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Work-related learning with the arts: developing work skills with the performing and visual arts

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Work-related learning with the Arts

Developing work skills with the performing and visual arts

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

Doctorate of Education

University of Wollongong

Claire Manning
BA, MEd

Faculty of Education
2007

Certification

I, Claire Manning, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Doctorate of Education, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other university or academic institution.

Claire Manning

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Abstract

In the last decade there has been a trend to incorporate the arts into work-related learning. The purpose of this study was to explore work-related learning utilising the arts to determine the benefits of this approach to learning. This study was designed to investigate how work related learners, predominately adult learners, could benefit from learning with artistic processes.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge and current limited research available on learning with the arts for work related development. Qualitative research was conducted in two arts environments, visual and performing, that offered work-related learning opportunities. This was undertaken using case study design where nine cases provided a snapshot of what was experienced when involved in work-related learning experiences.

An analysis of nine participants' perceptions of learning with the arts was undertaken firstly by exploring the individual learning from the personal, sociocultural and physical perspective using the Contextual Model of Learning developed by Falk and Dierking (2000). Secondly, to discover the potential of learning with the arts for work related skill development an analysis of the participants' reflections describing what was gained in these arts learning environments were analysed using the Employability Skills Framework (DEST, 2002).

Significant benefits for the individual adult learner are explored as a result of this study. For the workplace, this research presented evidence, based on participant perceptions, that employability skills could be developed when learning with the arts. Such skills identified during this study included assistance in the development of communication, initiative and enterprise, teamwork, self-management and lifelong learning skills.

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