

DEMOS

Consultation
Paper

Culture and Learning: Towards a New Agenda

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Introduction: why we need a new agenda for cultural learning

During 2007, a consortium of arts funders came together to explore the role of learning within cultural organisations in the 21st century. The Culture and Learning Funding Consortium recognised that learning in cultural organisations is an issue of change management over a long period. They believe that now is the right time to tackle this issue. This Consultation Paper therefore addresses the concept, perspective and practice of cultural learning in this country.

Historically, cultural organisations were established with education at the heart of their mission. Over time, however, the position of education within them has become more uncertain and precarious, both philosophically and organisationally. Its nomenclature has become problematic. A range of other terms are replacing the word 'education': 'learning' seems to be the most popular alternative, but the performing arts world has adopted even more flexible and non-traditional terms, such as 'creative projects', 'creative development', 'discovery', and 'interaction'.

The recent significant government commitment to five hours of culture a week in schools raises many questions about delivery and fulfilment. The Consortium's enquiry will help answer some key questions such as: What does 'cultural learning' encompass? Is it both formal and informal education? Does it include interpretation, audience development, outreach, audience engagement, access, research and development? How wide is learning's reach within and beyond the cultural organisation?

Philosophically, cultural organisations do not always accept learning as a core function. This has organisational implications; learning is often denied senior management status. For example, heads of learning rarely sit on senior management teams, and learning can be sidelined within another function in the organisation. There are also workforce concerns about recruitment, training, remuneration and retention of leaders in this field.

Out of the Funding Consortium was formed a project Steering Group, which met throughout the year. During the course of these meetings, discussions widened out to consider how best to incorporate this philosophical approach to learning within cultural organisations, into their practice, strategies, structures and aspirations.

Essentially, this is an issue about what an effective and credible 21st century cultural organisation should look like. For example:

- How can cultural organisations work successfully and consistently with schools and colleges?
- How can they engage effectively with and support lifelong learners?
- How should artistic and curatorial imperatives co-exist with the learning mission – and how might the tensions between them be resolved?
- How should education, or learning, relate to marketing, communications, development, and new media, and – in museums – to interpretation?
- How does the learning mission relate to governance structures?

This Consultation Paper, produced in association with Demos and written by John Holden, marks the start of the Steering Group's research into these and other key questions. A linked Context Paper – a literature review of relevant background – has also been published online (see details on page 6), providing an historical survey of culture and learning.

The scope of this project is cross-cultural: it is clear that the size, age and approach of an organisation are more relevant to the success of its learning work than whether it sits within the performing arts world or that of museums, galleries and heritage. (For data access reasons, the project's focus is on England, but its findings should be equally applicable to the other nations.)

We are gathering evidence from cultural organisations, the learning sector and those in other sectors with an interest in culture and learning. We aim to:

- explore the learning role of cultural organisations in their local communities
- identify factors for change by directors, trustees, government and regional bodies
- disseminate current models of good and best practice, and determine models of 'next practice' in terms of the role of the learning function in cultural organisations.

We also want to identify how best to develop:

- a shared language about learning across all cultural organisations, and between them and the learning sector
- the training and development of heads and directors of learning in cultural organisations
- the measurement of the impact of learning in the context of an organisation's overall mission.

There are specific questions for respondents in the *How to Respond* section on page 41, and there are further questions embedded (in bold) within the main body of the Paper. We would welcome your responses to any or to all of these.

Culture and Learning is also drawing on and extending the work of two other important initiatives: PAEback¹, and Mission, Models, Money (MMM)². The PAEback Group, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, is looking at the governance of performing arts organisations. Supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation, among others, MMM is a national action research programme and campaign addressing the challenges faced by arts organisations and their funders. We anticipate that all three initiatives will lead to a greater shared understanding of the issues within and between the cultural, formal education and wider learning sectors, and to a set of ambitious but practical recommendations and actions. These will focus on the development of, and relationships between, learning and culture; and on the core expectations for the learning mission of cultural organisations.

The recommendations – to be addressed to government, the cultural and learning sectors, and other relevant bodies and industries – will be set out in a final *Culture and Learning* report, to be published after completion of the consultation phase. Seminars, one-to-one meetings and web-based public consultation will be organised during the year (see *How to Respond* on page 41). All responses to the Consultation Paper will be carefully analysed. The Funding Consortium will publish the final report later in 2008.

¹ <http://www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=44>

² <http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk>

Culture and Learning: Towards a New Agenda

This Consultation Paper has been commissioned by the Steering Group of the Culture and Learning Funding Consortium, and is produced in association with Demos, the independent think tank. A linked Context Paper – a literature review of relevant background – has been produced that provides an historical survey of culture and learning. Both are available at www.demos.co.uk and www.cloreduffield.org.uk.

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FOUNDATION



The Foyle Foundation



Heritage
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I am also especially grateful to everyone who commented on earlier drafts, and to those who agreed to be interviewed – some of whom are acknowledged below, and most of whom have dedicated their lives to learning in cultural contexts. I have quoted from interviews extensively in this report, as shown in italics and quotation marks, but have kept the quotes themselves anonymous. I am well aware that there are many others who could have shared their experiences and views, and who would have been willing to do so: I hope many more will now engage in this debate during the consultation period.

Among those I interviewed were David Anderson, Stephanie Anderson, Jillian Barker, Anna Cutler, Jane Drabble, Lindsey Fryer, Valerie Hannon, Jenny Harris, Hassina Khan, Margaret Maden, David Price, Paul Roberts, Jane Sillis, Patrick Spottiswoode, Katie Tearle, Kenneth Tharp, Shelagh Wright and Katherine Zeserson.

Finally, I should add that the views and recommendations contained within this Paper are my own – based on wide research and the interviews described above – and not necessarily those of the individuals or organisations involved in its commissioning.

John Holden

Executive summary

This is a Consultation Paper, not a final report. It puts forward an analysis and a number of suggestions for change, and encourages responses from readers in all sectors. The Paper foregrounds the formal education system, but recognises the importance of lifelong learning and seeks views relating to learning in schools (in and out of school hours), in cultural organisations, and beyond. A final report containing recommendations based on those responses will be published later in 2008.

The growth of the creative economy, issues of identity, diversity, the influence of culture in international relations, digitisation and new technology have fundamentally changed both the position of culture in society and the lifelong educational needs of present and future generations.

The 1999 report *All Our Futures* argued that ‘a national strategy for creative and cultural education is essential’. But Britain does not have one. Instead, cultural learning has a low status, and is fragmented. Culture is downgraded within the education system, and learning is downgraded in the cultural sector.

The government’s significant new aspiration that schools provide pupils with five hours of cultural activity a week – backed by a £25m pilot scheme in 10 areas – throws into sharp relief many of the issues raised in this Paper; issues that group around a central question: how can the education and cultural sectors provide learners with a sufficient range and quality of cultural experience?

Beyond the classroom, increasing public interest in learning as a social or family activity is likely to create rising demand for learning activities and programmes across the cultural sector.

Although there have been many positive developments and initiatives in both the cultural and education sectors, fundamental problems remain, with learners encountering widely differing experiences. Cultural learning still has a low profile in public and political consciousness. Shared standards of excellence need to be developed, and consistent levels of provision established.

Cultural learning operates as a multitude of specialisms, contributing to problems of profile, scale and effectiveness; that in turn leads to problems of capacity, sustainability and how cultural learning is treated financially.

Much has been learnt over the last decade about which learning practices are successful, and how organisations can excel at learning. Improving the overall picture will involve leadership, long-term commitment, better coordination among the organisations involved, and a focus on the learner. Fundamentally, improvement will come about through changed attitudes.

Government, funders, agencies, schools, cultural organisations and individual practitioners all have a role to play. No-one acting individually can hope to achieve the wholesale change that is required. Acting together, we need to move away from piecemeal, time-limited initiatives into longer-term, more settled and sustained structures. These new structures should be driven by the needs and choices of individual learners, and should be adaptive, so that they can respond to changing needs.

The main suggestions in this report relate to:

- the definition of cultural learning
- shared standards of excellence
- impact assessment
- networks and brokerage, and
- leadership.

1 Saying what we mean: learning, culture, and cultural learning

The cultural sector is shifting to the use of the term ‘learning’ in preference to ‘education’. The latter is felt by many to be restrictive and too closely associated with the formal education sector, rather than also embracing wider lifelong learning for all. For example, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) defines learning as:

“... a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings, or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more.”³

‘Learning’ emphasises that such activities are centred on the learner’s experiences, as well as being a collaborative venture with mutual benefits for learners and those working in or with cultural organisations. ‘Learning’ has therefore become a usefully broad term.

Similarly, ‘culture’ has no single definition, taking on different meanings in different contexts. Professor Sir Ken Robinson defines culture in his 1999 report *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (DfEE/DCMS)⁴ as:

“the shared values and patterns of behaviour that characterise different social groups and communities”

and defines what his report terms ‘cultural education’ as:

“forms of education that enable young people to engage positively with the growing complexity and diversity of social values and ways of life”

‘Creative education’ is defined as:

“forms of education that develop young people’s capacities for original ideas and action”

However, in this Paper, ‘culture’ is used not in a wide ethnographic sense, encompassing the creation of meaning through all of society’s practices and symbols; instead it is used in a more focused sense of culture as a pursuit through the arts. Here ‘the arts’ are broadly conceived to include historic and contemporary arts, ‘high art’ and popular art, performing arts, literature

³ MLA *Inspiring Learning for All Framework*; online at www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk

⁴ DfEE, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (London: DfEE/DCMS, 1999)

and heritage, and arts within and beyond such institutions as museums and galleries. (The specific role of public libraries merits being the subject of a separate enquiry.)

Putting culture and learning together, therefore, we offer a short definition of cultural learning for this consultation that embraces formal education, lifelong learning, and learning that goes on within and beyond cultural organisations:

“Cultural learning means the acquisition and development of memories and behaviours, including skills, knowledge, understanding, values and wisdom by cultural means, or in a cultural context, or to a cultural end. Cultural learning is a lifelong pursuit. It is an affective experience where enjoyment motivates and enhances learning. Cultural learning is not the same as creative learning (learning that develops creative capacities), but cultural learning often encourages creative thinking, behaviours and attitudes.”

- **Is this the most useful definition in order to develop a new agenda for cultural learning?**
- **We need agreed definitions of culture and cultural learning, and of creativity and creative education, across both cultural and learning sectors. How best might this be done?**

In one sense, ‘cultural learning’ is a tautology. Learning is in the DNA of the heritage sector, and of museums and galleries; it should be their very *raison d’être* as they engage with and draw on the wider world. For example, museums were founded and still exist to increase knowledge, to make it widely available, and to enable the public to acquire new understandings – a public that is increasingly diverse, and which brings its own understandings to bear. Similarly, the performing arts and literature are ‘about learning’ in that people are changed by their contact with music, dance, theatre and the written word.

But assuming that culture and learning are so deeply related as to be synonymous makes it easy for cultural institutions to let themselves off the hook. To say that a theatre has an education department, or that learning is a defining characteristic of a museum, is not a sufficient response to the question, “What do you do about learning?”; nor does it address questions of excellence and quality. Moreover, there is evidence – addressed later in this Paper – that some leaders and Boards of cultural organisations marginalise learning.

It would, however, be wrong to place too much emphasis on institutions and others who ‘supply’ learning: that would fail to capture the learner’s view of cultural learning – since for them, the most important thing is their experience. This report argues that the learner is central to cultural learning. It is essential to see the world through their eyes, and to think hard about the future world that they will have to navigate, with its new technologies, diversity and opportunities.

“We worry about the youth of Peckham not getting Opera, but should we be equally worried about middle-class kids not getting south London street culture?”

2 Cultural learning: the current state of play

There is a long history of concern about cultural learning. Half a century's worth of speeches, commissions and reports have recommended change (see Appendix Two), but these have yet to solve two problems: the education system still largely downgrades culture and creativity, and the cultural world still largely downgrades learning.

Evidence of this is as recent as the October 2007 House of Commons Education and Skills Committee's report on *Creative Partnerships and the Curriculum*,⁵ which concludes that "the Department for Children, Schools and Families [DCSF] gives the impression that these issues concerning creativity are peripheral to their core responsibilities in education". The downgrading of learning in the cultural world is apparent in, for example, the low salary levels of learning staff – 10 to 30% percent lower than the salaries of their peers – in both the performing arts and museums (see page 26).

Such marginalisation is a matter of the utmost importance. As is made clear by both the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) 2006 Roberts' Review, *Nurturing Creativity in Young People*⁶ and the earlier *All Our Futures* report, what they define as cultural and creative education is a vital element in preparing children for their futures. The skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to operate in tomorrow's economy, where some of the jobs they will be doing in ten years time have not even been imagined yet, must be nurtured now. The young people of today are growing up in an increasingly diverse world, in which they need to develop both cultural understanding and their own personal sense of identity.

Enabling all people – not only children – to learn and grow throughout their lives has become a new imperative. Cultural learning is seen as one of the answers to the question of how to equip people for the world of today and tomorrow. However, radical action is needed now to make it a part of everyone's – but especially every child's – experience.

While this imperative is being recognised and acted on by government and key players in the cultural and learning sectors, the current state of play comprises a mix of positives and negatives. These highlight where good policy, practice and aspirations are being promoted and taking root, and where much still needs to be done to change attitudes and understandings,

⁵ House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee report, 11th report of session 2006-07, HC1034 (London, October 2006)

⁶ P Roberts, *Nurturing Creativity in Young People: A Report To Government To Inform Policy* (London: DCMS/DFES, 2006)

increase knowledge and expertise, improve standards and quality, ensure equity of access and provision, and rethink structures and funding policies.

2.1 Some positives

- At the end of the 1990s, the *All Our Futures* report and David Anderson's 1999 DCMS report *A Common Wealth: museums in the learning age*⁷ provided robust rhetoric and strong frameworks to argue the case, and build platforms, for cultural learning.

“They remain completely convincing about why culture and creativity need to be at the heart of every child’s education.”

- In the last decade, initiatives such as Creative Partnerships, Renaissance in the Regions, Specialist Schools for the performing arts and art & design, Artsmark, the Arts Award, the Big Draw, and Culture Online have all had a big impact on the practice, profile and quality of cultural learning. Cultural organisations now offer more family-friendly and adult learning programmes.
- Fundamental changes are currently underway in the education system, including the Children’s Plan proposal that all pupils receive five hours of culture a week, and the introduction of the 14-19 Diploma qualifications. Initiatives such as the RSA’s Opening Minds Curriculum⁸ and Key Stage 3 descriptors in citizenship, which acknowledge the role of cultural understanding in relation to diversity,⁹ are creating new opportunities for cultural learning.
- Significant improvements are being made in such areas as music, through well-coordinated initiatives like Youth Music, the Music Manifesto, the National Singing Campaign and Musical Futures. The music education sector’s success has been rewarded with a £332 million investment by DCSF over three years.
- The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is promoting pupils’ creativity through the national curriculum with its *Creativity: Find it, promote it* resource.¹⁰

⁷ D Anderson, *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age* (London: DCMS, 1999, 2nd edition)

⁸ <http://www.thersa.org/newcurriculum/>

⁹ <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/subjects/citizenship/keystage3/index.aspx>

¹⁰ http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_9915.aspx

- Professional development projects such as REFLECT – Creative Partnerships’ national co-mentoring scheme¹¹ – and the *engage* programme (see below) are starting to bring teachers and artists together so they can better understand each other. It is expected that much will be learnt from these schemes, including how to improve continuing professional development (CPD) both for teachers and for artists.
- The demand for learning in a social or family context appears to be growing strongly, as evidenced by Tate Modern’s need to build new learning spaces. Social and economic factors, including higher participation rates in the arts, social networking, and the rise of the creative industries, indicate increasing public interest in learning across the whole of the cultural sector, now and in the future.
- For the first time, an evidence base is being established across the sector through such initiatives as MLA’s Inspiring Learning for All Framework, and the *Enquire* project set up by the museum education group *engage*. The gradual improvement in evidence-gathering throughout the sector will build a convincing case about the value of culture in learning, especially to young people. So far, the evidence shows how cultural interventions help with formal learning¹² and influence capabilities and soft skills, from creativity, to building confidence, to encouraging risk-taking.¹³ For example, the University of London Institute of Education’s three-year evaluation of the National Theatre’s programme in primary schools showed a statistically significant increase in maths scores.¹⁴
- Progress at government level includes closer collaborations between DCMS and DCSF plus joint Strategic Commissioning and other funding initiatives. There is now a cross-government Creative and Cultural Advisory Board that meets under the aegis of the DCMS, and which includes organisations from both the culture and the education sectors.¹⁵

Compare the current state of cultural learning – the number and quality of the people involved, the development of practice and of learning spaces, and the political acceptance both of the

¹¹ <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/reflect>

¹² “The good news is that music lessons in childhood and particularly before the age of seven can have a lasting effect on children’s development. Studies by Dr Rauscher and her colleagues in Wisconsin, USA, have shown that piano lessons in particular seem to help develop children’s spatial-temporal intelligence.” From <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/parents/features/mozart.shtml> [Accessed on 19 November 2007]

¹³ J Holden & S Jones, *Knowledge and Inspiration* (London: Demos, 2006)

¹⁴ *Children engaging with drama: an evaluation of the National Theatre’s drama work in primary schools 2002-2004* (London: SSRU Institute of Education University of London/National Theatre, 2004)

¹⁵ http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/Arts/arts_education/cceab.htm

importance and vitality of the cultural and creative industries and of the need for people to learn throughout their lives – with how things were 20 years ago.

“We are travelling in the right direction and making real progress.”

2.2 Some negatives

- At the turn of the millennium, the energy and enthusiasm generated by the *All Our Futures* report made many people feel a radical change in the education system to be possible, with the arts and culture at the heart of that change. Some are now disappointed at the lack of progress. They argue that we are still failing to put culture at the heart of children’s learning and of lifelong learning.
- In many schools, the emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy skills continues to squeeze culture out of school life. Some cultural organisations say they have to tailor any learning that they offer to curriculum outcomes in order to remain legitimate in the eyes of teachers.
- Teacher training pays scant attention to the arts, and new teachers know little about how to introduce them into their teaching. On the other side of the equation, artists need more opportunities to develop their practice in relation to learning, enabling them to work better with schools and in other learning contexts.
- In cultural organisations, only a minority of Boards care much about learning.¹⁶ Few leaders of cultural organisations have come up through the cultural learning route. There are no agreed standards of excellence for learning in such organisations. Education and learning people can be treated as: *“second-class citizens, tolerated because education is an income source, or an adjunct of marketing”*.
- Access to good learning projects is too patchy in terms of quality and location. There are too many ad hoc, one-off projects and a lot of bad practice.

“Too often, good work happens because of particular individuals, and when they move on, the work stumbles, because it is not embedded in the institution.”

A child in an inner city near a group of great museums and theatres may have a rich cultural experience, but the difference between cities and small towns can be stark.

¹⁶ <http://www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=44>

“As far as schools are concerned, this is a hugely differentiated sector. Inner-city schools near major organisations get the best treatment. The suburbs are left out. Culture is literally inaccessible, a one-off special treat.”

2.3 Contrasting pictures

These two contrasting pictures – one positive, one negative – reveal a complex and diverse reality, and sets of perceptions and assumptions about that reality.

“Learning is absolutely at the heart of what this theatre is about.”

“Learning is not taken seriously at all.”

We face a considerable challenge to develop a universally positive picture of cultural learning.

3 The Big Issues – and some possible solutions

The major issues emerging from the evidence, opinions and interviews that this Paper draws on are:

- the way in which cultural learning operates as a multitude of specialisms; *contributing to*
- problems of profile, scale and effectiveness; *leading to*
- questions about capacity, sustainability and how cultural learning is treated financially; *leading to*
- the status of cultural learning in cultural organisations and in the education system; *leading to*
- the profile of cultural learning in public and political consciousness; *concluding with*
- how to make improvements in cultural learning.

3.1 Specialism, ad-hocery, sharing and making comparisons

3.1.i Some issues

Cultural learning has a low profile because it is ill-defined, disjointed and uncoordinated. There is a lack of ambition and a failure to grasp the bigger picture because people work (often very successfully) within too narrow confines.

- *Specialisms.* Many within the cultural world see their ability to engage with learning as being limited to arts-specific subjects rather than having a more general application to subjects like history or science. Similarly, many within education do not see the relevance of culture to their own subject specialisms. People involved in cultural learning often talk about whether their background falls into the artist or the teacher camp, debating whether they are involved on the ‘arts’ or the ‘education’ side. Few realise or acknowledge that the two are inextricably intertwined.
- *Inconsistency.* There is a lack of consistency and learning across the cultural system itself. For example, no common standards or methodologies for evaluating learning projects and programmes apply across the *whole* cultural field. MLA has created the valuable Inspiring Learning for All Framework, which enables people working in museums, libraries and archives to evaluate their successes and failures in learning projects. This is widely, though not yet universally, used in museums, and could be extended as part of a drive towards stronger and more diverse articulations of impact assessment.

- *Ad-hocery*. Cultural learning often takes the form of one-off projects, individual events and single workshops, whereas all interviewees stressed that engagements with learners need to be long-term, deep and sustained. In addition, learners can face a multitude of opportunities that are not easy to navigate.

“Signposting is poor. A young performer might well have a great experience with a particular organisation, but how do they find that organisation in the first place, and how do they find the next one?”

3.1.ii Some solutions?

Networks

There are many effective networks in both the cultural sector and the formal education sector. Renaissance in the Regions¹⁷ for the museum sector is one example; the real and virtual networks set up by the National College for School Leadership¹⁸ are another. While Scotland has a national Arts Education Network,¹⁹ in England, museums and heritage are better served by learning networks than the performing arts, with GEM’s email network, *engage*, clmg (the Campaign for Learning in Museums and Galleries), Renaissance, Heritage Link and the online social networking site www.english-heritage.org.uk/ourplacenetwork.

These networks set up for specialist purposes can work well, but more need to be established among and between the different parts of the system – or those that exist need to be better integrated. For example, cultural educators have no overarching network that crosses artform boundaries, even though some interviewees believe that multi-artform projects are the most interesting and successful. There is no equivalent of the Arts Marketing Association, and no professional association or network that combines learning in museums and the performing arts. Nor are there any national associations of teachers and cultural educators, though there are some cultural learning network initiatives in the regions, such as the Southwest’s ArtsMatrix²⁰ and Staffordshire Performing Arts.

More training of teachers and artists/cultural educators together is needed. Two recent initiatives are the Royal Shakespeare Company’s development of long-term relationships with 150 schools, providing training for 1,000 teachers; and REFLECT (run by the Sage Gateshead

¹⁷ <http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/programmes/renaissance>

¹⁸ <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/>

¹⁹ http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acci/web/files/SchoolsColleges/arts_edu_spring06_leaflet.pdf

²⁰ <http://www.artsmatrix.org.uk/>

in partnership with Creative Partnerships and the Cultural Leadership Programme) – a national co-mentoring scheme for 300 people, partnering emerging leaders from the educational sector with their equivalents from the cultural and creative sectors.²¹

Brokerage

Brokerage – the expertise applied in bringing together cultural educators with schools and others – performs an important function in the development of cultural learning. Often, brokerage is an inadequate term to describe the deep relationships nurtured between schools (and others) and cultural educators. Creative Partnerships²² is the largest and most obvious example, with a now well-established track record and Ofsted-assessed performance.²³ The MLA Southeast brokerage (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) between museums and schools is a regional example.²⁴ Given the divide already noted between the education and cultural sectors, brokerage is a very necessary function, worthy of extension and investment.

Aggregation

Scale is important. Bringing the parts together into a greater whole is crucial, both within organisations and at a regional and national level. National initiatives, especially when they work more or less coherently together, really do work. This is why music is now at the leading edge of cultural learning: DCMS, DCSF and the private sector are united behind a range of initiatives from the Music Manifesto and Youth Music to the new National Singing Campaign, which aims to reach every primary school child. Investment, infrastructure, energy and commitment combine into a large-scale enterprise of great significance.

Currently, much of the cultural learning enterprise takes place between individual cultural organisations linking to individual schools on a local basis. Some countries have established larger-scale units to make these connections: in Finland, for example, culture is part of the Ministry of Education; local cultural provision is a statutory requirement; and there is no standard curriculum but a high level of cultural education. In Norway there is the national Cultural Rucksack programme.²⁵ More research is needed into international models of organisation and practice, including US models of excellence, such as in Houston and Dallas.

- **How can the development of networks, brokerage, and aggregation help to solve the specific problems of specialism, ad-hocery and inconsistency?**

²¹ http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Press_notices/archive_2006/DCMS150_06.htm

²² <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/>

²³ <http://www.creative-partnerships.com/news/167697>

²⁴ <http://www.mlasoutheast.org.uk/assets/documents/100003ECBrokeringPartnershipwithCitizenshipAdvisorsfullcasestudy.doc>

²⁵ <http://www.denkulturelleskolesekken.no/oversettelser/english.htm>

3.2 Capacity, sustainability and finance

3.2.i Some issues

The interrelated issues of capacity, sustainability and finance powerfully affect the way in which organisations view learning, and act as a brake on the ability of cultural learning to address other issues such as scale, networking and finding a voice.

Capacity

Given the differential in scale between the education and cultural sectors (see section 3.3.ii below), there are serious issues of capacity-building to be faced if cultural learning is to be scaled up to a meaningful national level.

Sustainability and finance

Funding is a factor in the marginalisation of cultural learning. How learning is treated financially can reveal much about its status and position within organisations. Many interviewees thought that school budgets could accommodate more cultural learning, but that, first, *“schools need to be helped to value arts work”*.

“[Schools] are used to not having to pay much, but that’s got to change. The real money is in the education system.”

From the cultural sector’s point of view, learning, education and participation often have to be provided to learners either at low cost or free. This can be perceived as a financial burden to the organisation, so that learning can therefore be vulnerable, viewed by Boards and management as the easiest place for cuts when they are needed – in spite of the fact that learning can often demonstrate the best financial leverage. For example, at the Sage Gateshead, £1 of money needed from core funding may leverage as much as £7 in other grants.

In these circumstances, it becomes all the more important that learning be led consistently by an organisation’s values and vision, and not by funding priorities.

“The Board could have cut [education] but they didn’t, because they saw its importance. I was proud of them.”

“Funding is not the most important issue. The system has money, somewhere. Funding should be viewed as an enabling factor, not a determining factor.”

3.2.ii Some solutions?

Cultural learning is often isolated and fragmented. It needs much more integration at all levels, from the organisational to the national level.

A recurring view among those questioned was that funders need educating.

“Many don’t know what is innovative. The funding system discourages sharing, openness and learning, because too much evaluation is about securing the next round of funding, not about improving practice. Some of the best initiatives have come when funders have encouraged people, especially education agencies, to work together.”

Similarly, the view was expressed that funders need to think on a longer-term basis.

“Organisations don’t just perform well, they work at being good. Change is a constant process, not an event, but funders like innovation. They are hooked on novelty, and don’t want to get into long-term commitments.”

Learning and education should not be marketing-led or finance-led within an organisation.

“[Learning should not be seen as] a source of funds to prop up the core – in any case this leaves the core exposed if education grants stop.”

At a national level, more interactivity is needed between culture and the learning sector. The consortia of schools, colleges and employers that are being developed through the introduction of the 14-19 Diplomas offer new opportunities for such interactivity. More local authorities could second teachers into cultural organisations, and we need more sustained engagements between culture and schools. The devolution of budgets to schools presents opportunities to fund collaborations, but also carries the risk that individual schools can decide that they do not wish to get involved. Exploring what schools can do when they group together in networks and consortia (such as the National College for School Leadership’s Network Learning Communities, and the experience of Creative Partnerships) may be part of the solution.

One crucial aspect of sustainability is the ability to plan ahead. Many interviewees stressed how important this is. For example, one organisation cited does not accept funding for learning unless it is committed for a minimum of three years. The funding system overall is getting better at making longer-term commitments to organisations, but funders still need to be aware of just how vital this is in the sphere of learning.

Funders can also encourage consistency of evaluation and impact assessment. For example, the MLA's Inspiring Learning for All Framework could be adapted for use more broadly across the cultural sector. This would create a common language and set of standards.

- **Leadership from Boards and funders is essential in order to address these questions of capacity, sustainability and finance. What does such leadership mean in practice?**
- **How can the funding of cultural learning be structured to encourage excellence, openness, co-operation and consistency?**

3.3 Status

3.3.i Some issues

Cultural education in schools and other learning settings, and learning provision by cultural organisations, are not statutory requirements. As a result, cultural learning suffers from low status.

Although learning is listed as a priority in the high-level agreements between Local Authorities and MLA and Arts Council England (ACE), and is mentioned in the Funding Agreements between DCMS and the National Museums, in practice it is scattered across the education and cultural fields with no coherence or overarching framework. It could be argued that the obligation of local authorities to meet the Five Outcomes of Every Child Matters²⁶ (that every child should be healthy, stay safe, feel a sense of achievement and enjoyment, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being) necessarily involves engagement with culture. But schools and local authorities need to be challenged on the extent and quality of cultural learning in their Children and Young People's Plans.

What the current patchy picture shows is that the education system has not risen to the challenge set out in *All Our Futures*: "Education faces challenges that are without precedent.

²⁶ <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/>

Meeting these challenges calls for new priorities in education, including a much stronger emphasis on creative and cultural education and a new balance in teaching and the curriculum.”²⁷

Cultural learning has low status at a systemic level

Although the funding system encourages learning to be part of the cultural offer, it has little to say about quality, and sets targets that have little real meaning. This can lead to a concentration on the wrong priorities.

“Organisations go wrong when they play numbers games instead of concentrating on the depth of experience, quality and richness.”

For example, National Museum targets for learning are couched, first in terms of broad aspirations, and second in the detail of numbers of schoolchildren affected and access to lifelong learning. They do not address the quality of the learner’s experience.²⁸ Smarter targets are needed to raise the priority of learning.

The attention paid to issues of excellence in Sir Brian McMaster’s DCMS review *Supporting Excellence in the Arts*²⁹ points in the right direction. He comments that while “much has been done in the last fifteen years to further promote cultural learning, including schemes such as Creative Partnerships and Renaissance in the Regions, ... cultural education is still not being recognised as important enough within schools, or within some arts organisations”.

He then adds: “Introducing children and young people to culture at an early age and as frequently as possible is critical. It makes culture familiar, it provides a framework for understanding new cultural experiences and above all it gives the *opportunity* for engagement that many miss out on. There is much to learn from existing practice.” Sir Brian’s recommendation is that: “Cultural organisations be proactive in meeting the extra demand for their work that the ‘cultural offer’ will generate. They must ensure that the activity that makes up this offer is of the highest standard.”

²⁷ DfEE, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (London: DfEE/DCMS, 1999), p5

²⁸ For example, the National Portrait Gallery’s strategic priority in relation to learning, as expressed in its funding agreement with DCMS April 2005 – March 2008, is “To increase the understanding of and engagement with the collection and its subjects, through bringing more of the reference collections into use, developing outstanding research, displays and loan exhibitions, learning, access, publishing, interpretation, national and digital programmes, and creating a higher national and international profile for the Gallery.” In relation to learning, the Gallery is given a quantitative measure by which to judge its success: the “number of participations by children aged 15 and under in on- and off-site organised educational sessions” is to increase from 40,000 to 42,500 over the period.

²⁹ Sir B McMaster, *Supporting Excellence in the Arts* (London: DCMS, 2007)

Cultural learning has low status in schools

Many of the comments made by interviewees showed how much schools vary in their approaches to cultural learning. For example:

- *“The way schools deal with artists is whimsical.”*
- *“You are on a hiding to nothing if the Head is not supportive; we had a case where a world-class musician was on his way to a school and then we had a call cancelling it, because the Head was insisting on having a timetabling meeting instead.”*
- *“There’s a lack of culture in teacher training and in their professional development.”*
- *“The cultures and values of schools are really diverse, even within one local authority.”*
- *“Will devolved school budgets and localism make schools more free or more isolationist?”*
- *“Generally schools have a more open attitude to culture, but methods, aims and pedagogy are unfocused.”*
- *“It all adds up to jewels of practice all over country, but huge gaps.”*

The list of constraining factors on schools is long and familiar, and includes geographical location, difficulties of getting young people out of school, sustaining the engagement, the demands of the core curriculum squeezing out the time available for the arts and culture, funding, and negative attitudes. All these are real, but all are surmountable – as the practice of some schools throughout the country demonstrates.

One useful step could be for school governing bodies to adopt explicit policies in relation to cultural learning, and guidance on such policies should be made available to them. As a complementary measure, cultural learning should be a required element in Children and Young People’s Plans.

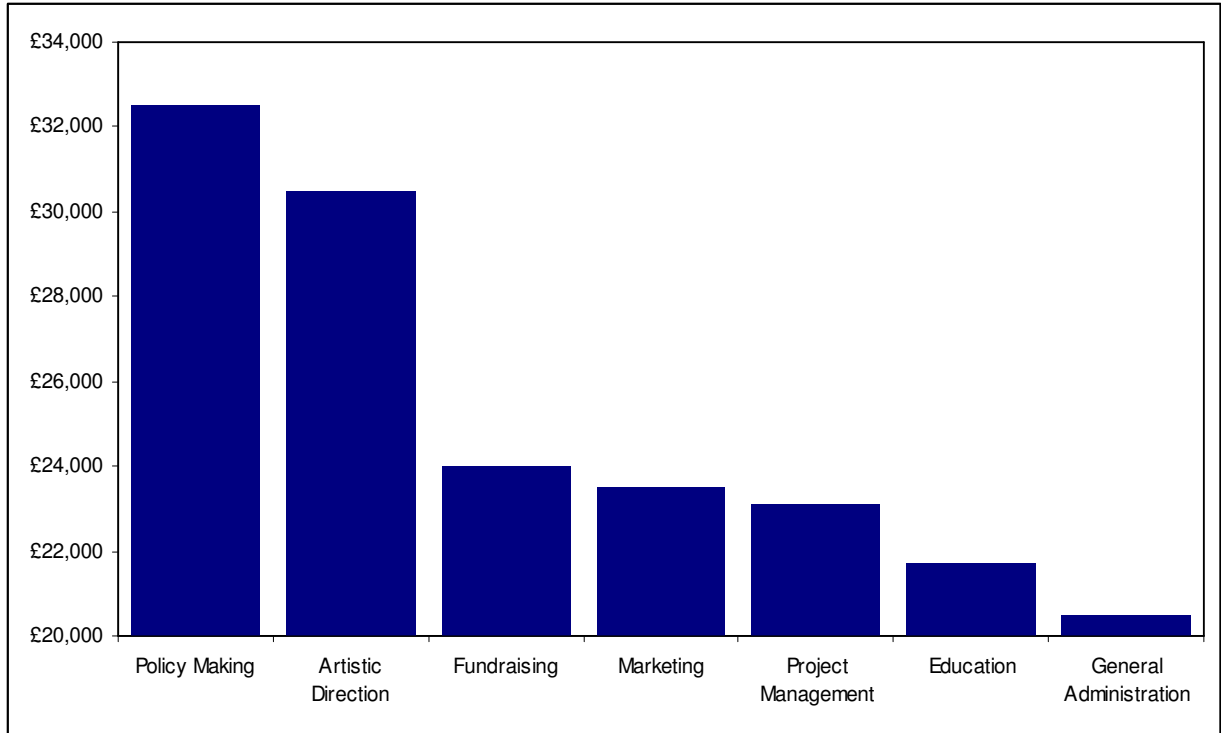
Cultural learning has low status in cultural organisations

According to one interviewee, the low status of learning is summed up by a sign seen in one museum: “Basement: Toilets and Education Room.” Mission, Models, Money’s 2006 report *Mission Unaccomplished* is prefaced with the quotation: “Education? That’s what Sally and her team down the corridor does, and they do it really well.”³⁰

³⁰ S Robinson & T Greenstreet, *Mission Unaccomplished*, (Mission, Models, Money, 2006) [Online]. Available at: http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/Asp/uploadedFiles/File/Mission%20Unaccomplished_MMM%20provocation%20Oct%2006.pdf

Indicators of low status include:

- Pay differentials between learning, education and other staff. In the performing arts, according to a 2006 *Arts Professional* salary survey,³¹ educators rate very low; the average full-time salary by occupation is as follows:



Policy Making: just over £32,000

Artistic Direction: just under £31,000

Fundraising: about £24,000

Marketing: between £23k and £24,000

Project Management: just over £23,000

Education: just under £22,000

General Administration: just over £20,000

According to a Museums Association survey carried out in autumn 2003,³² on average, educators in museums earned about 9.5% less than curators. Judged against similar jobs in other sectors, the situation is even worse; the survey says: “Typical salary levels for education and outreach staff in museums are substantially behind those of all the comparators; and the more senior the role, the bigger the difference.”

- Lack of promotion of educators into leadership positions.

³¹ “Salary Survey” in *Arts Professional*, Issue 135, 4 Dec 2006, p9

³² Museums Association, *Pay in Museums*, at

http://www.museumsassociation.org/asset_arena/text/ry/policy_salarysurvey2004summary.pdf

“We need to get educationalists as Chief Execs and Directors.”

- Lack of attention from Boards, as set out in the PAEback report.

“Boards rarely ask why they should be involved with education activities, and if so, how best to go about it.”³³

- Financial vulnerability, as discussed in section 3.2 above.

3.3.ii Some solutions?

Some current educational agendas are helpful to the development of cultural learning. These include the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, the 14-19 agenda, Extended Learning, and especially the new aspiration for five hours a week of culture for pupils in schools. This raises the question of whether the answers in fact lie more on the demand side of cultural learning – within the education sector; as one interviewee commented, *“there is common use of words like creativity, creative industries, excellence, opportunity”*. However, cultural learning will only be given the status called for by the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee, and by *All Our Futures*, if it is taken seriously and universally in the education system.

“Sustainability is a big issue. It needs to be demand-led, to come from schools. Teachers and Heads need to be demanding, to understand what they want.”

The relative size of the education sector compared with the cultural sector underlines the point that it is only as the education system changes that the cultural learning agenda will gain real traction. There are more than 25,000 schools of all types in England alone, with 3.3 million pupils,³⁴ while ACE has only about 1,000 regularly funded organisations.³⁵ The 2008-10 budget of the DCSF is £168 billion; by contrast, the DCMS budget for the same period totals £6.8 billion (4% of the DCSF budget).

“Culture needs to adopt a more challenging attitude to schools.”

³³ PAEback, *Performing Arts Organisations And Education: A Role For Boards* (London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2007), p2

³⁴ [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000682/SFR38-2006web1.xls#"Table 11!A1](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000682/SFR38-2006web1.xls#)

³⁵ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/documents/publications/phpAUCh9y.doc>

The cultural sector needs a sustained campaign, aimed partly at the education system and partly at government. The objective must be for cultural learning to become embedded across the social and educational landscape that it inhabits. This calls for cultural educators to get involved with new education initiatives, Local Authority Area Agreements, and Cultural Consortia – among others.

Beyond schools, the status of cultural learning needs to be addressed within cultural organisations. In the museum sector, a great deal of cultural learning takes place in a social or family context, or is directed at adult learning, where it is crucial to allocate sufficient resources to fund programmes and activities.

Powerful arguments have been mustered for cultural learning, and they are articulated in the reports listed in the bibliography. They include:

- the personal importance of culture in forming rounded and well-functioning individuals able to enjoy life and take part in society
- social justice
- understanding historic and emergent cultures
- promoting creative abilities
- issues of identity and citizenship.

These arguments need constant reiteration and revisiting by people within education and cultural sectors; every opportunity must be taken to push them home. Beyond that, a national initiative is needed to address cultural learning within education.

“We need a new meta-framework; isn’t it odd that music and dancing are what young people do outside school, but are the least popular subjects in school? Why are we not asking young people why this is?”

Solutions to these issues of the status of cultural learning, and the imbalance and fragmentation within and between the education and cultural sectors, can be developed through the answers to such questions as:

- **To what degree do the answers lie within the education and lifelong learning sectors – the demand side of cultural learning?**
- **What should a national initiative or campaign do to put cultural learning at the centre of education and of cultural organisations, and to reduce the fragmentation within the cultural sector?**

- **How can cultural educators become more integrated into and influence educational initiatives?**
- **How can Boards of cultural organisations and school governors be encouraged to increase the number and quality of cultural learning opportunities?**

3.4 Profile

3.4.i. Some issues

In spite of many initiatives introduced over the last seven years, the general consensus among interviewees was that cultural learning, education in the arts, and education for creativity have not achieved a central place in all schools; nor is learning at the heart of all cultural organisations.

“In most schools it's not yet about a creative approach to learning. This is where it has to go next. Everyone comprehends the proposition: government, business, teachers, everyone; but creative learning is a huge challenge to vested interests and settled structures.”

In 2006, government took a renewed interest in creativity in education. The Roberts' Report, *Nurturing Creativity in Young People*, undertaken as part of the Creative Economy Review, came up with many useful proposals and recommendations, from creative portfolios, to early years learning, to how to establish pathways into the creative industries. But the education system has not yet grasped the importance of creativity to the next generation, which requires a change in the way the primary and secondary curricula are designed and delivered.

“We've started to get a good direction of travel, but the window of opportunity will close if we don't radically shift the curriculum now; it is vital for the wellbeing of the nation.”

There is a big opportunity here for cultural learning, but change on the scale called for by some interviewees will take more than arguing the case to government. A tipping point will only be reached if enthusiasm for cultural learning is accepted by sections of the population with significant influence.

3.4.ii Some solutions?

The cultural sector can use the media, especially TV and radio, more effectively to raise the public profile of cultural learning. This would go some way to encourage parents, teachers, and adult learners to think more about how culture can serve their needs.

Cultural learning needs to be put on the mainstream agenda by the people to whom the media turn for comment on the arts and education. The cultural world has been on the back foot in promoting learning through the media; this is surprising, given the amount of public interest in cultural learning projects when presented in the mass media in the right way. TV and radio programmes such as *Ivor's Choir*, *Restoration*, *Masterclass* and *National Treasures* show that the public is fascinated by culture, heritage, and cultural expertise. But there is little connection between programmes like these and the creation of a public insistence for culture in education and learning.

Some journalists write seriously on cultural learning – Dea Birkett and John Crace spring to mind – and a handful of cultural learning projects, such as the Channel 4 film about Room 13, are featured in the media. Overall though, given its growing importance, there is relatively little coverage of cultural learning. Most media networks within the cultural sector link up with Chief Executives, curators and artists, not with cultural educationalists. Cultural learning needs a bigger voice and a higher profile.

- **Is a sustained PR and media advocacy exercise needed to revitalise the nation in relation to culture and creativity? If so, how might this be achieved?**
- **How can cultural programmes in the media be harnessed to the need to encourage greater public demand for culture in the curriculum and across all learning settings?**

4 How to improve cultural learning

Cultural learning needs more and better leadership. Interviews for this Paper reflected a general sense that while much is happening, it lacks focus. Learning needs an aggressive sense of direction from DCMS, Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), trustees and organisational leaders, all of which have a role to play. Improved standards and a more consistent approach to evaluation are vital.

“Leadership and the influence of funders shape organisational attitudes. It needs incentives and rhetoric to change things.”

Boards need to pay more attention to the learning activities of their organisations. The PAEback Group’s report³⁶ is full of insights, perhaps the most essential of which is that: “Funders had recognised what many Boards had not; namely, that education is key to achieving the aims of their wider agendas of relevance, diversity and public benefit.”

Interviewees differed about whether targets could drive improvement in cultural learning. Some argued that government targets would not be helpful because they would be too crude, possibly meaningless, and engender unintended consequences. Others see targets as a necessary factor in keeping organisations *“on the straight and narrow when it comes to learning”*.

There was scepticism about adopting a ‘beacon’ approach, which tends to overload good organisations, but support for the idea that more rigorous standards would help. For example, MLA’s accreditation standard 2.5 requires “interpretation of the collections in ways which support the users’ learning and enjoyment”. Should this be more forceful? Should the Museums Association – which includes in its Code of Ethics the statement that museums should “encourage people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment”³² – require for membership some evidence of a commitment to, and a practice of, learning? Should Arts Council England (ACE) adopt a parallel approach in its funding agreements?

“What we all need is a set of shared principles and standards.”

We also need a better regime of evidence and evaluation.

³⁶ <http://www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=44>

“Partners have their own frameworks and methodologies. Schools, Regional Development Agencies and so on have their own criteria. But it’s all a mess. Everyone’s doing their own evaluations and no one really cares too much about other people’s – and why should they? They are busy enough already.”

“The cultural sector is very bad at articulating the benefits of learning. What we produce is generic and not analytical enough. We need academic clarity, and to relate the empirical with policy.”

One possibility is for the cultural sector NDPBs – ACE, MLA, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), English Heritage and the UK Film Council (UKFC) – to establish a specialist learning team charged with agreeing shared approaches and standards of excellence to provide rigour and generate confidence. The team would raise the profile of learning, encourage cross-disciplinary working, undertake research, produce evidence, establish coherence across the cultural sector, and provide an audit function so that cultural organisations can benchmark their own performance.

This cultural learning team could take on a role anywhere between an inspection regime and simply providing advice and resources. At the very least, they could provide an external perspective and yardstick by which organisations could judge their learning activities. Drawing on the experience of the Audit Commission, Creative Partnerships, OFSTED, and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDA), schools and cultural organisations could be helped to assess the effectiveness of their approaches to learning.

“We need more self-policing to keep standards high. Cultural organisations are too small to do everything on their own, and they have little way of judging whether they are doing well or poorly in this area.”

Trusts could collectively invest in this initiative so that they know where their investments are best used. In this way they can invest in the long term, and address a common criticism that they are too project-driven.

“Funders need to see change as a process not an event. Private and trust money has very big leverage, but they don’t use it. And they are bad at investing in lengthy processes and high-level aims.”

“The marginal funders have huge leverage, and need to demand evidence, or peer opinion, that learning is a baseline.”

More incentives are needed to change behaviours. More prizes, awards, rewards and acknowledgements are required, particularly for excellent practice relating to cultural organisations, schools and lifelong learning. For example, Sir John Tusa's Arts Task Force has recommended the introduction of a Schoolsmark, akin to the current Artsmark for schools, "to be awarded to arts organisations in recognition of their commitment to a dynamic relationship with a wider community".³⁷

Continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and for arts and museum educators provides a route for improvement. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) reports that: "CPD has a valuable impact on the teaching and learning experiences of children and young people ... it is often possible to find evidence of observable changes in teaching that result from CPD".³⁸ The arts and culture can and should form a part of that CPD. In addition, training opportunities for artists and museum professionals need to be extended and improved, enabling them to work in a range of contexts both within and beyond the classroom. Artists' CPD should stress the benefits to artistic practice gained from interaction with new audiences in new contexts; it should also encourage cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural activities.

The task of improving cultural learning therefore requires us to address the following questions:

- **What, and who, will drive improvement in cultural learning?**
- **How can we establish a universal standard of excellence in cultural learning?**
- **Is target-setting a useful tool for improving cultural learning?**
- **Would a new improvement initiative for cultural learning be a helpful resource for cultural organisations to better assess what they do?**
- **How might a dedicated specialist learning team operate to ensure shared approaches to, and standards of excellence in, learning to improve quality and confidence across the sector?**
- **Should professional membership bodies and funders require cultural organisations to prove their commitment to, and practice of, learning?**
- **How can an effective, coherent and wide-ranging programme of continuing professional development be created for teachers, cultural educators, artists and museum professionals?**

³⁷ J Tusa, *A New Landscape for the Arts*, (The Arts Task Force, October 2007), p6 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.artstaskforce.co.uk/upload/FullReport.pdf>

³⁸ http://www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/continuingprofessionaldevelopment/cpd_guidance/impact_evaluation.aspx

- **How can the Boards of cultural organisations be encouraged to put learning more at the centre of their work and thinking?**
- **How can greater incentives be introduced to encourage more cultural organisations and schools to improve their cultural learning practice – and who might provide those incentives?**

5 Building on success

Cultural learning needs to be more ambitious. There is plenty of evidence about what leads to success in this field; the problem is that organisations and systems face barriers in applying what has been learnt.

“The biggest failing of artists and teachers is to underestimate their own and their students’ capabilities.”

5.1 Successful organisations

Cultural organisations that excel in cultural learning share a number of characteristics:

- First and foremost, learning lies at the heart of their concerns, as a value, as a moral imperative, and as a *raison d’être*. Cultural learning is not merely an activity or a product.
- Their commitment goes beyond rhetoric and is manifest in the consistency of their approach. Their mission statements and business plans articulate both a passion for, and a practical approach to, learning; the Board treats learning seriously, perhaps with its own Board sub-committee, and time is allocated for discussion at main Board meetings.
- Learning staff enjoy parity of pay, conditions and esteem within the organisation, and learning is seen as equal either to other scholarly disciplines (in the case of museums and heritage), or to performance (in the case of the performing arts).
- The entire organisation is involved in the learning endeavour, as at Tyne & Wear Museums: “The education policy can only work within a whole museum policy and with the ... support of attendants, curatorial staff, marketing and management. The ideal is to have all staff working together to create an environment which is welcoming and friendly, accessible and enjoyable and encourages exploration and discovery.”³⁹
- The extent of the organisation’s commitment to learning can be seen in the budgets, spaces and resources that it devotes to learning.

Successful approaches to learning are manifest in what the organisation does, but they are difficult to legislate for. There is nothing inherent in any particular organisational form that makes learning more or less likely to be treated seriously. Organisational structures such as charities running music venues, or local-authority-owned museums, or private-sector theatres can all do learning well – just as they can all fail to do it well.

³⁹ Tyne & Wear Museums, *Tyne & Wear Museums Education Policy 2000-2005* [Online]. Available at: http://www.mlasouthwest.org.uk/mli/pdf/pol_twms.pdf

“Education needs to be a core purpose. If the discourse moved to that, problem solved.”

Attitudinal change is more important than structural change – but it is one of the hardest issues to address. Looking for structural solutions can divert energy away from grappling with the fundamentals.

“It’s easy to get lost in organisational tinkering, restructuring and introversion.”

In the mid-1980s, an American research paper interviewed Museum Directors and Heads of Education separately. The report uncovered striking differences in attitudes between these two groups of people, with the Directors sometimes seeing the education department as non-essential. A similar attitudinal survey should be undertaken in this country across the cultural sector, and with schools and other learning settings.⁴⁰

5.2 Successful learning practices

There was a great deal of consistency in interviewees’ advice about how to create and run a successful cultural learning enterprise:

- ***Start with the mission.*** Learning needs passion, belief and clarity. And those need constant rejuvenation.
- ***Start early.*** It is notable that two organisations with very successful track records in learning had long lead times. The Sage Gateshead inherited a 15-year history of education before the building opened; Shakespeare’s Globe had eight years of education in place before it opened.
- ***“Consult, consult, consult”:*** learners, teachers, artists, schools, local authorities – everyone who is involved.
- Make a ***long-term plan*** of at least three years.
- ***Focus on the learner.*** As the FreshMinds’ report for DCMS, *Culture on Demand*, comments (in relation to building new audiences, but equally relevant to learning): “A fundamental shift from a ‘collection-centric’ to an ‘audience-centric’ approach has been

⁴⁰ EW Eisner & SM Dobbs, *The Uncertain Profession: Observations on the State of Museum Education in 20 American Art Museums* (Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Centre for Education in the Arts, 1984). See also B Waller, *Summary of Responses from Art Museum Directors and Educators Interviewed for ‘The Uncertain Profession: Observations on the State of Museum Education in 20 American Art Museums’* (Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Centre for Education in the Arts, 1985)

shown to help in sustainable audience development. To some extent this also involves adopting an increasingly commercial approach, learning lessons from the private sector and management practices in particular. This allows organisations to become more demand-driven and less product-focused, and thereby to tailor their services more effectively to the needs of users.”⁴¹

This concern for the centrality of the learner, beginning from *their* starting point, reflects a wider educational interest in personalisation.⁴²

“Start from where the users are; start with the learner. A cultural organisation is part of the community it serves. That seems anodyne, but it’s profound.”

“Focus the organisation on the visitor and the learner. Don’t simply make an offer.”

“Learning needs to be embedded in programming. Learning and programming should be one thing, but the tradition of seeing audiences as passive conflicts with seeing the learner as active and central.”

- **Build scale:** everything feeds off everything else. *“To be successful, learning programmes need length and depth and sustained engagement. That can only happen if the enterprise is big enough.”* One example is Shakespeare’s Globe, which engages with education from nursery through primary and secondary to Higher Education: it has public and family programmes; publications; conservatory classes; theatre design, two MA courses; two PhD students; research interns; conferences, puts on lectures and stage readings; and has a website. 100,000 people take part in its education programmes. But in all this, concentration is on the length and depth of the engagement, not one-off hits.
- **Look constantly for learning opportunities** for audiences. Understand the ways in which families, peer groups, children, grandparents and friends want to learn together.
- **Build trust** with learners and partners – go to them and understand them: *“Cultural educators don’t need to be teachers or ex-teachers, but they need to understand*

⁴¹ http://research.freshminds.co.uk/files/u1/freshminds_report_cultureondemand.pdf

⁴² See, for example, R Bird, *Personalisation: what does it really mean?* at <http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/personalisation-what-does-it-really-mean-1442>

teachers. Most of the good departments and people have a mix of artists and teaching experience.” However, “Be aware that partnerships are essential but tricky.”

- ***Pay attention to learning staff.*** *“They need to develop a profound sense of community among themselves and with the whole organisation.”* Organisations also need to invest in their development.
- ***Adopt reflexive practices.*** Ensure that learning staff and the whole organisation constantly question, evaluate and refine what they do.
- ***Share a belief.*** Cultural educators need to believe in the importance of the artist or the collection.
- ***Take new graduates and school leavers into learning departments.*** *“That way they act as a bridge with the education system because they are still close to it.”*
- ***Integrate the actual and the virtual*** as one way to build scale.

The success factors listed above are based on the experience and expertise of people working in the field. The lessons seem obvious, but their wider application depends on getting the bigger issues right – leadership, attitudes, coordination, and structures that generate scale and enable sustainability.

6 Conclusion: putting it all together

6.1 Are we ready for the future?

Culture is shifting from being a peripheral pursuit – about leisure and recreation – to being a subject that is at the heart of life. The landscape has been transformed by the growth of the creative economy, issues of identity, diversity, the influence of culture in international relations, rising inequality, digitisation and new technology.

Taking account of these changes, *All Our Futures* argued that “a national strategy for creative and cultural education is essential”. The government’s new aspiration to provide five hours of cultural learning a week in schools is a significant step in the right direction, but does not amount to a complete strategy that addresses the issue either in schools or in terms of lifelong learning. We need to move away from piecemeal, time-limited initiatives into longer-term, more settled structures.

6.2 Ambition and leadership

The remedies must be ambitious. A lot of knowledge and experience has been gained over the last decade about cultural learning. If these remedies are to succeed, they must be sustained, of sufficient scale and of good quality. This requires effective planning, adequate resourcing and ongoing commitment.

A major initiative is needed to scale-up cultural learning so that every child gets a cultural and creative education, and every adult has access to cultural learning and creative opportunities throughout their lives. This requires leadership from government, and a fundamental shift in the education system.

6.3 Putting it all together

Shared approaches and standards of excellence are needed to provide rigour and to generate confidence. A joint initiative by all the cultural sector’s NDPBs could help achieve this; it would also raise the profile of learning, encourage networking and cross-disciplinary working, undertake research, produce evidence, establish coherence across the cultural sector, and provide an audit function so that cultural organisations can benchmark their own performance. This initiative could also undertake more research into international models and comparators.

Funders of all types should be more rigorous, demanding and challenging to the organisations that they fund. They must also help organisations to develop over the long term. Change is a constant process, not an event.

Organisations themselves need to be reflexive and to learn. They need constantly to revisit and reaffirm their values. According to MIT Professor Peter Senge, the most vibrant, resilient, successful and profitable organisations display a set of learning behaviours. These are to:

- think and enquire
- challenge assumptions and stimulate debate
- collaborate and discuss
- create feedback loops
- develop a common language, and
- create a shared understanding and taxonomy.

These behaviours need to be continuous and embedded. Senge's insights illuminate some of the behaviours that characterise the best of our cultural organisations, and their approach to learning.

The governing bodies of schools and other learning settings and the Boards of cultural organisations could adopt explicit policies in relation to cultural learning, so that stakeholders and users are clear about their goals, standards and commitment. Similarly, culture should be an explicit part of the Children and Young People's Plans required under Every Child Matters.

This report began by arguing that culture is undervalued in the education sector, and that learning is undervalued in the cultural sector. The remedies must be applied across both. It is only when the value of cultural learning is celebrated by both sides that each will be able properly to serve the learner, and realise their own full potential.

Culture and Learning: how to respond

We invite readers of this Consultation Paper and linked Context Paper (both available at www.demos.co.uk and www.cloreduffield.org.uk) to respond to the issues raised, the questions posed, and the proposals made. In particular, we would value your responses to the issues of:

1. How best to define cultural learning.
2. How to embed cultural learning more firmly in the education and learning sectors and in cultural organisations.
3. How to identify the most effective leaders to drive improvement in cultural learning.
4. What the leadership role in cultural learning should comprise.
5. How to develop a set of shared standards, and a definition of excellence relating to cultural learning.
6. How to improve the profile, scale and effectiveness of cultural learning.

Alternatively, you may prefer to address the questions which appear in the *Introduction* on page 3, or throughout the main body of the Paper. We would welcome responses to any or to all of these.

During the consultation period, and while we await all written responses, we will convene five invitation-only facilitated consultation events across the UK. These will be hosted by the Sage Gateshead, Tate Liverpool, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the egg in Bath, and a venue in London.

When you submit your response, please make sure that you:

- provide your name and contact details, so that we can get in touch with you if necessary
- give brief background information about yourself or your organisation, so that we can put your response into context, and
- identify the question(s) you are responding to.

We would prefer to receive submissions in electronic form; however, other formats are of course acceptable if these are more convenient. We would be grateful if you could let us know whether you would be happy for us to quote sections of your submission in any future publications – and, if so, whether you require this to be on an anonymous or an attributed basis.

Please email your responses to **cultural_learning@demos.co.uk** or write to Cultural Learning, Demos, 3rd Floor, Magdalen House, 136 Tooley Street, London SE1 2TU. The closing date for responses is **30 April 2008**.

After the close of the consultation period at the end of April, all written responses and event reports will be analysed and a paper compiled to inform a final report, *Culture and Learning: A New Agenda*. This will be published later in 2008, and will make a set of recommendations for change based on the views of respondents.

This Consultation Paper stresses that: 'Government, funders, schools, cultural organisations and individual practitioners all have a role to play. No-one acting individually can hope to achieve the change that is required.' That is why we want to make this debate a collective endeavour, where the voices of all interested parties can be heard. We look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix One

Recommended reading

The reader's attention is drawn to a number of recent reports, and to the work of two authors, as being of particular relevance to understanding the current state of play in culture and learning:

- *Mission Unaccomplished: the place of education and learning in our national and regional performing arts and cultural organisations*, Mission, Models, Money, 2006
- *Beginning at the beginning: The creativity gap*, NESTA, 2007
- *Performing Arts Organisations and Education: a role for Boards*, PAEback, 2007
- *Nurturing Creativity in Young People: A report to Government to inform future policy*, DCMS, 2006
- *Inspiration, Identity, Learning: the value of Museums, Second Study*, DCMS, 2007
- The publications of US academics John Falk & Lynn Dierking, in particular *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning* by John Falk & Lynn Dierking

Appendix Two

The downgrading of culture and learning

It has been a central contention of this Paper that the education system has always downgraded culture, and that it continues to do so, despite regular calls for reform. Similarly, it has been contended that in the cultural sector, many organisations continue to marginalise learning and education. The following quotes, demanding change over the years, show the historical pattern to which we are heirs:

The education system has historically downgraded culture ...

1957 RFH Conference: “We believe that ... the contribution of the arts to general education ... has not yet been properly recognised.”⁴³

1982 The Arts in Schools: “Society needs and values more than academic abilities ... The arts exemplify some of these other capacities – of intuition, creativity, sensibility and practical skills. We maintain that an education in these is quite as important for all children as an education of the more academic kind, and that not to have this is to stunt and distort their growth as intelligent, feeling and capable individuals.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Royal Festival Hall, *A Consideration of Humanity, Technology and Education* (London: Royal Festival Hall Conference Report, 1957), p62

⁴⁴ K Robinson ed., *The Arts In Schools: Principles, Practice and Provision* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982), p5

1999 All Our Futures: “Promoting creative and cultural education is not a simple matter ... We believe that this is not an option but a necessity ...”⁴⁵

2001 Resources Survey: “Less than a quarter of secondary schools require all pupils at Key Stage 4 to study at least one arts subject. Few schools (just 13%) allow every pupil to take art & design if they wish to do so.”⁴⁶

2006 Roberts’ Review on Nurturing Creativity: “There is a rich array of creativity work in pre- and main-school activity strongly, but not systematically, supported by the many creative programmes, projects and agencies.”⁴⁷

2007 House of Commons Education and Skills Committee: “Extending creative approaches beyond a particular activity and firmly embedding them in the wider curriculum remains a key challenge for schools ... the DCSF gives the impression that these issues concerning creativity are peripheral ...”

... and the cultural world has historically downgraded learning

1920 Museums Journal: “Museums are not fundamentally educational institutions”.⁴⁸

1982 Experience and Experiment: “The [Gulbenkian] Foundation encouraged the Arts Council to address the issue of arts and education by funding the first post for an arts education officer.”⁴⁹

1999 A Common Wealth: “Provision for museum and gallery education is a patchwork. The questionnaire surveys for the first edition (1997) showed that approximately 50% of museums ... made no deliberate provision for education. 15% made almost none and in the remaining 35% it ranged from basic to comprehensive.”⁵⁰

2006 Mission Unaccomplished: “Given that trustees and senior executives at some of our national performing arts organisations express ambivalence and confusion about how educational activity relates to the core purpose of the organisation, it’s no surprise to find

⁴⁵ DFEE, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (London: DFEE/DCMS, 1999), p190

⁴⁶ Clore Duffield Foundation, *Survey of Art & Design Resources in Primary and Secondary Schools* (London: Clore Duffield Foundation, 2001)

⁴⁷ P Roberts, *Nurturing Creativity In Young People: A Report To Government To Inform Policy* (London: DCMS/DFES, 2006), p13

⁴⁸ From *Museums Journal* 1920. Quoted by M O’Neill, “The Good Enough Visitor” in R Sandell ed., *Museums, Society, Inequality* (London: Routledge, 2002), p27

⁴⁹ R Hewison & J Holden, *Experience and Experiment* (London: Gulbenkian Foundation, 2006), p119

⁵⁰ D Anderson, *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age* (London: DCMS, 1999, 2nd Edition)

*that education departments tend to sit at the margins ... financially under-resourced and semi-detached from the rest of the creative programme.*⁵¹

2007 Performing Arts Organisations and Education: *“Boards rarely ask why they should be involved with education activities, and if so, how best to go about it. Boards frequently regard education as simply a ‘bolt-on’ with no impact on the core artistic activities.”*⁵²

⁵¹ S Robinson & T Greenstreet, *Mission Unaccomplished* (Mission, Models, Money, 2006) [Online]. Available at: http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/Asp/uploadedFiles/File/Mission%20Unaccomplished_MMM%20provocation%20Oct%2006.pdf [Accessed on 30 October 2007]

⁵² PAEback, *Performing Arts Organisations and Education: A Role for Boards* (London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2007), p2

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Weblinks

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<http://www.21learn.org/index.html>

Creative Partnerships
<http://www.creative-partnerships.com/>

Glasgow Museums – HLF Schools & Museums Project
<http://www.glasgowmuseums.com/showProject.cfm?venueid=0&itemid=46>

Institute for Learning Innovation
<http://www.ilinet.org>
 Contextual Model of Learning: <http://www.ilinet.org/contextualmodel.htm>

Learning at Bristol's Museums
<http://www.bristol.gov.yk/ccm/content/Leisure-Culture/Museums-Galleries/learning-at-brisstols-museums.en?#internalSection1>

The MLA's Inspiring Learning for All programme
<http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/default.aspx?flash=true>

Museums Association – Join the MA – Institutional Membership
<http://www.museumsassociation.org/institutional>

Museums, Libraries and Archives (South West) – Museum Learning Initiative – Learning in Museums
<http://www.mlasouthwest.org.uk/mli/learning.htm>

Musical Futures – Musical Futures in Words
<http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk/mfInWords.html>

Participation Works
www.participationworks.org.uk

QCA work on creativity
<http://www.ncaction.org.uk/creativity/whatis.htm>

RSA Developing a capable population (including Opening Minds)
http://www.rsa.org.uk/projects/curriculum_network.asp

Tyne & Wear Museums
<http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/>
 Learning & Schools: <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/learningschools/>
 Schools Online: <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/schools/>
 Schools Online – Events & Workshops: <http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/schools/resources/events/>

Youth Music
<http://www.youthmusic.org.uk>
 In particular, see http://www.youthmusic.org.uk/about_us/About_us.jsp