 40 opportunities) with 15% in the North East of Wales and the rest of provision scattered (Sellers, op.cit: 19). Consilium (2012c: 23) reference variation in provision year on year, in the context of the HE funding reforms which are a particular driver for institutional decisions about courses – and this is of course also true for FE.

What the qualitative research tells us about these FE and HE providers, particularly in terms of the *views* and *values* of those deciding on, devising and delivering courses, is also important to consider.

Sellers finds that 'Decisions to offer training in participative arts appear to depend on the interests of individual leaders' (op.cit: 20). Likewise, Consilium report that 'the rationale for course development in many institutions...seems to be dependent on individuals rather than organisational policy or strategy' (2012c: 61) while Mitchell et al. (op.cit: 20) note 'some [courses have] been established...often following top level visionary decisions'. Smethurst reports all four case study London-based HE institutions have an 'institutional commitment' to delivering courses focusing on participatory arts practice, with support from 'senior management level' (Smethurst, op.cit: 2).

The past experience of course leaders also appears to be significant, as they are more likely to offer participatory skills training for students if they themselves have been involved in the work (Sellers, op.cit: 20). Those with no experience, who do not offer modules in participatory work, justify this decision as the need to prepare students for industry and a professional career, in effect suggesting that 'community, or participative, arts is not a professional career' (ibid: 20). Other tutors interviewed expressed views that the skills and qualities needed by participatory artists cannot be taught. As Sellers says:

Clearly much needs to be done to change attitudes at an institutional level if they (ie tutors) are to provide training for future participatory artists (ibid: 20).

Academic's attitudes were found to be significant in the research by Mitchell et al. (op.cit.) undertaken for ArtWorks North East. The team interviewed 26 academics from five universities, looking specifically at their perceptions of arts practice in participatory settings. The interviewees ranged from professors to visiting lecturers; worked across creative writing, media, dance and drama, visual arts and music; and represented a mix of experience in relation to teaching in this field. Interview questions were focused on the following key areas:

- understanding of this field of practice
- involvement in, and personal motivation for, the practice
- influences and approaches in developing course content

- cited barriers to inclusion of practice in participatory settings within degree programmes
- employability

Academics offered a wide variety of definitions and understanding of the term 'participatory practice', which for some was completely unfamiliar. While some thought separating a passive involvement in an art form from an active one was specific to our culture (ibid: 3), the range of understandings of 'audience', 'participants', 'collaborative practice' and 'socially engaged' practice reveal more about a general lack of awareness of historical and current debates about practice rather than an active engagement in those debates.

Motivations for involvement in participatory practice included 'a passion for involving people in the community in creative work... political commitment... facilitating change' (ibid: 4) but also personal financial imperatives; for some academics, there was no interest in this area of work.

Valuing the role of arts in regeneration as part of higher education's contribution to local and regional development positively influenced the inclusion of participatory practice in some courses, while views about what constituted the 'mainstream' arts industry meant little time for the practice on other courses (ibid: 4).

Provision of relevant skills development (e.g. working with groups, understanding differing participant needs, ethical issues, co-creation) ranged from little to extensive coverage. Mitchell et al. helpfully link the influence of academics' past experience with current training provision:

The proportion of time devoted to helping students to gain these skills, and the difficulties reported by those academics who had 'fallen into' work in participative settings without gaining the skills as students, would seem to suggest to us, however, that it is important to focus on these skills to some degree, and that, at the very least, students and academics alike should be clear what expertise is needed if the job is to be done well (ibid: 67).

Reasons cited for lack of focus on practice in participatory settings in courses include institutional policies; difficulties in recruiting experienced staff; lack of student interest and demand; and also 'a failure to recognise it as a specialism in some places' (Ibid 5).

Issues of isolation – between tutors within institutions and between institutions and other organisations – also affect the potential development of relevant curriculum content and delivery, with the latter issue also being referenced in other reports:

There needs to be greater dialogue between educational providers and art organisations to discuss skills that artists needed, and the best way to prepare early career artists for their future careers (Sellers, op.cit: 20).

A very strong point was made about the apparent disjunction between what undergraduates learn about Participatory Arts practice during their study, and what they need to function as professional artists post graduation with a 'protean' or 'portfolio' career...the importance of 'situating' (HE) learning inside the practices being learned about, rather than in 'ivory towers' removed from actual practices, was recognised as being essential to prepare undergraduates for employment (ArtWorks North East, 2012: 12-13).

It is suggested that greater HE and employment sector connectivity could help address an inconsistency between training provision and work opportunities:

Overall, training for artists looking to develop skills in participative settings is poor...It is surprising that opportunities to develop such skills are low because colleges and universities often suggest 'community arts' as a career option for early career artists. The majority of training providers are suggesting career options without providing early career artists with the necessary skills, or experience, to work successfully in this sector (Sellers, op.cit: 19).

Consilium note some progress in this respect as their consultation:

... revealed that institutions are making efforts to work more closely with the sector to meet their requirements...support in this area is widely acknowledged to work best when it's delivered by people who also practice these skills as part of their own practice, which is increasingly typical with the employment of part time, freelance lecturers common place (Consilium, 2012c: 56).

In terms of the employability agenda, Mitchell et al. (op.cit) found a mix of views, in that some academics (and students) see the work as 'second class' (historically especially within the visual arts), while others recognise that for many graduates it is a common career route and for other graduates, teaching and facilitation will complement other practice throughout their portfolio working lives, particularly within the performing arts.

Consultations with some (graduate) artists evidence a perceived 'lack of adequate careers advice ... [which gave] a false view of what life as an artist could be and failed to show arts in a participatory context as a viable and valuable option...[and there would be] benefit from having more contact with industry professionals during the course of their training (Leatherdale, 2012: 10). However, Consilium cite undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at Goldsmiths, University of London as good examples of researched provision that seeks to respond to artists' working practices and the requirements of employers (Consilium, 2012c: 50).

Placement and other work related experiences opportunities (as noted above) are cited as significant in terms of employability. As Smethurst reports:

All HEIs agreed that the live experience of delivering a project in the community is crucial and enriching for the students' experience, and indeed some wish to develop and broaden the range of community contexts and partnerships on offer (Smethurst, op.cit: 3).

In their UK study, Consilium found 'just over half of courses (56%) provide an assessed placement compared to 14% facilitating a non-assessed placement' (2012c: 43), giving an indication of the value placed on this mode of learning. They

note 'a distinct movement (amongst HE institutions and staff in particular) towards incorporating work-based learning within new and existing provision' (ibid: 49) and found that:

Where placements have been seen to work best they have been closely monitored and assessed by the institution in relation to a framework linked to agreed outcomes and objectives with established partners (ibid: 58).

While there is a general acknowledgement that practice in participatory settings is 'a growing employment option' there is, however, a range of views about 'the most appropriate time to introduce emerging and early career artists to the subject and related skills development required to work in participatory settings' (Consilium, 2012c: 51). Mitchell et al. found that:

...most academics involved in courses with a high PP (participatory practice) element valued the fact ... skills were part of the courses from an early date, but other minority views came from one person who considered that students need to be more mature before they can work within different communities, and another whole view was that anyone could gain these skills provided they were 'at ease with themselves' and 'have a certain kind of amiability and the ability to be in the same space as everyone else' (Mitchell, op.cit: 67).

Smethurst also noted 'readiness' to understand and appreciate participatory practice (op.cit: 2) as a live question among the London-based HEI case studies, with many consultees expressing the view that degree programmes should be 'focused on the students immersing themselves in their artform...[with] the acquisition of the skills, experience and practical knowledge required for participatory practice being something that students were better placed to develop slightly later in their careers' (ibid: 3).

Consilium's study gathered a range of views, which was summarised as follows:

There are broadly two trains of thought on this issue... that it is preferential to introduce and integrate a knowledge of participatory practice as early as

possible within undergraduate study programmes: and emerging artists should effectively learn their trade/artform before concentrating on the additional and often specialist skills required to work effectively in participatory settings.

There is consensus amongst providers however that both methods, but especially the former, should be characterised by a flexible learning journey which enables the individual to make an informed choice as to their direction and intensity of travel towards participatory practice (Consilium, 2012c: 52).

Providers recognise there are issues with attracting undergraduates to courses directly named 'participatory' in some way, but once students are recruited, integrating participatory practice early in courses is seen to 'help raise the profile and view...from a lower value fallback option to an alternative or complementary career path' (ibid: 52). Smethurst notes that the University of East London until recently offered a Community Arts Practice degree, with both the name of the degree and 'the perception that students undertaking this course were assumed to be weaker in their artistic practice and were unlikely to become artists' (Smethurst, op.cit: 13-14) making recruitment difficult. The institution now offers community arts practice modules as part of the theatre studies degree, renamed as 'Public Projects'.

While postgraduate provision offers opportunities for experienced artists to reflect on their practice and further their skills and experiences in new contexts, cost issues can inhibit take up of those opportunities – with this being the highest rated barrier cited in Consilium's survey of artists based in Scotland, at 83% of the 217 respondents (Consilium, 2012b: 11). Some institutions are exploring access to postgraduate provision on a modular basis and others are looking into providing short courses, which are less expensive for participants, although the 'business case must still stack up' for these (Consilium, 2012c: 62). Sellers notes that in Wales:

Suggestions of ... postgraduate training were popular, although most institutions do not offer such programmes, nor do institutions seem to be thinking of developing courses within this area. Funding cuts are playing a large role in stopping the development of new courses (op.cit: 20).

We have seen above how ArtWorks research and activity has mapped FE and HE training and development providers, giving us an insight into the *variety* of, and *variation* in, the opportunities and how the *values* and *views* of academics influence that offer, as well as the policy and funding landscapes. There is also an issue of *visibility* of provision, as evidenced by Consilium in their UK mapping exercise as including:

...substantial inconsistency in the level of undergraduate/postgraduate course detail about working in participatory settings provided on institutions' websites...general absence of clear contact details...difficulties in separating out...skills development that is specifically focused on helping artists work in participatory settings...absence of detail on elective opportunities and placements (Consilium, 2012c: 23-24).

3.2 Arts Organisations and Others

In terms of arts organisations and others as providers of training and development opportunities, Consilium's research for ArtWorks Scotland identified 58 opportunities (which included some offers from higher education, but which were not disaggregated as such). These comprised 38 instances of practice based training (including placements/traineeships and knowledge exchange); 11 of accredited CPD and nine short courses (including workshops, summer schools and residencies). The mapping exercise did not review all the knowledge exchange networks and forums that are recognised as providing formal and informal skill and experience sharing for practitioners alongside the role they play in raising sector profile (Consilium, 2012a: 15).

As with FE and HE courses, distribution of skills development opportunities across art forms is uneven, with the performing arts again most prevalent. Consilium noted 'there is no single access point for artists to obtain information about the range of skills development opportunities available' and 'the changing nature of provision can present challenges for artists wishing to identify and take-up suitable opportunities' (ibid: 16). This is reiterated through the artists' consultations reported in their *Phase 2 Final Report*, where 52% of respondents rated ease of finding out about course or

other professional development opportunities as only 'adequate', with a further 28% saying it was 'difficult' or 'very difficult' (Consilium, 2012b: 22).

Lack of information was also an issue in Wales, where Sellers found it difficult to assess CPD opportunities provided as ad hoc training by organisations, although she noted more training is offered in South Wales and overall is 'still behind ... opportunities in other parts of the UK' (op.cit: 21). A snapshot of provision during August to October 2011 found an introductory four day training course offered by a local council; a private company in partnership with a local council offering mentoring as part of an artist commission; an accredited short course in arts and health offered by an FE college; and two arts organisations working together to offer a free one day community arts training focusing on skills in community settings.

Lowe's *Audit of Practice 'Arts in Participatory Settings'* (2011) includes a table illustrating the types of training and development opportunities which the 12 arts organisations surveyed in the North East provide. Two organisations provide higher education opportunities, and other types of support are shadowing/mentoring; apprenticeships; internships; structured student and professional work experience placements; working with specific groups; masterclasses; policies and procedures; and opportunities to reflect on practice (ibid: 59).

Lowe notes that there is wide variation in terms of the level and range of training and development opportunities offered by different organisations. The importance of training and development is recognised, but there is an issue of lack of resources, particularly in relation to training for freelancers, whose training costs organisations are reluctant to support, as they are not 'their' artists. Given the current financial and funding landscape, Lowe notes the challenge that 'We may be entering a situation in which everyone is expecting someone else to offer training' (ibid: 60).

Other types of training and professional development opportunities are revealed through ArtWorks pathfinder consultations with artists. These include unaccredited work-based training (ArtWorks North East, op.cit); accredited art training for trainers (Sellers, op.cit.); organisation in-house training (e.g. trainee animateur schemes, integrated CPD within projects and programmes) and setting/ purpose/ intent specific

training (e.g. healthcare settings) (Deane, 2013); and summer schools, arts-specific learning groups, mentoring programmes, workshops and classes (Leatherdale op. cit.).

ArtWorks pathfinders have themselves been acting as training and development providers, both indirectly through consultation activity (which has through its processes provided useful opportunities for reflection on practice) or directly through the active testing of different methodologies for professional development. These are examined in full in *Working Paper 3* (Taylor, op.cit.) and include learning groups reflecting on collaborative projects; peer to peer networks for sharing experiences; peer-assisted learning (i.e. coaching and learning conversation pairings between more and less experienced artists); facilitated discussions supporting reflective practice; and a variety of 'laboratory' formats, from masterclasses to peer-to-peer sharing.

3.3 Artists

As noted at the onset, we also need to recognise that artists can be their own training and development providers – in terms of self-directed learning and a commitment to reflective and reflexive practice in taking and gaining learning 'on and from the job'. Consilium attributes this to a lack of specific focus on, or opportunities for, quality practice experience in participatory settings within undergraduate programmes:

The overwhelming majority of artists working in participatory settings are highly qualified in their arts practice. However their work in participatory settings tends largely to be self-taught (Consilium, 2012b: 1).

Self-teaching takes place in many ways. For instance, among the forms of CPD undertaken and noted by artists in the *Foundation for Community Dance Artists' Lab Report* (Leatherdale, op.cit: 19), were:

- actively observing another practitioner's sessions/classes
- reading art form specific journals
- keeping a reflective journal

- taking part in a production in any artistic capacity
- visiting a gallery/installation

Several artists interviewed for the ArtWorks Cymru *Artist case study report* describe ways of experiential learning, whether 'on the job' or more generally, such as the practitioner who joined a theatre group committee as a teenager: 'So, that is literally who I am because of that experience, y'know. So you *can* learn. That's where I learnt: through my **life experience**.' (Sellers, op.cit: 6).

Another says:

'I think for anybody who is new coming into the field, the best way of learning the skills is to **take part**...I didn't go into any formalised training. Obviously I'm trained as a singer and I have some teaching certificates that say I can teach, but that means absolutely nothing. It was just watching other people work, sharing ideas and actually doing it' (ibid: 8).

Many artists set great store by reflective practice, for instance '**always evaluating** what you've done' (ibid: 10) and also reflexive practice, as in '**having that ability to sort of go with things**', with the attitude that 'you can **learn by doing**' (ibid: 10). Another says, 'I obviously **seek to improve** the way in which I relate to people given each new encounter...It's every time I meet a group of people, I think it probably adds to the experience that I have and it changes, probably, the way that I deal with people in the next project...It's **experience**' (ibid: 12) and another 'You have a massive tool bag which you pick up along the way... you keep, **you keep developing**' (ibid: 14-15).

Consilium reference a 'wide body of literature providing guidance, ideas and practical tips for artists working in participatory settings...provide[s] a useful resource to support artists' CPD'. These sorts of opportunities are particularly dependent on self-directed learning, being 'contingent on the motivation and confidence of individual artists to review the material and use the learning to actively inform their practice' (Consilium, 2012a: 9). They note that with no systematic review of resource uptake

and evidenced impact, it is difficult to assess effectiveness of this particular type of CPD provision.

3.4 Best practice and gaps in provision

Artists' consultations and other reports have also provided the all important 'other side of the coin' in exploring training and education providers and opportunities, in terms of what works well – and where perceived and actual gaps exist. Significantly, Consilium note that while cost can be a barrier to taking up learning opportunities, artists are very motivated to undertake professional development – with two thirds having self-financed their training and three quarters being willing to pay for relevant, high quality training – although more specialist opportunities need to be available (2012b: 1). Consultations identified observation of, and mentoring from, active practitioners as the most effective learning methods (ibid: 1) and mentoring/coaching were highly valued by artists from the ArtWorks North East Peer Artist Learning project (ArtWorks North East, op.cit: 15).

Findings from the ArtWorks Navigator labs (covering artists working in range of art forms) were that:

The majority of artists...like to learn by doing on the job so they are looking for opportunities for situated learning (shadowing, assisting, placements, internships etc.) and peer learning (networking, mentoring, co-mentoring) (Johnston, 2013: 3).

In Wales, Sellers also found that artists':

...key learning experiences were not undertaken in a formal learning environment, but whilst working with other people or on projects... [they] feel that the practical nature of the job requires artists to develop their skills by 'doing' the job. For this reason, apprenticeships and mentoring opportunities are popular, and many artists would like to see organisations offer more opportunities of this kind (2012b: 18).

Mid and later career artists in particular felt that there was not enough suitable training (ibid: 18), which was also reflected by Lowe, among other gaps:

- Opportunities for early career artists to get ‘hand-on’ experience of participatory work
- Training for artists on how to work with different audiences and different groups of participants in different contexts
- Opportunities for mid and late career artists to refresh their practice – through reflection and development time
- Mechanisms to help develop greater consistency in the quality and rigour of artists’ work in this area
- Understanding how to measure and monitor outcomes (Lowe, op.cit: 60-61)

Artists taking part in the ArtWorks North East Peer Artist Learning project expressed strong views about the kinds of training that would be appropriate, focusing on how these need to be consistent with the practice itself – in other words, ‘dialogical’ (ArtWorks North East, op.cit: 12). This is a significant ‘isomorphic perspective’ as Kay summarises:

So the suggestion is that initial training and continuing professional development in AIPS [arts in participatory settings] must in their processes be congruent with AIPS principles and practices (so observation, placements, mentoring, coaching and dialogue again) (op.cit: 23).

Lastly, the importance of time and space for structured reflection with other artists was another key area of value noted (e.g. ArtWorks North East, op.cit: 23), something which employers also recognise as important and needing appropriate opportunities for support:

‘... we expect a practitioner to be constantly reflecting and learning from their work, something that is not necessarily demonstrated through participation in training (but there is a need for more reflective practice training)’ (Deane, op.cit: 9).

4 Considerations

This Working Paper draws together key points and issues from across a range of ArtWorks research and activity that provides learning about the current situation in relation to training and development providers and opportunities. As the *ArtWorks Evaluation Interim Report* (op.cit: 56) proposes, it is important that future solution design responds to this learning, so the following are offered as three key issues for consideration, in the context of next phase developments being pursued by the pathfinder partnerships.

The first issue to address is that of advocating and developing a recognition, understanding and appreciation of arts in participatory settings among training and development providers – and also employers, students and practitioners – as a ‘legitimate’ academic and work practice (or set of practices). To support this, consideration could be given to developing a ‘practice statement’, as a form of subject benchmark statement, and commissioning a robust history of the field.

Formal subject benchmark statements are published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). They:

... provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated... Some statements combine or make reference to professional standards required by external professional or regulatory bodies in the discipline.

Subject benchmark statements do not represent a national curriculum in a subject area. Rather, they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within an overall conceptual framework established by an academic subject community. They are intended to assist those involved in programme design, delivery and review and may also be of interest to prospective students and employers, seeking information about the nature and standards of awards in a subject area (QAA, 2013).

While it may be debatable that arts in participatory settings is a 'subject' per se, and of course training and development happens in contexts – and at levels – outside HE provision, using QAA's subject benchmarking framework may be helpful in providing a strong and considered description that respects, and does not constrain, the 'richness and diversity' (Lowe, op.cit: 5) of the work. The approach is not about creating a curriculum, which has been seen as a danger in terms of stifling creativity and setting specific responsiveness (Consilium, 2012b: 24).

The framework includes articulating defining principles; the nature and extent of the field; and the knowledge, understanding, attributes and skills required (at different achievement levels). A 'practice statement' that represents an 'overall conceptual framework' (as above) may be a helpful legacy contribution from learning about the practice from across the ArtWorks programme (and indeed, beyond). It could help address perceptions of participatory practice 'as being outside the main teaching and learning of arts skills and practices' (Mitchell et al. op cit: 23).

In terms of the academic and theoretical underpinning of arts practice in participatory settings, it is noticeable there is no 'history' category in the bibliographies and literature reviews produced within the ArtWorks programme (Schwarz, 2013: 7). Perhaps it is another timely legacy action to 'catch up' on what has been happening in the field since the publication, nearly thirty years ago, of Owen Kelly's *Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels* (1984) that has been called the 'classic history of the community arts movement in the UK' (ArtWorks Navigator, 2012: 4). This again may help in establishing the evidence base and credibility needed to advocate and profile the work successfully.

The second issue relates to the 'what, when and how' of training and development, which are examined briefly one by one below to draw out key considerations, while of course being closely inter-related.

For the 'what', while some ArtWorks research and activity seems to date have focused only on 'skills', the majority acknowledges that it is a range of particular skills, knowledge, attributes and qualities that need to be considered and also that some 'core competencies' for the practice could be identified and understood (Consilium, 2012b: 31). It is also significant that:

Consultation feedback ... from artists...often failed to make a distinction between the required skills, knowledge and qualities. The distinction is important as the process of supporting artists to acquire skills may be different to the approach to acquire knowledge or qualities (ibid: 31).

In this respect, consideration could be given to articulating better – and more consistently – these different elements of learning.

To address the issue of 'when' (i.e. in relation to pre-working and working life), a holistic approach and consideration of the whole lifelong learning journey of the artist and their development, bearing in mind the issues of content, timing, delivery and accessibility reported on, would be helpful.

For the 'how', it will be key to respond to evidence from the ArtWorks programme that preferred modes of learning are those that directly draw on, and reflect, the practice itself, i.e. modes that are situated and isomorphic.

Thirdly, we know there is a challenging policy and funding landscape for FE and HE, as well as arts organisations, and in this context, more active consideration could be given to maximise connections between different policy agendas such as widening participation; enterprise and employability; knowledge exchange; research impact; and public engagement. This approach could also both contribute to the first issue of developing legitimacy for arts work in participatory settings and also the second issue of ensuring the continuing relevance of training and development opportunities.

ArtWorks pathfinder partnerships are already starting to address these three key considerations. For instance, ArtWorks Scotland's work includes piloting approaches to raising the profile of work in participatory settings in undergraduate programmes and developing good practice guides for placements. ArtWorks Navigator is continuing to map CPD provision across the range of learning methods and other pathfinders are piloting opportunities at undergraduate and postgraduate levels: ArtWorks London with an 'arts leadership' undergraduate programme and ArtWorks North East with a modular based MA level CPD programme that can be accessed in 'bite sized chunks' on an accredited or non-accredited basis. ArtWorks Cymru is working with HEIs on developing a quality framework that can fit into training provision. In addition, the new pilot projects to be supported from the development fund arising from the *Changing the Conversation* conference in April 2013 are picking up on addressing and connecting such policy agendas.

The *ArtWorks Evaluation Interim Report* proposes a consideration of 'if, why and how' (op. cit: 56) the research about training and development providers and opportunities should be updated in the future. The mapping and audit work undertaken to date has represented an evolving approach to data collection (both quantitative and qualitative). We have also noted that to date there has not been a consistent approach to terminology in respect of formal, informal and non-formal learning – or indeed, to the types of training and development opportunities that have now been identified, as well as the different concepts of skills, knowledge, attributes, qualities and competencies. Gaps in knowledge and information in respect of training and development providers and opportunities are noted in the documentation, with reasons given for these gaps.

Given all this, if the research is to be updated in the future, there is now the opportunity to develop robust definitions and best practice methodologies drawn from work to date and apply these consistently across any research work undertaken, which will then better enable effective comparisons when tracking developments over time.

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Paul Hamlyn Foundation

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