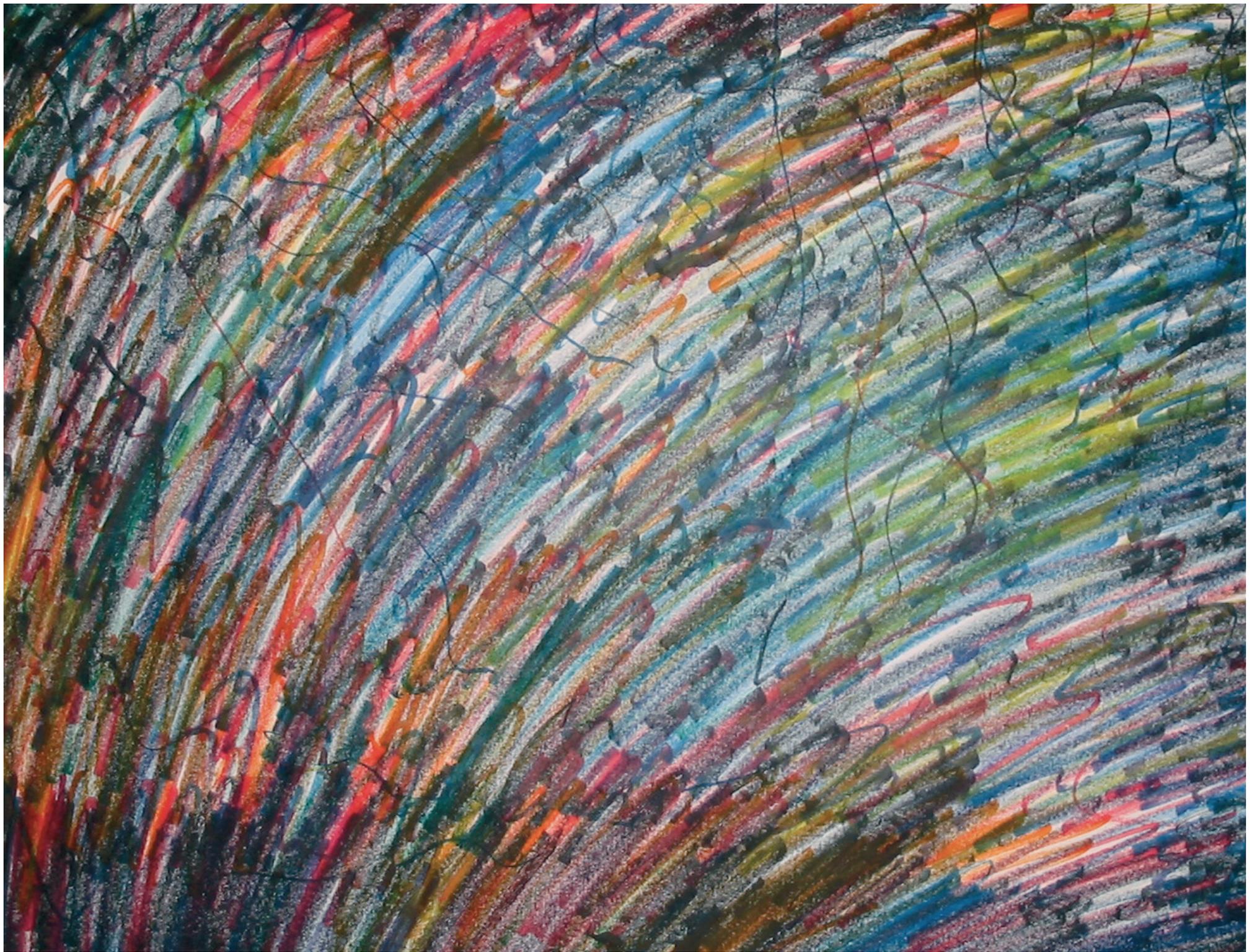


ARTS ENGAGEMENT:

A Guide to Inclusive Arts Programming
for People with Disabilities

March 2004



ARTS ENGAGEMENT:

A Guide to Inclusive Arts Programming
for People with Disabilities

by
Maya Gislason
Kari Krogh
Vicki L. Nygaard
Cassandra Phillips
Sue Proctor

Copyright 2004 by the Canadian Centre of Disability Studies. We welcome readers to reproduce any part of this handbook, provided that credit is included.

**ARTS ENGAGEMENT:
A Guide to Inclusive Arts Programming for People with Disabilities
Canadian Centre on Disability Studies 2004**

CONTRIBUTORS

Artist participants of the Arts Ability Project

Staff and Administration from the four Project Sites

Artist Animators – Marcia Barkman, B. Pat Burns, Judy Cook, Joy Eidse, Tara McInnis, Sue Proctor, Claire Stephensen, Brigitte Urben

Artist Apprentices – Kelvin Free, Hildi Janzen, Karen Johannsson, Vivan Muska

Videographer – Carolyn Combs

WRITING AND EDITING

Maya Gislason, Dr. Kari Krogh, Vicki L. Nygaard, Sue Proctor, Cassandra Phillips, Rosalyn Howard

RESEARCH

Dr. Kari Krogh and Maya Gislason

ILLUSTRATIONS

Hildi Janzen

ARTWORK

Artist participants of the Arts Ability Project

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Lydia Del Bianco of Momentum Productions (mpdesign@telus.net) and v.a. Lewis of ATR Productions (atr_productions@animail.net)

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Catherine Frazee

The Office for Disability Issues – Government of Canada is pleased to have provided financial support and consultation to this project. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

To order copies contact:

CCDS, 56 The Promenade, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3H9

Phone (204) 287-8411 • Fax: (204) 284-5343 • TTY: (204) 475-6223

Web Site <http://www.disabilitystudies.ca>

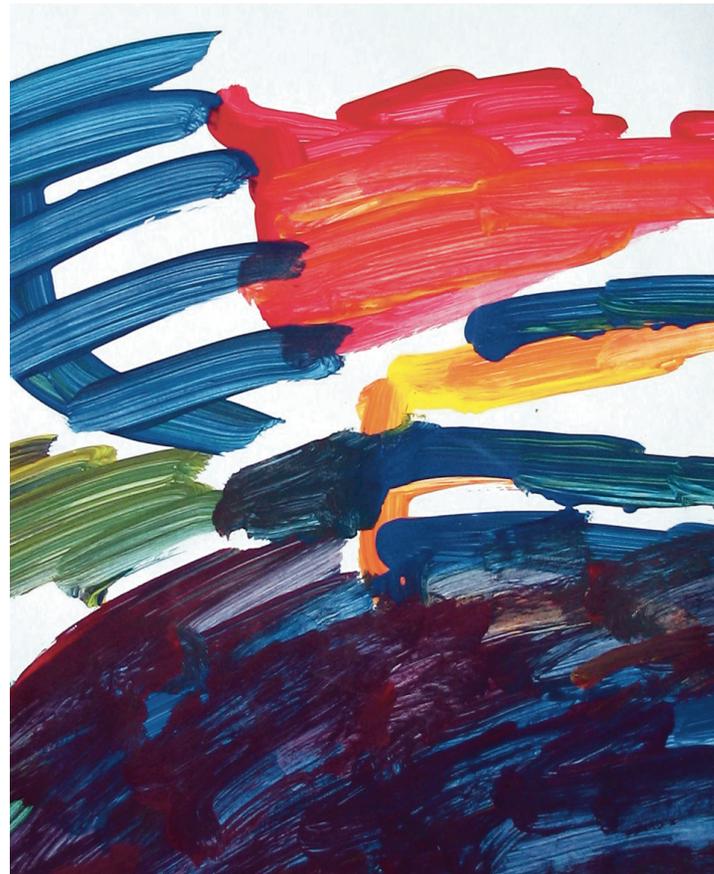
Email: CCDS@disabilitystudies.ca



Dedication

We would like to dedicate this manual to Elias Katz, PhD for his pioneering work with his wife Florence Ludins-Katz, MA, in establishing Art Centres for people with disabilities. We would like to thank him for his clarity of thought and guidance in developing and articulating the creative focus of this project. He writes in *Art and Disabilities: Establishing the Creative Art Centre for People with Disabilities*:

Creative self-expression is the outward manifestation in an art form of what one feels internally. This expression may find its outlet in painting, sculpture, music, dance, poetry or many other forms. It may be inspired by what one sees or experiences in the environment or a transformation of it; it may be a reaction to inner moods, feelings, or sensations.







Acknowledgements

The Arts Ability Project originated as a two-year project out of the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) and was supported by Ryerson University's School of Disability Studies in Toronto, Ontario, where supplementary research resources were accessed.

Four sites were involved in this project, and we would like to acknowledge the invaluable support and contributions of the participants, support workers, and administrators at each of these locations. We appreciate their support, enthusiasm and commitment to the programs. We would especially like to extend our gratitude to the participants for their energy, involvement and willingness to take risks and try new things.

Artist animators and artist apprentices were hired to become involved in implementing and reflecting upon their programming and for their involvement we are grateful.

This project was funded by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Office of Disability Issues (ODI) of the Government of Canada and Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism. We are indebted to these funders for their encouragement and support. Without their support, this manual and the activities that contributed to its production would not have been possible.

Research activities were supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council through a grant to explore support relationships for people with disabilities.

This manual was created through a weaving together of the experiences and insights of artist animators, artist participants, site administrators, site staff, artist apprentices and researchers who participated in the **Arts Ability Project**.



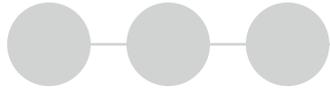


Table of Contents

Introduction	11	Frontier School Division, Norway House	22
Module One: Framework	13	Arts Programming for People with Disabilities in Various Settings	22
Social Model of Disability	14	Setting up the Program	22
Independent Living Principles	14	Music Programming	24
Emancipatory Principles	15	Drama Programming	26
Quality in Research	15	Visual / Textural Arts Programming	29
Artist Participant	15	Dance Programming	32
Artist Apprentice / Support Staff	15		
Artist Researcher	16	Module Three: Training and Mentoring; Working with Apprentices	34
Personal Creativity	16	Qualities for Artist Animators	34
		Artist Apprentices	36
Module Two: Context	17	Graduated Approach	36
Background of the Arts Ability Project	19	Skills	37
Canadian Mental Health Association	19	Reflecting on Practice	39
New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families:		Opportunities for Self Expression	39
Community Outreach Program	19	Valuing Process over Product	40
New Directions: Specialized Day Program	20	Flexible Environment	41
Deer Lodge Centre	20	Supportive Exploratory Environment	41



Being Intuitive	42
Increasing Awareness of Disability Issues	43
Reflective Exercises: Themes, Tips, and Exercises	43
Drawing on Limited Experience	45
Ongoing Reflection and Evaluation for Facilitators	46

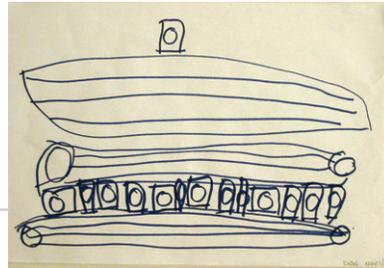
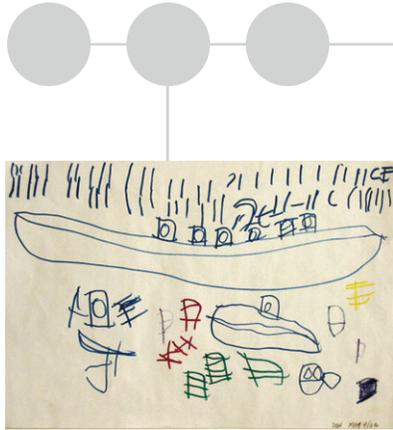
Module Four:

<i>Evaluating Arts Programming for People with Disabilities</i>	47
Overview	47
Intended Research Outcomes	48
Literature Review	48
Development of an Evaluation Model	50
Making Space for Art and Disability Perspectives	51
Establishing Principles and Criteria for Evaluation	52
Principles and Criteria to Guide Evaluation	52
Data Collection	52
Evaluation Process	53
Reflections on the Evaluation Process	53
Participants' versus University Needs	55
Conclusion	55

<i>The Final Word</i>	56
-----------------------	----

<i>Bibliography</i>	57
---------------------	----

<i>Appendix</i>	59
-----------------	----



Introduction

Welcome to Arts Engagement: A Guide to Inclusive Arts Programming For People with Disabilities. This manual is a resource guide for persons interested in hosting, administering, facilitating and participating in arts programming with persons with disabilities. It is important to stress that this is not an instruction manual in the sense that it provides a list of predetermined activities that guarantee a specific response or outcome. Instead, this manual is a point of origin to engage persons with various disabilities, their families and others in creative expression. We are all different. Within the disability community, different people with the same impairment respond in different ways and at different times to living with that impairment. Such a person may be disabled in one environment and not in another. As a result, we need to acknowledge what is unique about each and every one of us as we not only grow and learn from one another, but also recognize our own and others' artistic potential. We also need to recognize the disabling effects of certain types of interactions and environments. The arts are a rich resource

in our community – they have the power to affect personal, interpersonal and societal change.

The manual is divided into four modules: the first module establishes a general framework for arts programming and arts program evaluation; the second module gives context and background and moves into particulars for programming within a variety of settings. It outlines tools and personnel requirements, plus some sample scenarios for activities. The artist participants are described in terms of their potential rather than diagnosis or label. The third module focuses on training, the role of apprentices and reflective practices. The fourth module discusses the research and evaluation process of the Arts Ability Project, which, out of necessity, reflects on the participants at particular sites and the principles that comprise the framework for programming and program evaluation.

Interspersed throughout the manual are direct quotations from artist participants, artist apprentices, family members, artist



animators, and those who were intricately involved in Arts Ability. These words serve to reinforce the discussion and, more specifically, reflect on the empowerment process.

The added illustrations and poetry are also strong reminders of the talents and abilities of the artist participants and artist animators involved in the Arts Ability Project.





We aim for everyone to live to their full potential, to participate fully as citizens, and to contribute their particular skills and talents to their communities

(Tim Broadhead)

FRAMEWORK

Everyone is capable of artistic expression, yet many people are seldom provided with the opportunity to explore this creative aspect of the self. As a result, many talents go undiscovered and unnourished - what a loss to humanity.

Arts programming recognizes the potential for creativity in all people. By introducing people with disabilities in organizations and agencies to art and to the notion that they are artists themselves, the environment in which they live and learn takes on new meaning. This is because there is a sense of engagement with self and others, which, in turn, opens up possibilities for individual and social change. This level of artistic engagement

differs from arts and craft instruction in that the artist animator works with the participant to find that connecting point between the person and the medium or art form. This approach demands flexibility, creativity and patience, because the participant is shaping the content and development of the interaction/class content. As an illustration, in drama, one artist participant may connect with or be inspired by the tactile aspect of soft costumes or puppets, while another may connect more through sound; voice or music may inspire movement of the whole body or one finger, depending on physical ability or circumstance. The artist animator would, therefore, have to be flexible enough to incorporate both music and puppets into a class not only to encourage participation from both artist participants, but also to allow individual talent to grow and prosper.

When persons with or without disabilities engage in the creative process – to whatever degree that may be – they are indeed exploring, learning, taking risks, developing trust,



I think that it's important, it's really important that it's a safe place. . . that people feel that this is not a place where they can get criticized, [are] not going to get judged, not going to get stepped on for doing something or not doing something. . . that they feel safe.

(Artist Apprentice)



building relationships and opening themselves up to the world at large. In the Arts Ability Project, one artist apprentice points out,

Staff often gain a new appreciation of the ability of artist participants to create art. One of the most poignant comments came from a staff member who was talking to us. She was very positive about what we were doing, saying for example

I did not know that Mrs. B was capable of doing such good work." . . . Staff see their clients in a different light: more in terms of their abilities rather than their disabilities. The program helps to demonstrate we are all just people, possessing different and varying abilities.

In this instance, because of the artist participant's engagement in the creation of art, the perception of the staff member about the ability of that individual changed. This means that the dynamics of their relationship also changed in positive ways.

Change is not easy: for some it comes slower than others. Issues of trust and respect are, however, essential to this process.

In setting up any arts programming, it is essential to establish a safe place from which to instigate change. Accordingly, there is a need to develop a set of guiding principles to inform activities. These need to be established from the onset. They

are most effective when developed in consultation with all the players: artist participants, artist animators, artist apprentices, musicians, administrators, researchers and evaluators. The goal is to have each person directly involved commit to working together in an approach that is respectful of the following guiding principles:

Social Model of Disability:

- Take into account factors outside of the body of the individual with an impairment
- Consider factors that would lead to change for the individual
- Take into account factors that would lead to change in the lives of people who provide support (e.g., staff, teachers, administrators)
- Consider factors that would lead to institutional or societal change
- Be familiar with the role of society's physical space and attitudes in the creation and perpetuation of disability

Independent Living Principles:

- Recognize the full range of capacities of people with disabilities
- Acknowledge people with disabilities' right to self-determination
- Acknowledge the importance of people with



disabilities making their own choices

- Recognize the benefit of peer support

Emancipatory Principles:

- Recognize the disadvantaged position of people with disabilities in society
- Commit to a process that results in a greater balance of power between people with and without disabilities in society in particular situations

Quality in Research:

- Acknowledge that triangulation (the use of several different research methods to test the same conclusion) increases the credibility of findings (internal validity)
- Acknowledge the importance of rich descriptions, in terms of being able to transfer insights to other situations (transferability / external validity)
- Understand that keeping track of the research process is valuable (dependability / reliability)
- Recognize the importance of accurate documentation - for example using direct and exact quotes from participants, referencing and dating documents, to track exactly where an impression or idea came from (verification / objectivity)
- Recognize the importance of doing research that informs and results in positive change for participants,

artist, support workers, institutions (catalytic validity)

- Recognize the importance of doing research to benefit people with disabilities in an attempt to redress their historical disadvantage in society (emancipatory)
- Acknowledge the creative capacity of the researchers and the research process

Artist Participant:

- Acknowledge the rich perspectives, experiences and capacities of the artist participants
- Acknowledge the need to capture participant perspectives and acknowledge that people express themselves in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways
- Recognize that the artist participant may have unfamiliar and particular ways of expressing and exploring his or her creativity
- Recognize that research that facilitates reflection upon the practice of arts programming is ultimately about increasing accountability to the artist participants

Artist Apprentice / Support Staff:

- Understand the value of reflection and the lessons that this process provides
- Acknowledge the rich perspectives that artist apprentices can provide to the research and also the challenges that are associated with engaging in his or her





own evaluation research

- Know that artist apprentices may have particular creative ways that they wish to describe some aspect of their class and to apply the principle of triangulation
- Have knowledge of the skills and learning opportunities available

Artist Researcher:

- Acknowledge the value of reflection and the lessons that this process provides
- Allow for the rich perspectives that artist animators can provide to the research and also the challenges that are associated with engaging in their own evaluation research
- Understand that the artist animator may have particular creative ways that he or she wishes to describe some aspect of the class and apply the principle of triangulation in reflective reports
- Have knowledge of the skills and interests of the artist apprentice

Personal Creativity:

- Acknowledge the artist animator's and artist apprentice's needs as creative beings
- Know that that each individual has his or her own creative process
- Understand the value of being in the moment when teaching / learning





Module 2

*Every artist dips his brush in his own soul,
and paints his own nature into his pictures.
(Henry Ward Beecher)*

CONTEXT

Traditionally, arts programming within an agency setting includes activities that are structured, product oriented, and aimed at skills development, as in the making of rugs, baskets, clay pots, and so on. This manual in no way devalues these activities. The social paradigm from which this manual operates acknowledges the inherent value of all creative forms of expression. Of particular importance in the Arts Ability Project, however are the ways that arts programming impacts on self and society.

The approach to the performance arts programming developed in the Arts Ability Project was influenced by performer and artist animator Sue Proctor's work, where "the spirit of the

clown" enlivens dramatic activities, and makes them accessible to children, seniors and people with disabilities. When people who feel as though they have no creative ability can laugh and play together, welcome mistakes, and invite experimentation, or even foolishness as important aspects of creative exploration, hidden talents and abilities can emerge. While working with this approach, Sue has witnessed the amazing talents of people with disabilities in agency, institutional and educational settings. Using playful songs, stories, mime, slapstick, music and costumes, people have learned to move, laugh, play and create. These exercises support creative self-expression, vocalization and new forms of social interaction.

The approach to the visual arts programming was influenced by Claire Stephensen's extensive work with people with disabilities in institutional or agency settings. She has developed an approach that meets people in the moment and engages them in creative expression. This work can bring dramatic changes to the environment that artist participants and staff live and / or work in.



Artist animators are facilitators of the creative process. In some instances, they are artists working with paint, crayons or clay; in other instances, they are clowns involved in mime; and in other instances they are directors or players in a dramatic scene. In all instances, the political and social ramifications of their actions impact in some way on their audience, who may be passive or active participants in the activity. It is important, therefore, to value the process as much as the end product.

Built into all the programming is an evaluation process that follows the daily sessions/classes. This allows time for reflection and ensures that the long term goals and objectives of the program are being met for each session. The involvement of people with disabilities in any creative process has the potential to challenge existing stereotypes of people with disabilities and to subvert current ideological and social practice:

Changing my Mental Illness

*Sometimes, when someone finds out I am mentally ill,
they just stuff me into the smallest, clumsiest cupboard
of their minds,
judging my size, like squishing a huge, fresh bag of marshmallows
into an old tiny tea bag.
I do not fit,
into their stigma that is melting over my soft core.
My shame is meshed into my skin. Dripping from my eyes.
Changing my mental illness to suit you*

will not do me any good.

*Vivian M. Muska,
Artist Apprentice, November 27, 2003*

These words are powerful and emphasize the fact that the personal is political for many people with disabilities.

In order to allow for participant-directed change, those who take on artist animator or facilitator roles must consider their approach carefully. For example, therapeutic clowns, artists who use mime and play to facilitate engagement with children or adults in healthcare settings, perform in the moment because they respond directly to, and connect immediately with, verbal or non-verbal cues from children or adults.

Writer Camilla Gryski states,

When I think of the many children I play with who would be considered by the world to be 'disabled' I think that the gift to the child of the clown, who lives purely in the moment, is acceptance and what psychologist Carl Rogers would say, 'unconditional positive regard.' As clowns, we have no preconceived notions of the world, or the way that people in it ought to be. We exist to be completed by the children.

This degree of engagement—between artist and participant—is what arts programming strives to achieve. The clown uses



play as a form of engagement and not to diminish his or her regard for the individual.

In a similar vein, the use of crayons in art or folktales in drama or storytelling is meant to engage rather than presuppose any level of diminished capacity in participants with various disabilities. Play, when used in a non-placatory way, links past with present, (re)connecting artist participants to their imagination.

Background of the Arts Ability Project

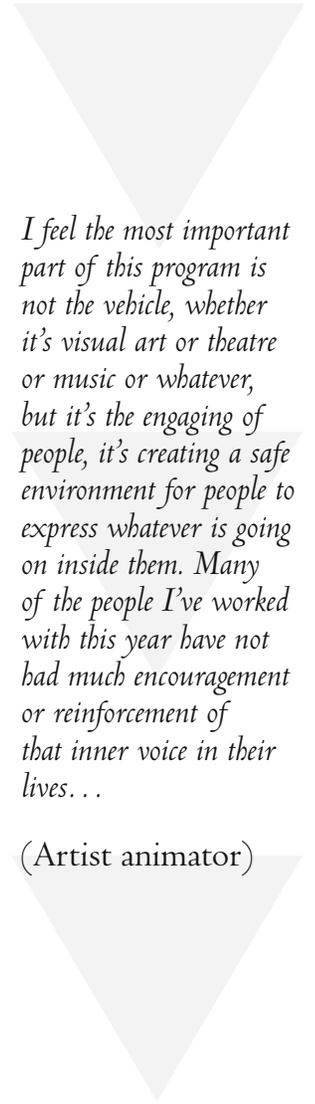
Four original host sites and five programs were involved in the Arts Ability Project. People at these sites made the learning reflected in this manual possible. We celebrate their vision and collaboration.

Impairments are included in the following descriptions, as they are made explicit in organizational mission statements. What is important to consider, however, is that within a societal context, the artist participants experience social and economic disadvantage, sometimes based upon these labels and seek opportunities to find their voice and express themselves artistically, outside the label.

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

Canadian Mental Health Association is a national organization - one of the oldest non-profit organizations in Canada. It exists to promote the health of all people. Its specific mandate is to empower people to engage in good mental health practices. The drop-in centre where Arts Ability was hosted supports a variety of activities that include the facilitation of information, educational sessions about different areas of mental health and the coordination of a summer camp for mental health consumers.

Through the Arts Ability Project, a small group of adults who have been consumers of mental health services had the opportunity to work together as a team to create drama and music. With an initial focus on drama, music was used as part of the class to broaden sensibilities and to bring rhythm and vitality to the work. In the second year participants chose to explore the possibility of running their own drama sessions and to explore developing a music program.



I feel the most important part of this program is not the vehicle, whether it's visual art or theatre or music or whatever, but it's the engaging of people, it's creating a safe environment for people to express whatever is going on inside them. Many of the people I've worked with this year have not had much encouragement or reinforcement of that inner voice in their lives. . .

(Artist animator)



New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families- Community-Outreach Program for Adults with Developmental Disabilities and Dual-Diagnosis

In terms of families, I think there have been families as well who come in and participate and I think that's...been another positive piece. Again, when you're visiting somebody with significant cognitive impairment, it's often hard...to look for meaningful things that you can do and do together. So whether it's actually working on the project or sharing results of the project, then I think that's more helpful for families.

(Administrator)

New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families Inc. is a large community service organization mandated to help children, youth, adults, and families in the Winnipeg area gain access to opportunities to achieve their life goals. Programs offered through New Directions include services for single mothers, community treatment centres, family violence programs, children's day services, and a variety of programs for people with disabilities. The Arts Ability Project offered a day of drama / music and a day of visual / textural art once a week from October to May for two years.

The program that hosted Arts Ability was established to work with individuals to maintain quality of life, promote community awareness and develop their independence. It is based on independent social skill building, life skills, and work experience. Currently, it serves approximately 60 consumers that are diagnosed with a range of disabilities that include Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, autism, Asperger's, and mental health challenges. Most adults in this program have at least two diagnoses. Individuals range in age from 16 to 50 years.

New Directions - Specialized Day Program for People with Developmental Disabilities

This day program serves adults with severe to profound developmental disabilities as well as behavioural issues who require 24-hour care. These individuals have experience in programs that have either denied them access to services or rejected them. Diagnoses include autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorders. The goal of the day program is to improve quality of life, provide safety, increase socialization and improve the general knowledge and skills of the participants.

Deer Lodge - Special Care Unit for Older Seniors Living with Dementia

Deer Lodge is a long term care facility with a range of different programs. The Arts Ability Project took place in a special care unit for individuals living with cognitive impairments, such as Alzheimer's disease or multi-infarct dementia. Individuals living in this unit have been significantly impacted by the progression of the disease and may have severe difficulties in remembering, communicating, or understanding things and people. The unit provides enhanced staffing and environmental support to facilitate independence and quality of life.



The Arts Ability Project gave older adults in the later stages of dementia an opportunity to work in the visual / textural arts on a weekly basis, providing a meaningful and enjoyable avenue for creative expression and non-verbal communication with family and staff.

Frontier - Northern School Division with a Focus on Children with Alcohol-Related Learning Disabilities

These programs took place in a First Nations reserve community and an adjacent non-treaty community in Northern Manitoba. The Frontier School Division was the host of the Arts Ability Project in the communities, with the focus on children with suspected alcohol-related learning disabilities. The project at this site used the arts to help youth relate to each other, learn from the curriculum, explore their feelings and ideas through creative expression, and make the school environment responsive to their needs and interests.

Arts Ability offered programs in dance and visual arts for youth in the schools in the early and middle grades, junior high, and high school. The Project tried to meet the needs of the school by having an integrated format for the classes and to meet the needs of the community by having the artist in the community engaged in after-school programs.

The Arts Ability Project at this site evolved over two years. The model created classes of eight children, some with disabilities and some without, to work with the artist animator and the classroom teacher for an hour each week. Substitute teachers were found for the rest of the class at this time to enable teacher involvement. When possible, the artist animator led a session a few days later for the whole class, including the teacher and the eight children from the small group. This took careful coordination. However, it was beneficial, because the small group sessions gave the eight children a “head start” with the large group and thus supported them in overcoming shyness or other difficulties. At times, they became leaders in the large group setting.

The artist animator worked with the teacher to develop an art activity that fit in with the curriculum goals of that particular group. Through working with the artist animator, the teacher learned skills to support learning through the arts, and at the same time the teacher assisted the artist in learning how to work with the group dynamics and individual participants.

Artist animator Brigitte Urben expresses her experience with one child,

He came to me after class to show me that his work, a lizard of some type, had its legs broken. We became doctors; we added glue, the white glue that takes a day to dry. We had to add 'bandaids' until tomorrow, which he helped me to do. He understood this entire process well. Relationship was the context, and art was

*...most importantly
PHILOSOPHY...
that it's not the finished
polished products
that are important
here, but the internal
process! And especially
in "mental health
recovery", it is ALL
ABOUT INTERNAL
PROCESS! Something
about spontaneity, going
with the flow, the people,
the people, the people
listen to the people and
do what the people are
wanting[want] to do!*

(Participant)



He came to me after class to show me that his work, a lizard of some type, had its legs broken. We became doctors, we added glue, the white glue that takes a day to dry. We had to add 'bandaids' until tomorrow, which he helped me [to] do. He understood this entire process well. Relationship was the context and art was a safe container for exploration. He learns with an all around body, visual, interactive experience and with respect and love.

(Artist Animator, Brigitte Urben)

a safe container for exploration. He learns with an all around body, visual, interactive experience and with respect and love.

ARTS PROGRAMMING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN VARIOUS SETTINGS

The Program

Choice is very important. If possible participants should be able to choose whether or not they want to be in the room and whether they want to participate or watch, as well as determine the ways in which they participate. This includes choosing what roles they play, what costumes they would like to wear, if any, where they would like to place themselves physically in the room, and whom they would like to work with.

In these ways, the arts program may be run differently than the way the day-to-day programming is run in the host agency or organization. In the arts, it is important to find your own voice, move from your centre, be open to inspiration, and express yourself. In the regular day programs, where set schedules are maintained, participants are required to cooperate with the set rules and regulations of the program. Personal expression and independent initiatives are not, therefore, always easy for support staff to accommodate.

These two ways of working can complement and or influence one another. This can happen if the artist animator, staff, and participants take time to understand the philosophies behind the ways they work and the reasons why each approach may be used in particular situations. Once a clear understanding between the artists and the staff is established, then discussions about how an arts space and method of working that supports more open and creative approaches to working with participants can be developed. Certainly, this kind of collaboration requires that people stretch their vision of themselves, others, and the function(s) of the program and agency or organization to allow for the world of imagination to be developed within a structured environment.

Within institutional or agency settings, there are times when the actions of children, youth or adults with disabilities are restricted to ensure the safety of the person and those with whom they come in contact. Again, while this manual has chosen to focus on the artistic abilities of the participant rather than his or her disability, it is important to negotiate with staff the degree of involvement of some participants. In the beginning, some participants may only be able to participate for a few minutes in the class / activity. But, as time progresses, they may feel increasingly more comfortable with the artist animator and the rest of the group and be able to stay for longer periods. An artist apprentice, Karen Johannsson states,

One of the participants came and gently sat down beside me. She took my hand and held it; she would not let it go. So we both sat



together, quietly waiting for the artist animator to arrive. . . . It took a couple of days before I learnt her name and started to observe her particular behaviours. Over time, however, the capacity of the participants started to become more evident, and their limitations faded from sight.

Space

Drama/Music: Large empty room with moveable chairs and boxes

Art: Washable table and chairs and floor, with a sink in proximity. Dry room for storage of supplies, preferably locked.

Equipment

Drama: Brightly colored scarves, hats, wigs, fake fur, skirts cut in half to make capes, shirts and dresses slit down the back to help with positioning over clothes and wheelchairs.

Art: Non-toxic paints, oil pastels, chalk pastels, markers, glue sticks, pencils, brushes, sponges, toothpicks, colored cardboard, pipe cleaners, feathers, ribbons, buttons, flour, plaster, clay, clay tools, plaster tools and buckets of all sizes. Heavy cardboard and string to make individual portfolios for the artist participants' work.

Music: Box of musical instruments, such as tambourines, bells, small drums, triangles, symbols and plastic pipe.

Time

Depending on the size of the group, 1 or 1 1/2 hours per class is appropriate.

Personnel

- Artist animator
- Artist apprentice or support staff
- Musician
- Sign language interpreter if working with the Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Community and family members and staff whenever possible

Goals

- Discover and develop artistic potential
- Help to build self esteem and self confidence
- Provide an enjoyable experience
- Allow for self / other discovery

Objectives

- Maintain respect for the artist participants, artist animators and others, including respect for private and public space
- Value process over product without dismissing any artistic product created out of this process

I think for the participants, it means a lot when the staff will put on costumes and play out different kinds of things [roles] because it means that there's a real willingness there to play and to be part of the group. There has been wonderful partnering that happens when they act out . . . the staff helps the participant act out the part and gives him/her the support [needed].

(Administrator)



You see a different side to an individual and then you know all that much more about them and then if you're personally involved in it and you can let go, they see a different side of you. . .we all know that friendships don't grow and mature unless barriers are dropped.

(Support Worker)



- Create a safe place from which to instigate change
- Abandon preconceived notions or ideas about individual potential, regardless of disability
- Make sure the artist animator identifies and validates the gifts / contributions of the group each class, in addition to something important or unique about each participant

Music Programming

Arts programming activities are most effective when they are enjoyable. This is because we all learn more when we are having fun. In addition, when planning an outline for each class, the artist animator should consider how the artist participant may want to reflect upon or use expression in real life. It is also important to note that in many long-term institutional settings, persons with and without disabilities are subject to isolation and routines that can be mundane. Drama and music can provide opportunities for communication, collaboration and socialization, while simultaneously allowing for the resurfacing of underlying artistic talents. Artist animator, Clare Stephensen, points out,

One of the most powerful ways I found to get the participants involved was to first make a personal connection with them. This meant finding a person, greeting them by name, making eye contact; sometimes a gentle touch . . .then I would invite them to work on a project.

We have all suffered from the negative effects of misplaced criticism and one result is that we start to shut down our creative process. It is of the utmost importance for me to try and mitigate the effects of the stifling of an individual's creativity.

These words speak to the need for patience and flexibility on the part of the artist animator.

Sample Scenario

I. Musical Adventure Sheets

These sheets list a broad range of possible activities for each class. Before preparing the sheets, hold a short meeting before the first class to identify both group and individual strengths and talents. Remember that some artist participants are going to be guarded. Develop activities and approaches ahead of time that may help to put participants at ease within this new musical experience. As you develop the Musical Adventure sheets,

- Draw upon artist participants' pre-existing knowledge and skills set
- Use an eclectic approach: do not focus on one style
- Be familiar with a range of musical instruments
- Involve music in other areas, such as drama or dance

Continue to evaluate your process and make shifts according to your thoughts and reflections and the feedback you receive from others



Sample Sheets:

- Create an atmosphere or mood using sound, such as sounds from nature, including the sea shore, breezes and forest, or from urban environments, such as buses, trains and open air markets
- Introduce music from different countries, such as Irish jigs
- Concoct your own or the group's eclectic mix of music
- Discover the voices / songs in the crowd
- Invite artist participants to instruct the class on their favourite instrument
- Organize an event for a special celebration / holiday
- Recreate favourite groups or individuals, such as The Beatles or Elvis
- Learn as a group about a specific composer, and play his or her music
- Build your own musical instruments and perform with them as a group

Challenges:

- Keeping artist participants with different musical interests connected as a group
- Knowing that progress for some artist participants comes slowly

Benefits:

- Opening up of possibilities to recognize and applaud the skills and talents of artist participants
- Building of self esteem and self confidence
- Building of sense of community among artist participants, staff and other participants
- Learning among artist participants and artist animators about how to negotiate with other group members about interests and needs.

As one artist animator, Tara McKinnis, notes,

I was quite amazed. . . . I think it worked because I gave the power to them [artist participants], asking them to suggest and create.

Another artist animator, Sue Proctor, adds,

When one staff member participated in the class, she made up a song with one of the artist participants: one line at a time. The artist participant would throw out a line and then she, the staff member, would respond with another line. The relationship was equal. It was, 'I have something to give; you have something to give.' There is no 'you need my help' or 'I am more able than you are.'

This level of engagement, between staff and artist participant,





destabilizes hierarchy and opens up a space for collaboration and change.

Drama Programming

Setting the scene for a drama group or class can be quite intimidating for some artist participants. We all feel vulnerable in certain situations, and drama assumes a degree of proficiency with respect to speech, voice projection, memory and movement. This can be challenging for persons with cognitive disabilities, physical limitations and / or anxiety. Clearly, some assistance may be required to set the scene, invite participation and, literally, allow the drama to unfold.

The importance of each member of the team needs to be stressed from the onset: no play succeeds because of one actor. This means that the development and transformation of relationships within the program are very important. Artist animator Sue Proctor talks about how relationships develop:

There have been some wonderful staff - participant moments in the group. One was where one of the participants was driving an imaginary car and the staff [member] was standing in the doorway. He [the staff member] looked in and started singing the music that was on the radio in the car. As the participant was driving, he started to move to the rhythm of the music that was coming from the radio through the staff. Another time was when they were going mime fishing in drama, they got stopped by another participant who was checking for fishing licenses. They

were scrambling together to stay out of trouble. The staff was calling the participant "Bro! Hey, Bro!" To have those kinds of moments occur in relationships between staff and participants supports staff recognition of the abilities of the participant because they are equals, more like partners. There are no big differences in capability there. They are as capable as each other in the game. When people play together as equals it validates a person's sense of self and contributes to the development of relationships.

Drama allows participants to move out of their assigned roles whether as a person with a disability, a support staff member, an anxious job seeker, a child or a parent. As a result, artist participants begin to take risks as they 'try on' a new identity that may ultimately be both empowering and informing. Parents, for example, may begin to understand a son or daughter's frustrations in living without speech. An artist participant with a disability may find a confidence he or she can take into new community settings or begin to believe in his or her ability to move into the arts as a career.

When planning for and facilitating classes, it is important to:

- Acknowledge the fears and anxieties of artist participants
- Be patient
- Allow for inclusion in different ways, such as sound effects, lighting
- Accept that artist participants may not always want to

When they came to the class, everybody was the same. . . we really made sure that we understood that, yes, we can get on our hands and our [knees] legs and crawl and be bears or skunks or rats, whatever, and they [staff] did it right beside us, and I think they saw that at that time we were all equals, and it didn't matter, and I think they liked that.

(Support Worker)



be centre stage

- Know that the possibilities are endless
- Make room for laughter
- Invite participation by staff, community, family members

A debriefing session is useful after a drama class to discuss how certain activities can be expanded upon or modified to reinforce the skills / strengths of participants. It is most effective if participants can give feedback directly to the artist animator so that their interests and needs are directly reflected in the programming.

Sample Scenarios

I. Warm up Exercises

The goal is to facilitate inclusion. The class can begin with an invitation to have the group sing and act out a popular song. Artist participants can choose whether or not to sing or mime. As the artist participants become more comfortable, they become more connected to the music and / or the movements. As one artist animator says,

If you are dancing in a scene and all you can do is move with a ribbon, then all of your life force is there willing and moving that ribbon and it is wonderful to see.

The movement of one finger is participation.

2. Calling for a Story

This is an excellent example of inviting participation. When the artist participants contribute to the story, they take ownership of that story and are able to take pride in the outcome/ performance. For some, choosing a costume is enough; for others, control of his or her script is more important. Again, flexibility is the key. When rules and regulations are a strong part of the institutional setting, for some artist participants, it takes time to move out of that comfort zone (or expected role) and begin to take risks of stating their preferences and creative ideas. Eventually, coming to trust that the group is a safe place to develop their own scripts contributes significantly to the engagement and empowerment of artist participants within the program.

The artist animator needs to follow a plan for the story, as well as the action. Often the two will vary, but it is vital to follow the lead of the artist participants in this regard and review the class for future reference.

Sample:

Artist animator (A)

Artist participant (P)

(A) What should our theme be today?

(P) How about Thanksgiving?



*I have seen others
[participants] take
phenomenal risks that
I know they would not
have previously taken. We
have a tremendously gifted
“story-teller” amongst us;
I have witnessed it. Voice
inflections, expression,
manner with children. . . .
it was such a privilege to
watch.*

(Participant)





Clowning/ drama -
 (call it what you may)
 - is NOT the peripheral;
 it is ALL of the essence
 of life. I know it to be
 full of relationships,
 humour, communication,
 teamwork, fun, work,
 spontaneity, rehearsal,
 understanding, play, and
 silliness. It is serious
 play; and it is healthy.
 I await drama nights
 (though bone-tired
 physically) in anticipation
 of a good time and have
 never, — not once — been
 disappointed. It seems
 to rejuvenate my energy
 level. It is most definitely
 a change of pace and a
 stress-reducing program
 for me. From budgets/
 numbers/admin/crisis
 work to “catching a
 wink”, playing charades
 or the like. A welcome
 change! A breath of fresh
 air!”

(Participant)

(A) Thanksgiving—okay—what could happen on Thanksgiving?
 (P) Well, people could come to dinner. The family could cook dinner.
 (P) I could go to my girlfriend’s house.
 (P) I could play on the computer
 (P) I could watch TV
 (A) Okay—the house is on the farm; the farmer shoots the turkey for dinner, and then they cook the food; then the relatives come over, then they watch TV. We can show the show they are watching on TV

Who’s the farmer? Who wants to be the mother?

The ‘crew’ then assembles the props and sets the stage, making sure that the positioning of tables and chairs allow space for manipulation of wheelchairs. Artist participants who are visually impaired may want to check the area for obstacles. Remember, wheelchairs make good boats, sleds and cars.

In this sample story, the narrative both guides the action and builds off the action. Major skill areas to develop in order to make the notion of story making possible are mime, improvisation and use of ‘silly’ objects. Mime means that any prop or activity can be ‘pulled out of the air,’ while improvisation means that anything can happen. A ‘silly’ object is the transformation of any object or space into something else. This is all done in the spirit of humor and well-intentioned laughter.

Challenges:

- Takes time to build a cohesive group that acknowledges the value and creative contribution of all participants
- Takes time for artist participants and staff to move past their performance anxiety

Benefits:

- Builds a safe environment for artist participants to take risks and discover aspects of the self
- Identifies new and innovative ways of communication
- Allows for community building
- Builds confidence in artist participants
- Helps artist participants to focus on their strengths

One of the artist animators, Sue Proctor, recalls being introduced to a woman who could only move her chin.

I soon discovered, however, that she had a great sense of theatre. In the second year, she began to articulate sound through tone and emotion. By the third year, she was taking the lead role in performances, drawing cheers from the crowd. She was animated, moving her body as if from the very core of her being.



Visual / Textural Arts Programming

Most of us have picked up a pencil or crayons and drawn stick figure versions of our family at some time or another, sometimes to have it taped with pride by a parent or guardian onto the wall or refrigerator door. Why do we devalue our work and that of others years later? One artist animator observes,

As the year progressed, staff gained an awareness of the artist participant's abilities, which they had not appreciated in the past. One staff talked about how she has seen M's work as scribbling the same thing over and over again, until the artist animator pointed out that M's choice of colors were definite and expressive. This gave the staff a new way of looking at M. . . . One staff began to notice that when M was upset, her choice of colors were darker and her strokes heavier. In this way, M's expression of herself through her art was recognized and given validity.

Because of the change in the staff's interpretation of the artist participant's work, they were able to communicate with her on a different level. Again, this level of engagement allows for social and ideological change.

As the artist participant begins to produce some treasured pieces, make sure they are stored in a portfolio for safekeeping. This helps the artist participant to recognize his or her full potential, as his or her work is valued and can also be displayed.

Claire Stephensen talks about her experience as an artist animator in the Arts Ability Project:

Creative energy is about being a physical being in the world. It is how we express our aliveness and connection to the earth and others. I realized that the three things that are absolutely necessary for the creative process to happen are acceptance, inspiration and encouragement. We may get these things from within or from outside of ourselves but get them we must.

Acceptance of an individual meant meeting them where they are without an agenda of changing them. The emphasis is on what is going on in their life, what is important or beautiful or ugly to them, what they want to say.

The inspiration was in the introduction of ideas and materials for them to explore. The encouragement was necessary at times for the person to be able to risk giving expression to their thoughts or feelings.

It was very important to create a safe place for this creative process to take place. Within the rules of the agency we made an art place where the rules were somewhat different. Cleanliness and/or order were not absolutes. It was ok to make a mess, to try things that were unfamiliar, to push the boundaries of the usual or comfortable.

If there was one thing that almost every patient with Alzheimer's

Yes, there's been definite changes between then and now, some of it would have happened irregardless of Drama but, it [change] was reinforced or affirmed again through the Drama setting. It has 's happened through an openness on everybody's part, an openness to each other and to learn from what the moment could teach. . . . And not necessarily from the planned 'lesson.'

(Participant)



. . . As I said, Claire, as an artist, sort of has a 'let's go with the flow, let's see what emerges' . . . A wonderful approach to helping people learn to express themselves and to deepen their ability to communicate or to understand or to see something in a different light.

(Administrator)



remembered it was that they were not good at art. It was often a matter of cajoling, encouraging, joking to get them to try a project. Much to the apprentice's and my surprise, participants began to get very involved with what they were doing. One man who would protest that he was not an artist and that his hands hurt would relax enough to get started and then spend 60 – 75 minutes completely absorbed in making a drawing or painting.

I find that it is good to be light on my feet. I have a project idea before the class but stay tuned in to what is happening, in the moment, and make changes as we go. It is like a dance where sometimes I lead and other times I follow.

It was very gratifying to return to the sites after the summer off. We were welcomed, with warmth and enthusiasm by both staff and participants. The folks with Alzheimer's don't know who I am or what I am doing there but there is a positive response that suggests that somehow they know I'm ok.: that it is all right to accompany me to the sunroom to do something. Consistently I have people try using unfamiliar materials in unfamiliar ways and become absorbed in what they are doing. Many then show pleasure in the finished project.

At the beginning many staff said that they are not creative or artistic and were not very comfortable making art. This has been changing and staff at all three locations are more relaxed about their own efforts and the work done by the participants. There is less judgment about results and much more enjoyment and appreciation of the process.

Sample Scenarios

I. Making a Mural

Begin by talking about the history of murals and bring some pictures to show participants some samples. Open up a dialogue on the different frameworks for the mural:

- Based on a memory
- Based on a concept or idea surrounding an event, such as a holiday
- Based on a film or a story

Make sure there is a consensus before you proceed with preliminary sketches. The group then gathers the materials, including canvas or a roll of large paper, paints or crayons, glue, scissors, magazines, pictures, buttons, memorabilia and textured material to complete the project as a group. For those persons with severe physical limitations, apply paint to the tire the wheelchair and encourage them to move freely across the canvas, which can be spread out across the floor.

Ensure that enough time is given for the artist participants to review their work. They need time to acknowledge their creative potential. The mural can be displayed in a prominent place to showcase talent.

2. Mask Making

Masks can be ornate or simple. Again, the process is as valuable



as the product. This activity encourages individuality and creativity. It offers a less threatening venue than drama to be able to 'try on' different identities.

Begin by collecting materials like paper, glue, feathers, glitter paint, sequins, dried grass, leaves, tissue paper and colored pens or markers. Discuss with the group if they have worn masks before: when and where. Talk about how people can hide behind and reveal aspects of the self using a mask.

Make the masks together, allowing square ones, round ones etc. to materialize. Provide opportunity for dialogue and reflection. Some may want to wear their masks in a sketch or next-week performance.

3. Holographs

A holograph is a kind of print. Provide samples to show the group before you begin. Talk about texture and composition, as well as printing technique. Work on your own design in pencil with the group, so they know there is room to experiment.

Shapes cut from a variety of materials, such as string, cardboard, fabric, pasta shells, lace etc. are glued firmly to a heavy cardboard base, creating a block, which can then be inked and printed. The project will take two classes, as the glue will need time to dry. Aside from learning how a print is made, this project allows for tactile and visual stimulation.

Challenges:

- Creating enough space around a canvas to allow everyone to contribute and to maintain everyone's interest
- Maintaining participant's interests in projects that must be carried out over more than one session. A review of what the artist participants have created and why is important can help with this challenge

Benefits:

- Builds a safe environment for artist participants to take risks and discover aspects of the self
- Fosters collaboration, encourages teamwork and makes room for negotiation
- Empowers persons with disabilities to recognize the value of their contributions, small or large
- Allows for tactile and visual stimulation
- Supports imaginative thinking and recognition of individual strengths

Artist apprentice Kelvin Free describes his experience sharing art:

There are two ways in which my art has enriched me. One is the education of the senses that for me is the visual. I see more and am more aware of what I'm seeing. The other way is through



She's got something new all of the time and she doesn't stick to the traditional idea of art. I was really happy to see that. It wasn't always here's your paintbrush and this week we'll make it a blue paintbrush. . . really anything, from painting flowers to making pottery.

(Support staff)





the education of the heart. Through the expression of emotion one acquires a rich emotional life. It seems that simply through working with colour the participants are becoming more aware of what they are seeing. All in the group seem to be acquiring progress in some fashion.

Dance Programming

Each individual has his or her own creative process. Through the process each participant will expand his or her view of the artistic medium, as well as learn to appreciate other individuals' work in the session. The artist animators facilitate this by sharing the techniques that they have learned through their own quests for self-expression in artistic experiences.

Society often views people with disabilities as being "less of a person." In the artistic world, however, people that are different are often viewed as exceptional. For society to keep changing in a positive direction, we need to have creative leaders in arts education and an appreciation of original ideas.

The artist animator needs to find ways to connect with each artist participant. Each artist participant deserves opportunities to become involved to the maximum of his or her ability. It is the artist animator's responsibility to find out how to connect or how to facilitate connections so the participants can express themselves physically, intellectually and creatively through the shared dance experience.

Sample Scenarios:

I. Follow the Leader

Each participant is given the opportunity to go to the centre of the room or circle and improvise or make up a move. Everyone else is invited to imitate this move as they are physically able. This exercise is a great equalizer.

All participants learn that each person has an equal opportunity to express him or her self. No matter what movement the other participant does, it is validated, respected and everyone else is invited to try it. This helps with self-awareness for the participant in the middle and also, increases awareness of each individual's unique creativity. There is no right or wrong movement in this activity.

Many times in dance choreography repetition is used for creative expression. Also, the same move performed by someone else can look quite different, or can be changed slightly by increasing the speed or dynamic of the movement.

Often, sessions do not proceed as expected. Judy Cook describes an Arts Ability session in a Northern School:

In the "follow the leader exercise" in one particular class no one wanted to go to the middle. I think it was because of peer pressure. The first participant I invited wouldn't do it and then no one else would do it. I abandoned the exercise, not knowing what to do

Talking with people has to be very appropriate to how much they understand and their own image of themselves. . . we can really undermine people by speaking simply from ignorance. I think that's really important.

(Artist Animator)





and went on to something else. Later on in the same class I gave them another activity called “I’m here and I want to go there.” The class then chants together “I Know! I’ll (walk, run, fly, roll) etc. The participants get the chance to think of their own movement. This exercise worked beautifully, and we spent a long time exploring all the movement possibilities. Everyone participated in this activity, and it fulfilled my original objectives of encouraging self-expression in a group.

2. The Balance Exercise

The artist’s intention is to work on elements of balance, focus of attention, control of body, and imagination. The participants stand on one leg and bend over, pretending to pick up a penny and put it in their pocket. The participants imagine different objects, pretending to pick them up and then feeling how the shape and weight of their imagined object would affect their balance. Participants conceive of many creative and fun ideas, such as picking up a credit card or a carton full of eggs. This can include exploring different creative dance elements.

Flexibility in the program is always important in order to meet different individual’s needs and abilities in the group. As Judy Cook, an artist animator, points out:

In one class I was doing a “positions of the feet” exercise, incorporating jumping. One of the participants was trying very hard to do the exercise. He wasn’t doing the exercise as given but

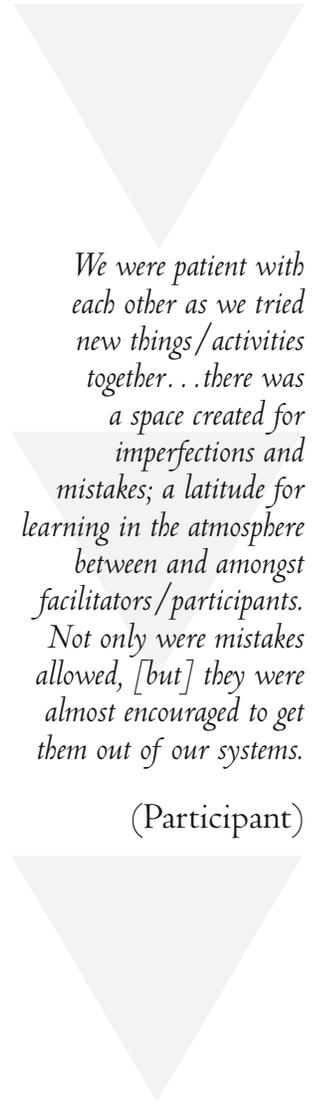
was really trying to jump high. I changed the direction I had been moving in and then had the whole class try to jump as high as they could and not worry so much about having their feet in the correct positions. This in turn gave me the idea to do an across the floor exercise in practicing running-jumping and doing a high-5 with a partner. Now the whole class could participate and experience the feeling of success and the joy of jumping.

Challenges

- Working through the participants’ insecurity about body image and strengths
- Being innovative about inclusion of all disability groups

Benefits:

- Identifies new and innovative ways of communicating
- Builds confidence
- Allows for team building and collaborative thinking



We were patient with each other as we tried new things/activities together. . . there was a space created for imperfections and mistakes; a latitude for learning in the atmosphere between and amongst facilitators/participants. Not only were mistakes allowed, [but] they were almost encouraged to get them out of our systems.

(Participant)

Module 3



With non-verbal people it is so important to listen. Why would you listen to somebody who can't talk? If you ask a question and pay attention, look at them and listen, the participant will communicate to you. They will express how they're feeling, what they want, what music they prefer, what kind of stories they like, what kind of costumes they might like to wear, and what they might like to do in the play or in the story. It is important to build two-way communication.

(Artist Animator)

The success of the teacher is measured by the students' absorption in their work and by their desire to continue. In this way true growth takes place. Often does a student's work through its integrity, through its power, and through its rightness exceed the technically perfect work of the teacher.

(Elias Katz)

TRAINING AND MENTORING: WORKING WITH APPRENTICES

These programs rest on the belief that “anyone can do art” – that they simply need access to the tools and to be led by someone who loves to use various tools and modalities in creative expression. Artist animator Sue Proctor states,

To facilitate these classes you have to be ready to pull tricks out of your bag, to be incredibly flexible, to fly by the seat of your pants. People's lives are never straightforward, level, the same each day. There are ups and downs. Whether you are working in an

institution or in a day program or an organization of some kind, the organization has its rhythms too. There are many things that seem beyond control of the artist animator, artist participants or the staff managing the program. There are day trips, appointments, renovations and crises. There are changes in the environment, and health issues. You might think that you are perfectly prepared and then you realize from the group that major changes are required.

Qualities for Artist Animators

- **Respect:** the foundation of all interpersonal effectiveness and the elixir to foster trust and learning
- **Flexibility:** essential because working in an organizational or service environment means that you have no control over many aspects of the environment
- **Imagination:** to develop vision, a sense of direction and ability to see what is not always obvious. It also enables exploration of possibilities, as in how people communicate through body language, tone, engagement



- **Experimentation:** informed, conscious, and intuitive trial and error brings forth new ideas, shifts, change and new approaches
- **Playfulness:** nourishes a sense of humour and laughter, essential for making it through the rough spots
- **Persistence:** important because changes happen in increments but can be a challenge to detect. Bit by bit relationships and the environment change and grow, but at any particular moment it can be difficult to see
- **Passion:** the core of the moving energy of the programs is the artist's passion for their own art. This is what moves them: the gift they have to share

These factors enliven others and, as animators see other people develop an interest in the arts, this can nourish them.

It is essential that, while they are participating in the arts programming process, the people who provide the support do not adopt the behaviours associated with the role of teacher, therapist, behaviorist or other authoritative person. Instead, all participants must enter the process equally, and must commit to sharing the artistic space.

These programs can be led by artists without formal training in working with people with disabilities in agencies or institutions. If an artist works with participants and administration to determine needs and possible approaches, good things happen very quickly. It is important for the artist animators to find

out about whom the artist participants in their program will be, what their interests, daily routines, and needs for support are. The more information the artist animator has about the program and the people they are going to be working with, the more prepared and responsive she or he can be. The artist animators with the Arts Ability Project learned to work with different participant populations by getting to know them and trying out different approaches. When the artists gained experience, they were able to orient other artists.

For the artist animator, it can be helpful to have apprentices in the room while the programming is taking place. This makes it easier for the artist animator to lead the artistic programming and to remain attuned to what the participants need in order to be able to interact. A staff member describes the situation at the live-in hospital:

You almost need a second person to deal with those things, and even getting the people to the program, because you have to invite each person individually and if you are hoping to have five people in the program, you have to bring them one at a time and then you have to have someone there to begin the program. Otherwise, when you come back with the third person, the first two are gone. You almost need that second person to keep things flowing smoothly and meeting residents' needs during the program.



If I had gone in to teach a class like these this without having followed the artist-animator, I would have probably started teaching, trying to teach the different concepts of art that I might try to teach in an elementary school classroom and it would have been totally inappropriate. . .”

(Apprentice)





Artist Apprentices

The apprentice model works well for expanding these programs and helping new artist apprentices gradually acquire skills. The key quality for an apprentice is an affinity and passion for the arts: the art form itself generates the power for renewal and the inspiration to release creative energy.

People who are going to carry out this work do need the ability to handle uncertainty and to persevere through difficult conditions. Often people that are already employed / affiliated with a site have a great deal to contribute because they understand the experience, needs and communication styles of members of the participant group.

Many artist apprentices in the Arts Ability Project are people who experience disadvantages associated with living with a disability. It is important that the apprentice is able to articulate the kinds of supports her or she would like to have in place. These supports can become refined during this period.

Agency staff with an affinity for the arts may also be able to adopt an arts programming role, in addition to, or in place of, their institutional roles. Apprenticing the interested staff can provide them with the opportunity to learn facilitation skills, as well as ensure the continuity of the program at that site. One administrator notes,

Year two, as I understand it...we'll start to actively train some of our staff to carry it on... to get in some of the skills, some of the ways of working, some of the ideas, some of the creativity, some of what the artist animators bring in, and imbed those in the staff... The training is a major reason why the agency was a taker on this.

Dual roles can be challenging, as staff's interactions need to be guided by a unique set of principles in art class. The nature of their interactions with participants will likely be different within and outside of the sessions.

Graduated Approach

A graduated approach works best in training people to take on lead roles in facilitating arts programming with specific groups.

- **Year one** - The artist animator develops the program appropriate for the group and the organization that is providing the program.
- **Year two** - The same artist animator takes on an interested artist apprentice and spends time training some staff from the organization (some may be participants from year I)
- **Year three** - The artist apprentices would take the lead role in programming, with the artist animator providing consultation, support and resources. The staff would also



be a support and continue to give participants accessibility to the art facilities, materials, and activities when the artist apprentice is not there.

The length of time of the apprenticeship in any given site for a particular individual varies. By participating in creative activities where apprentices are required to engage “on the spot” alongside the artist participants, the artist apprentices are able to consider the participants’ perspectives and become more flexible. They also experience, through apprenticeship, concrete examples of what kinds of art projects are appropriate and of interest to an individual participant, and what processes can be used to assess this in future programs.

Skills

Several skills may be helpful to the overall development of the artist apprentice. Helpful skills include the following:

- Flexibility about time, program content, physical space
- Ability to be aware and responsive to people’s needs in the moment
- Valuing of process over an end product
- Ability to be open-minded
- Recognition of each individual’s potential and strengths

Supports need to be in place for the apprentice, in terms of debriefing time and ongoing dialogue with the artist animator, artist participants, administrators, and support staff. Handouts, reading lists, and activity profiles are useful as well.

The following is an artist apprentice’s personal perspective and description of her first year doing this work. It was her first year after graduating from Fine Arts and the work demanded a strong shift in perspective. This shift in perspective is significant to changing attitudes in the organizations, community and society where people with disabilities live and/or work:

As an [artist] apprentice, I started the year with a great deal of uncertainty. I’d never worked with people with disabilities before and didn’t know what to expect. The first day when I walked in, I was actually rather horrified – here was a roomful of people doing what some would consider rather weird and bizarre things, making noises, talking nonsensically, moving around oddly and I wondered what am I doing here? What can I possibly contribute to this? I was quite overwhelmed.

As I got used to the participants, their behaviors and noises didn’t bother me as much but I got quite discouraged by their lack of response. I’d had ideas about teaching art, not keeping people from eating the pastels. I figured this was a rather futile endeavor. How can one talk about people making choices, much less making art, when they would not hold a pencil or played with [their] socks the whole time? How can one talk about creativity or self-expression

There were two individuals sitting across from each other and one individual was doing a drawing and the person across from him. . . . was doing a similar drawing, following after the first person and if the person was making vertical lines down the paper, the other person would make vertical lines down the paper. . . . there is obviously some level of communication going on between those two people and some relationship going on between those two individuals.

(Support Staff)



if people say and do the same things over and over?

Gradually though, I began to see that the art teaching was less important than the connections we were making among people. I still would eat pastels if given the chance, but she takes my hand and strokes her hair with it, and then waits for me to continue. . . it shows me that art class is a safe place for her; I am a safe person, and that is the beginning of creative possibility.

I came to appreciate this year how difficult it is for participants to feel safe. It seems to me that a lot of their behaviours are defenses against what must be a pretty scary world. I would find myself during the year, when I wasn't with participants, wondering what things must be like from their point of view. I'd catch myself twiddling my thumbs when anxious and think of C picking things up, putting them down repeatedly. When I looked at some of my favourite possessions, which make me feel comforted or safe or happy, I'd think of T and his socks or M stashing treasures in her pockets.

Their behaviours no longer seemed as odd or bizarre, and I'd start to come in and not notice them any more than I pay attention to my friend who has a habit of clicking the partial plate she wears on her teeth. This year has been a lesson in accepting people as they are and realizing that there are more commonalities than differences.

It has been hard to let go of my desire to see results. I find myself

getting frustrated when someone stops in the middle of a work and doesn't finish it, or when I work with someone who seems to me to have no motivation or interest in what they are doing. Still, the importance of the process and connections that develop into relationships have taken precedence over this need to have finished works.

The most helpful part of my learning process was observing Claire, the artist animator. She saw this program as valuable, even when I wondered what the point was, since people kept doing the same things over and over.

In sessions, I tried to do what she did — make suggestions but not impose my will; invite people to try things but not force them into things they didn't want to do; keep a sense of humor; treat people with respect and warmth; not putting people down or embarrassing them or telling them what they were doing was wrong; using descriptive words, not "good" and "bad"; accepting their behaviours but not allowing them to use their behaviours in an unproductive way.

I watched the way in which Claire would talk and joke with the participants, treating them as equals. Her approach to the participants was consistent and this helped to create a safe environment for them. By the end of the year, the participants were comfortable with us.

Regarding skills that are important for people who want to teach



these kinds of art classes, open-minded listening is the most important. Listening to someone else is a way of respecting them, of acknowledging the importance of their ideas and opinions, of giving them space to figure things out. When someone listens to me with an open mind, not jumping on me with his or her expectations and telling me what I should do or be, then I feel as if they have given me a gift. It boosts my self-esteem and my self-confidence.

It is important for people who are often not heard, or are overlooked or disregarded, to be able to express themselves in whatever way they are able to and to feel that someone is paying attention.

Another important aspect of teaching is patience. Often it is necessary to repeat things and to go over instructions and techniques several times before people [grasp concepts]. Sometimes they never do, and then one needs to be flexible and come up with other ideas and other ways of doing things.

Flexibility in planning is crucial. It is good to go in with a plan but it is also important to recognize when the plan is not working and be ready to do something different. Sometimes teaching requires a lot of spur of the moment thinking and problem-solving.

Finally, it is important to have fun. Art classes should be places where new things can be tried and explored, where mistakes are

fine since they lead to new ideas, and where materials and ideas are shared. I found that when I was enjoying myself in the class, I was more relaxed and happy and this attitude would then spread to the participants. I considered it a success if people seemed relaxed, felt safe, and were having a good time.

Reflecting on Practice: Themes, Tips and Exercises

There are some key elements to providing inclusive and empowering arts programming for people with disabilities. This section offers short explanations of some of the guiding questions used to assess how each theme was being practiced in the programs, including insights from the external evaluator of the Arts Ability Project.

Opportunities for Self Expression

When participants were given time, space, resources and the invitation to make their own pieces of art, they had the opportunity for creative self-expression. As one program administrator comments,

I think with her [a Focus Student], she was able to produce something that was accepted and she hasn't been able to do that for a long time... She was able to create something that she had ownership of, rather than always being told 'this is how you do it', 'this is what you do' and so on. So, I think for her in that sense,





It kind of provides, in more general terms, a support system or a group of people who wanted to learn about an area that gets overlooked at times, and I thought it would be enjoyable to get to know myself a bit more.

(Participant)

What we've seen is that the cliques are kind of meshing together. . . individuals who wouldn't necessarily do things outside of the program or outside of the classroom instruction or outside of the community together. . . they've become friends. . . two people who didn't really communicate, they belonged to two different cliques. . . those two have become friends, they've drawn in their other group of friends and we have this big huge, I call them the Arts and Ability gang.

(Administrator)

just being exposed to creativity [helped].

The external evaluator for the Arts Ability Project states that the equation should not be figured primarily in terms of artist-participants' skills, but rather upon the development of capacities within environments and among facilitators and supporters to support creative expression.

Reflective Question:

How can participants with disabilities be supported during arts programming to articulate their needs, desires, and dreams through their explorations with different kinds of artistic mediums?

Response - This can be achieved by:

- Providing the materials that participants want to work with
- Building a safe and creative atmosphere
- Ensuring that the guiding principles of the program are respected by all those who enter the artistic space
- Giving minimal instruction about the way to use materials
- Giving lots of time to create
- Not pressuring people to produce a product, finish at a certain time, or do things a certain way
- Ensuring that artist animators, apprentices and

support staff remain aware of the participants' needs and offer support when requested by the artist-participants to do so

Valuing Process over Product

As one support staff said, "one great thing about the art class is that you don't have to be really good at it [art] in order to be successful at it." Certainly, a key element to working with the creative process is to value what people are doing and to be supportive of how they are doing it. As one artist animator stated, "I hope they have the feeling that it's non-threatening, there's no right way or that I'm some kind of judge of whether they've done it right or wrong."

Reflective Question:

How can we make the process of creating art a priority while also supporting the artist participants in their efforts to create products they are proud of and want to share with others?

Response - This can be achieved by:

- Emphasizing that the process is paramount
- Trusting that products that emerge out of the artistic process are always valuable
- Allowing the art to speak for itself; not interpreting or struggling to figure out what something is or what it means.



Allow the artist-participant the space to explain or not explain his or her work

- Allowing for a limited emphasis on product when doing warm-up exercises or trying different techniques to inspire new creative ideas
- Remembering that if people ever want to produce a product for a specific event or deadline, the participants need to decide upon the destination of their work and the timeframe they want to work with.
- Taking great care to ensure that events where artwork is shown are characterized by respect, recognition, and approval of the artists and their work
- Developing audience sensibility through providing audiences with appropriate guidance and cues towards sensitive, respectful, and thoughtful responses. This is particularly important if it is the first time that a mainstream audience is encountering Disability Arts and Culture. If artist participants wish to explain their work, provide statements, program notes and / or introductory remarks that will help the audience make sense of the art work and that place it within a socio-political context.

Flexible Environment

A flexible environment is necessary for the beginning phases when the arts program tries to find its place within the host organization. It is also a technique that the artist animators can

use in their classrooms. One artist animator describes, “I wasn’t sure what I was going to get and I’ve been adjusting from week to week...but primarily I’ve seen them [participants] develop their personal skills, their confidence and... I guess I ... don’t walk in with huge expectations.”

Reflective question:

Are those involved in hosting or implementing the art programs being responsive to the artist participants and to others who are joining the classes?

Response - This can be achieved by:

- Allowing art to emerge in its own good time
- Ensuring that artist animators do not hover over participants as they work as that creates a feeling of surveillance in the classroom
- Avoiding verbal clutter. Be aware of the ways that people in the class communicate. If people are non-verbal, for example, use gestures and not words to communicate
- Working to be sensitive to the emotional experiences of the participants

Supportive, Exploratory Environment

The artist animator always needs to have a variety of art supplies and creative ideas ready to offer individuals who may

...every time we’ve had an art show, people have been totally blown away by what’s been on display and I think it’s a very...

...important opportunity to break down some of the barriers between the participants’ world and society at large...it can be a point of awakening for people to become more aware of people with disabilities and their abilities and their place in the world. A lot of people in the so-called real world are fairly insecure about their artistic ability...but it’s not like it’s less or it’s not done right, it can be there just as legitimately as anybody’s work...it gives the artist participants a chance to be recognized on a level playing field and gives the general population a chance to shift their perceptions of people with disabilities, maybe see things with different eyes.

(Artist-animator)



Each group has its own political sensibilities, its own culture and its own language and, unless you're aware of that language and that culture, unless you know people well that are part of that group and part of that language. . . It is important to get education around this before trying to work with the community.

(Artist Animator)



have unique interests, abilities, and comfort zones. The support to explore artistically is also based on individual interests and needs. One of the artist apprentices describes her work with one of the participants,

There's one woman who picks things up, puts them on the floor. . . and she still does that. . .but there are times now where you can take her hand and invite her to do something a little different for just a moment, even if its just one mark on the page or put her fingers into clay a little bit. . .and for a long time she would sit and hold her hands rigidly if you tried to do that and now she'll allow you to take her hands and [help her to]do that. You think well it's a really small thing. . .but there is a change. I think it's all about looking for those little things, instead of thinking 'we'll have them do drawings.'

Another artist participant also stated that it was empowering to learn new art-making techniques and figure out how to use them in her own work. Working with professional artists was significant. As one artist participant points out,

I thought it was cool [to be] working with people who had more knowledge in the field than myself, and sometimes people have limitations and I guess we were accepted for our limitations and were able to progress at our own speed.

Reflective Question:

How can participants with disabilities be offered greater opportunities to explore their identity, skills, needs, relationships and values through the creative process?

Response - This can be achieved by:

- Remembering that artistic expression originates from lived experiences: things we have seen, felt, lived, witnessed, thought and dreamed about. For people who live in institutional settings, there are many images that they can draw upon from there as well as the mundane details of our lives
- Appreciating that within institutional settings, free expression of one's personal experiences through artistic means can only take place under conditions of absolute safety. There must be an explicit understanding that artist participants will not be punished, ridiculed, exposed, confronted, or impacted by other kinds of negative consequences as a result of their expressive explorations.

Being Intuitive

In this kind of program one just has to let go and follow what is happening. Organizational staff that witnessed this said that



it is “a wonderful approach to helping people learn to express themselves and to deepen their ability to communicate or to understand or to see something in a different light.” It also led to the development of the artist animators’ own skills. One drama facilitator describes working with people with disabilities as bringing him back to using his senses,

Teaching brought this back to me...sensing through your back - and I got better at that so I was more aware of what was going on in the room and that was something I'd forgotten about...but what I found in this room is you can't do that: you have to be aware.

When we work from the Independent / Interdependent Living philosophy, it makes it clear that learning about and supporting one another is very important.

Reflective Question:

How can those implementing the programming be allowed opportunities to be intuitive while also taking into consideration many other factors that are related to the participants, resources, and the settings where the program takes place?

Response - This can be achieved by:

- Entering into exchanges with great humility and

accepting the limitations of one’s own instinctual and communicative capacities

- Accepting the possibility of an incomplete or imperfect understanding of the work created by the artists in the program
- Using all your senses when creating art and when working with other people
- Using alternative forms of communication, such as using gestures or images rather than words.

Increasing Awareness of Disability Issues

Notions about what disability is, how it affects people’s capacities to live, to create, and to lead others were addressed throughout the program. It is crucial that all persons involved believe that the participants with a disability are engaged in a process of artistic discovery and expression. There must be no confusion about art as therapy, an activity to fill time, or something that people with disabilities cannot do well.

Reflective Question:

What are some concrete ways to foster continued awareness-building about people’s own beliefs about disability?





I want to stay open so that if there's a way around an obstacle that nobody else has thought about, I'll be open to it just because I don't have all the intellectual baggage about the condition with me. . . if I just. . . treat them [artist participants] as a real being, I find the [y] . . . actually find a way to communicate [something] that they may not have [previously communicated] just because I'm there, "ignorant of their condition." The only exception to that might be if there's deafness involved. Sign interpreters ... would help, ; it would make the process easier.

(Artist Animator)

Response - This can be achieved by:

- Exposing members of the project team to the artistic products of people with significant cognitive and communication impairments
- Learning about the individuals in the classes, what their abilities and interests are, what their challenges or their impairments are and what kinds of supports they need to participate in the most ideal way in the class
- Ensure that people have the supports they need to communicate, take initiative, express preferences, and join in the class as a co-collaborator in the artistic process

Reflective Exercises

Shifting Interpersonal Exchanges

These participatory exercises are particularly helpful for programmers, artist animators, artist apprentices, support workers, and administrators. The underlying goal is to help the people who are implementing arts programming understand the difference between directive and collaborative approaches to working within people with disabilities within the creative process.

Mural Making:

Supplies:

Drawing paper and utensils (4 pieces of paper per pair)

Glue, paint, and other mural making supplies
Tables and chairs

Instructions:

1. Ask the group to divide themselves into pairs (A & B).
2. Ask the pairs to sit beside each other.
3. Each pair will have four pieces of paper and all the drawing supplies they require set up at their place.

Let participants know that the group will play out three scenarios where one person is the participant and one person the support worker, allocated to work alongside the participant. In each of the scenarios, the support worker will be given a different working style to use. The pairs will be able to switch throughout the exercise to ensure that each person experiences both roles.

Scenario One: Directive and Dominant Support Giving

The support worker is directed to place a piece of paper and supplies in front of the artist participant and then take a very directive role. The support worker may suggest what kinds of images to draw, what colours to use, what is considered good and bad technique. They may also assume a teaching role, such as asking the artist participant to tell them what colour he or she is using; the support worker may actually draw on the artist participant's page to test his or her recognition of shapes.

Run the scenario for five minutes. Then ask participants to



switch roles.

Scenario Two: Facilitative Support Giving

Ask the support giver in this scenario to take a more respectful approach to working with the artist participant. The support worker offers the artist participant a piece of paper and utensils. They are encouraged to find ways of being supportive. These could include inviting the participant to sketch a drawing. Be patient while you help the artist participant begin by selecting colours and mediums that might be useful. Do not force any choices or any directions but be available to offer support when the artist participant invites it. Do not draw on or impact the work in any way.

Run this scenario for five minutes. Then ask participants to switch roles.

Scenario Three: Collaborative Support Giving

In this scenario, ask the support giver to work alongside the artist participant on her or his own sheet of paper. Do not interfere with the artist participant's process. Be aware of it and remain attuned to his or her needs while you work on your own piece. If a participant appears to need some assistance and indicate this to you in a variety of direct or indirect ways, ask that individual if he or she would like some support in a way that is appropriate to that person. Follow the artist participant's lead throughout the scenario. This may include choosing colours that complement his or her work, moving at

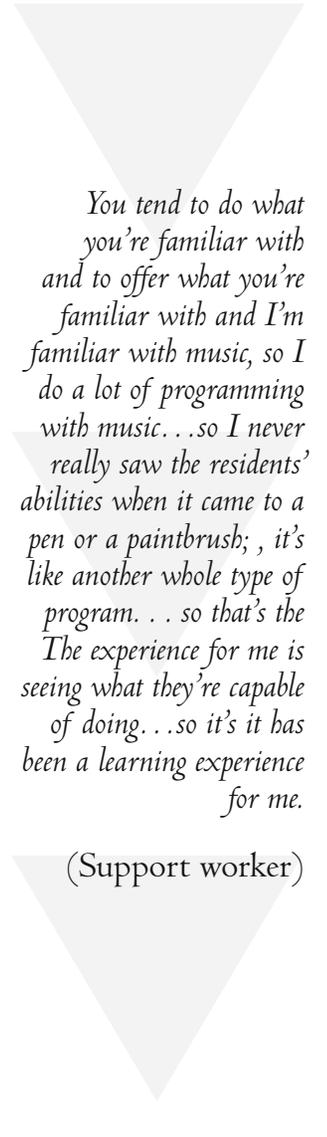
a similar speed and intensity and exploring similar shapes and movements.

Debriefing:

Ask the participants to come back into the larger circle. Use the questions below as a very rough guide to debrief the experience. Once you have allowed the group a couple of minutes to talk, ask them to focus on debriefing each scenario. Start first with the artist participant experience and then move to the support worker experience. The idea is to gain an appreciation for the strengths and weaknesses of each teaching style. The goal is to have program leaders experience the importance of working collaboratively with people and when necessary, working in an un-obtrusive facilitative way to ensure that the program is really about engaging in the creative process.

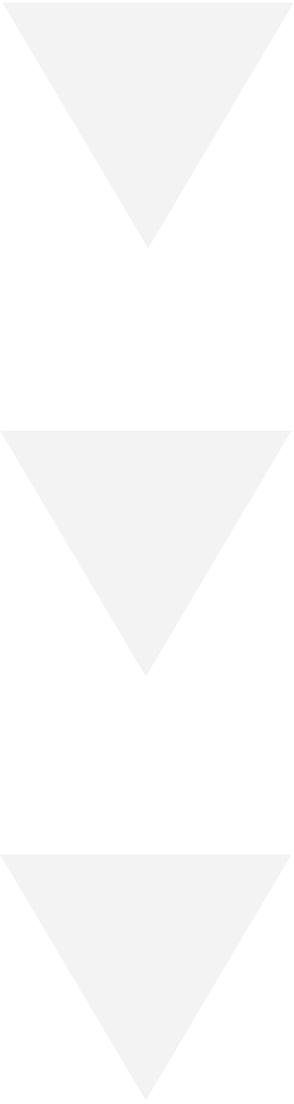
Questions to guide the debriefing are:

1. How is everyone feeling?
2. What was it like to be an artist participant working with your support worker in scenario one?
3. What was it like to be that kind of support worker?
4. How did this approach to working together affect your bodily experiences, the art you were making, the ways that you felt about one another, what you wanted to do, your creative inspiration?



You tend to do what you're familiar with and to offer what you're familiar with and I'm familiar with music, so I do a lot of programming with music. . . so I never really saw the residents' abilities when it came to a pen or a paintbrush; , it's like another whole type of program. . . so that's the The experience for me is seeing what they're capable of doing. . . so it's it has been a learning experience for me.

(Support worker)



Drawing Upon Lived Experience as a Source of Inspiration

Real life content can serve as an excellent source of creative inspiration. To discover what themes people might like to work with that come out of their daily lives, one can explore using many different techniques that communicate to participants that their lives are important, that what they experience is a source of inspiration and creativity within the arts space. It is also important to let people know that strong emotions or feelings are acceptable to express artistically in this space, because it is a place to express who you are, what you know, and what your vision of the world is. As an artist animator one can simply invite people to follow their inspiration. If this is hard to do, a large or small circle conversation about certain issues may work to bring up ideas that can serve to spark creativity. The group can join to brainstorm ideas to questions or statements, such as things they are thinking about that today, an interesting / confusing / frustrating / joyful experience, the holidays, or a story / song / movie of significance. It is important to emphasize throughout these discussions that there is no right answer, that this is not therapy but an invitation to draw on life experiences to make art, and that sending strong messages through art is an appropriate and powerful thing to do.

Ongoing Reflection and Evaluation for Facilitators

It is important for the people hosting and implementing the programs to meet together and assess how the program is developing. While it is important to assess the program, it is also important to review each session. One example includes the Personal Evaluation.

Supplies:

Large piece of paper

Drawing utensils

A hard surface to work at that is comfortable and provides each person with a little bit of distance from one another so that personal reflection can occur.

Instructions:

Ask the participants (artist animators, staff, management) to draw an outline of their body on the piece of paper. Give them only a couple of minutes to do this. Ask them to ensure that they draw a distinct head, middle and feet. Once they have completed this outline, ask the participants to take a few minutes to reflect on the day.

Next, ask the participants to work on the head of their drawing. Here, they are invited to depict (as words, phrases or images) any new ideas, concepts, facts, information, or insights that they might have felt during the working session. Next, ask the



participants to move their attention to their heart and middle. At this location, ask them to depict changes in feelings, values and beliefs and discoveries about themselves.

Next, ask them to move to their feet and write down new skills they acquired. Finally, ask them to move to their hands and to depict things they would do differently next time and how this learning will make a difference in their lives. The participants are then asked if they would like to add anything else to their drawings. This is a good evaluation as it serves as a document that each person can take with them and refer to in future sessions.



Module 4



You don't really have to be good at art to be successful at it.

(Staff Member at Arts Ability Project Site)

EVALUATING ARTS PROGRAMMING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Overview

A research team was established to study the impact of the Arts Ability Project upon participants with disabilities, programmers, staff and others who provide support to individuals with disabilities.

The research team looked for change at the individual, inter-personal, organizational and broader societal levels. In this way, they were not participating in perpetuating a view of disability as something that exists exclusively within the individual, but rather as something that is created as a form of disadvantage from an individual's interaction with others within a physical

and social environment (Oliver, 1992). They were particularly interested in how studying arts programming might offer new opportunities to re-think the ways people can learn to interact with one another when one person is receiving and another is providing support.

In addition, the research team assessed the arts programming in terms of its responsiveness to the expressed needs of those involved. The research team collected information through various means from all stakeholders. They communicated central ideas to those who were in a position to make changes to program design and implementation. In this way they were focusing on issues such as arts programming, staff training and organizational arrangements rather than individual impairment. This represented a unique approach to arts program evaluation. This approach was developed in a way that recognized socio-political realities, which are particularly relevant for people with disabilities since, historically, such programming has focused on therapeutic impacts framed



within a medical model of disability. The goal here was to promote reflective practice informed by the artist participants with disabilities and others involved. Additional goals were to discover effective ways to promote opportunities for people with disabilities to express themselves creatively - particularly in ways that might be informed by their disability experience - and to enlighten others regarding their life experience and desire for social change.

The research team consisted of one individual who has experience as a member of the disability community and as a person studying, teaching and conducting collaborative or participatory research on a disability issues. The second investigator had experience facilitating community development and programming with a variety of populations that experience social, economic and political disadvantage. Both researchers have spent some time engaged in the arts as artists themselves. Whom the researchers are affected how they approached the work of researching disability and art.

Intended Research Outcomes

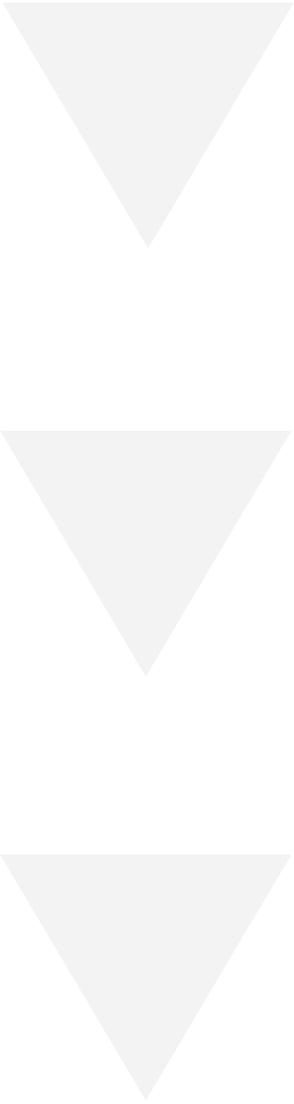
The first outcome of the project was to establish an appropriate method for conducting arts program evaluation, with a particular recognition of arts programming that is inclusive and responsive to people with disabilities and implemented within community organizational, agency or healthcare facility settings. The second outcome was to complete an evaluation of

the arts program at each of the five sites:

- i. Deer Lodge for older residents of a hospital who experience advanced dementia. They engaged in visual arts activities.
- ii. Frontier School Division of Cree Nation for elementary students with learning disabilities. They engaged in dance and visual arts.
- iii. Community Mental Health Association for adults who have experienced mental health challenges. They engaged in the dramatic arts and music.
- iv. New Directions, community-outreach program for people with developmental disabilities and dual diagnosis. They engaged in the dramatic and visual arts.
- v. New Directions, specialized day program for people with developmental disabilities. They engaged in the dramatic and visual arts.

This module focuses on objective one: the development of an appropriate model of art program evaluation. The Arts Ability programs will continue to take place until May 2004, and the program evaluation will be completed within the months that follow, once all of the information has been collected and analyzed.





Literature Review

There are several bodies of literature that have informed the development of the evaluation framework, as well as the evaluative analysis of the arts program itself. These include literature associated with:

- a. Personal supports/ support relationships for people with disabilities
- b. Arts program evaluation
- c. Disability, art and culture

Support relationships have been described in the disability literature as strained and unsupportive of physical and emotional health for care recipients and providers, ;) resulting in limited life opportunities for recipients of support (Bookwala & Schultz, 2000; Keating, Fast, Fredrick, Cranswick & Perrier, 1999; Krogh, 2001a; Krogh, in press; The National Alliance for Care Giving and the American Association of Retired Persons, 1997; Schultz & Beach, 1999). In addition, support relationships have been described as unequal and at times abusive towards people with disabilities (Sobsey & Doe, 1991; Twig, 2000). Krogh and Jonhson (in press) place such support relationships within a critical disability studies framework where the influence of language, organizational systems, and policies on people with disabilities is examined. One particular study of disability-related supports resulted in a set of proposed criteria for promoting equality of well-being between women providing

and receiving support. The set of criteria promotes self-determination; fosters mutual recognition; encourages respectful interdependence; ensures security; democratizes decision-making processes; and promotes citizenship (Roehrer Institute and the Status of Women Canada, 2001, p. 88).

Arts program evaluation literature has been reviewed with documented impacts related to community empowerment, social cohesion, and increased understanding of people's cultures (see review of studies by Newman, Curtis & Stephens, 2003). While all these aspects are relevant to our study, none of the literature reviewed was explicitly inclusive of people with disabilities. Interestingly many of the previous studies focused on individual outcomes related to, for example, personal development and health of individuals. This focus on the individual presents theoretical challenges to researchers such as those involved with the Arts Ability Project who wish to recognize the social determinants of health and emphasize the role of social factors in creating the disadvantage associated with living with impairment. Reviewers of the literature on arts program evaluation conclude that there is a need to develop new evaluative approaches. This is, in part, because community-based arts projects present particular challenges due to the typically large numbers of stakeholders and the multiplicity of possible outcomes (Landry, Bianchini & Macguire, 1995). Clearly, innovative qualitative approaches are required since as Newman, Curtis & Stephens (2003) state, "experimental models of research are often impractical, partly because of



their level of complexity and partly because of the extreme dissonance that often exists between demands for numerical accuracy and artistic temperaments.”

Literature related to disability, art and culture is another important source. The disability arts and culture movement can be seen to be influenced by people such as Paulo Freire. Freirian pedagogy is defined by a vision of social transformation based on confronting oppression through consciousness raising (Freire, 1993). Giving voice to experience through theatre can illustrate ways that oppression functions in societies. In a manner consistent with Freire then, this has been reflected in the work of the Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1974). The political potency of art in facilitating social change for people with disabilities is critical. As articulated by various scholars and leaders within the disabilities movement (e.g., Barnes et al. 1999), this approach is dramatically different from programs that have been established for therapeutic purposes. Increasingly Canadians with disabilities are becoming involved in promoting the arts as a cultural and political act (see for example the Kickstart website and Ryerson University Disability Studies website).

Development of an Evaluation Model

After the research team gathered information from two focus groups with the artist animators, they engaged in class activities alongside artist participants, or communicated directly

with participants. They determined that an Empowerment Evaluation would provide an appropriate evaluation model for the Arts Ability Project. Through this method the researchers could involve those responsible for implementing the project and ask them to agree upon the set of guiding principles that would form the basic criteria from which they would be assessed. A component of this would be a commitment to be responsive to the needs of artist participants. This model of action-based research has been developed by David Fetterman and has been used in a range of programs including those associated with community-based addiction and parenting initiatives (Fetterman, 2001; Fetterman, Kaftarian & Wandersman, 1996).

Empowerment Evaluation is comprised of three steps:

1. Establishing a mission statement or vision based on clear guiding philosophies and principles of the program being evaluated.
2. Taking stock of the project, which involves collecting information on the specific activities used to meet the project vision. Knowing where the project stands in terms of strengths and weaknesses is helpful in determining future direction. Staff and participants are then typically asked questions about what might lead to refinements or improvements.





3. Charting a course for the future is the third stage of this process. The group reflects upon goals and strategies to create their vision in light of what is known. Articulating clear goals help move people towards supporting one another in moving towards program improvements.

The researchers involved in the Arts Ability Project introduced and emphasized a fourth stage:



4. Research-informed training to translate what was learned in a manner that could engage people in making changes to programming content and implementation as well as related inter-personal interactions and organizational arrangements.



Although not typical, the researchers found it necessary to add this fourth stage of research-informed training to the design of Empowerment Evaluation for this particular project. There were several critical ideas that were observed, identified and documented that the research team felt needed to be understood and used to transform practices of arts programming. These notions included: a) ways that the program might reflect a social rather than individual model of disability (see Rioux, 1997); b) the ways that artist participants might guide support relationships rather than be constrained by them; and c) ways that programs, including materials, activities, space and organizational arrangements, might be altered to attend to the needs and desires of the artist participants. Training

was designed to engage artist animators, artist apprentices, organization site-affiliated support staff and administrators in reflecting upon their practice and to be responsive to the needs to many parties, particularly artist participants.

Making Space for Art and Disability Perspectives

One of the unique and on-going struggles within this project has been finding ways that researchers with a strong disability rights perspective can speak with artists - some of whom had little knowledge of the perspectives and issues that have been put forward by disability groups or disability arts and culture organizations. Some of the people with disabilities involved wanted to choose to focus on their art rather than teaching others about disability and this fact had to be acknowledged by the researchers. Teaching others about disability is a responsibility often presumed of people with disabilities and is already critiqued within the literature. The fact that this project was hosted by the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies enabled the researchers to draw upon participatory research and a social model of disability principles that CCDS espouses. The evaluation team also determined that it was necessary to involve a highly competent and articulate external evaluator involved in current work and discussions related to disability-inspired art as a significant cultural act (see for example the website for Society for Disability Arts and Culture at www.s4dac.org).



Those involved in making program design and implementation decisions were, therefore, supported by an external evaluator who provided direct critical reviews and by two internal evaluators who not only listened, engaged in art activities, collected information and discussed matters with the external evaluator, but also acted as translators of research and disability-related concepts and staff trainers to demonstrate some of the changes that were required to meet the needs of the primary users - artist participants with disabilities.

The researchers believe that arts programming for people with disabilities should be accountable to participants. Reflective Practice through a model of Empowerment Evaluation is one path to conducting arts programming that is responsive to the needs and desires of artist participants who live with disability.

Establishing Principles and Criteria for Evaluation

Central principles were used to guide arts programming and as criteria in the evaluation of the Arts Ability Project. Some of these principles were derived from discussions with artist animators, and others were introduced from the Independent Living Philosophy for people with disabilities and the socio-political model of disability. The ways to implement these in terms of practice became better understood during the project. All stakeholders, including the artist animators and the administrators and staff at each of the sites, made a

commitment to participate and learn from the project, with the idea of improving arts opportunities for people with disabilities in the future.

Principles and Criteria to Guide Evaluation:

1. Creating Opportunities for Self Expression
2. Valuing Process over Product
3. Ensuring a Flexible Environment
4. Fostering a Supportive and Exploratory Environment
6. Being Intuitive
7. Incorporating a Political Awareness of Disability Issues (Historical Disadvantage, Greater Opportunities and Voice, and Recognition of Work as Art)
8. Discovering Ways for Artist Participants to Inform / Direct Programming
9. Responding to Artist Participants' Invitations to Provide Support
10. Social Model of Disability: Understanding the Ways that Disability is Created by Environment (including Physical Space, Social Interactions, Programming, Communication Modalities)

Data Collection

There were approximately 200 people involved in the Arts Ability project. Information was gathered from artist participants, artist animators, artist apprentices, staff affiliated





with host institutions, administrators from host institutions, and parents or spouses who were caregivers. Information was collected in the following ways:

- I. Interviews
2. Focus Groups
3. Participant Observation / Engaging in Art Activities
4. Class Video Clips
5. Reflective Journaling
6. Artist Animator Reports
7. Administrative Meetings
8. Project Information Sessions
9. Training Workshops
10. Working Retreats
11. Conference Calls
12. Email Exchanges



Using a combination of all of these methods, the researchers attempted to gather information in direct and indirect ways from artist participants; some used means other than speech to communicate. This also allowed them to triangulate information from various sources in an attempt to construct a picture / pictures of the program, how it was implemented, and the kinds of impacts it was having on those involved.

Evaluation Process

While the Arts Ability Project researchers expect that many programs will use a much less formal procedure for their reflective practice evaluation, they undertook this project as a formal research study affiliated with the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies. Therefore all those who chose to participate in the study were required to sign an informed consent form. In some situations, a consent form was required from a substitute decision-maker in addition to an assent form in plainer language from a participant. In this way, permission was granted to participate in the study. If a participant communicated discomfort in any way, they were supported in leaving the class, if this is what they wanted to do. It was also made clear that each artist participant could remain to enjoy the art classes without getting involved in any of the research activities.

Many evaluation activities took place simultaneously; for example, when the two evaluators observed an action that was inconsistent with the principles, they would discuss it and then approach the art program manager to determine the best way to incorporate this knowledge into the development of an alternative practice. A large amount of information was gathered at the end of the first year, and this was provided in the form of an information report to the external evaluator along with selected video clips of classes. The external evaluator drafted a report of initial findings that were then discussed with the two internal evaluators so that



additional information could be exchanged. Information gathered and knowledge generated from the project evaluation work were used by the research team to design and deliver training sessions offered to both Arts Ability and host institution staff. These sessions targeted the behaviours and decisions of artist animators, artist apprentices, and the staff hired to provide support within the affiliated organizations or institutions.

Reflections on the Evaluation Process

Collecting Information in a Sensitive and Participatory Manner

The Arts Ability Project researchers wanted to understand what it was like to engage in the creative arts activities as a way to assess the possible impact of its delivery. Given that both of researchers have been involved in the arts, they were interested in connecting to the project as occasional artist participants. They did this primarily through conducting participant observations.

They also wanted to use research methods that acknowledged the reality that many artist participants had been observed, had their impairments assessed and in some circumstances were then placed into restrictive facilities as a result. Given that some participants were made very uncomfortable by observers, participant observation was a particularly appropriate method of information gathering.

A staff manager at one of the sites recognized the importance

of considering alternative approaches to information collection. She states:

They [the researchers] didn't come in with a pen, a paper, a big book, four-piece suit - that terrifies them [artist participants]. They [the researchers] came in as people, people that [participants might] meet on the streets, in malls. . . . They were very open. . . [If] you broke a marker, you broke a pen, you broke your piece of art, it was okay, it wasn't a huge issue. . . I think it was good, they took them out of a serious state and I think everybody really respected that and they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Acknowledging Context in Evaluation Design

One thing that became obvious to the research team early in the process was that it was going to be important to allow the key principles to emerge in a manner that accepted the uniqueness of each site. While they established a clear set of guiding principles for the Arts Ability Project from which to base the evaluation, the particular methods that the sites used to enact or operationalize those principles depended on many individual factors. The contextual factors at each site influencing program implementation and evaluation included:

1. The medium and modality of creative activities, e.g., dance or visual art
2. The organizational context, e.g., mandate and physical space
3. The individual participants, animators, artist apprentices



- and staff involved
- 4. The geographic and cultural context
- 5. The historical and current realities of participants with disabilities

The researchers made an effort therefore to avoid further categorizing people. Rather, they wanted to allow people to be themselves, and acknowledged that programs would have to find ways to evolve that considered their context. A research participant and mother of one of the artist participants described her anxiety about research and her ultimate acceptance of this research approach by stating,

To tell you the truth, when I first was introduced to the program and I thought, OK great, a drama class and then when I found out it was a research program . . . they're just going to try to fit people into specific categories, such as . . . somebody has some kind of a theory and they just want to prove it's true or whatever. . . . When you came here today and started telling me more about it, I realized wow, this really sounds like the kind of thing that I have been wishing the world would do.

Participants' versus University Needs

The researchers found it challenging to meet the requirements of ethics review committees while also meeting the needs of participants with disabilities. The consent forms contained many details that were difficult for some participants to

understand. Fortunately there were people who could provide assistance in clarifying the information in language that was more accessible. As one staff member comments:

I did have a participant arrive at my door . . . saying, "I want to speak to you". He'd brought all the paperwork, cause we'd sent it. He was his own decision-maker . . . but the amount of complexity in those consent forms would . . . I didn't understand it, so he and I sat down and went through it all, but it . . . has to be [as] straightforward as possible when you've got vulnerable people... They need greater assistance.

Conclusion

The on-going dialogue with the disability and arts communities and an integration of information from the literature have led to the development of a model for assessing arts programming within institutional and organizational settings that serve people with disabilities. This approach represents an important contribution to the arts program evaluation literature because it challenges traditional frameworks, which may function to reinforce an individualistic medical model rather than a social or socio-political model of disability.



The Final Word

Through the ongoing evaluative process, artist participants were asked by the researchers how they felt being involved in art through the Arts Ability Project. Their responses confirm what everyone involved in the project already knew, that it truly has been a worthwhile endeavor. Some participants say:

“It relaxes me, takes away all my depression.”

“I think it just depends how you’re feeling about it. That’s what I was told, you know, it’s true, let all your feelings out, all your frustrations out, by putting it on a piece of paper, that’s what I think. That’s all I have to say.”

“It makes me feel peaceful because I’m concentrating on peaceful things and not things that are exciting or too stressful.”

“Of course there’s limitations that people have, but through [the arts] it’s kind of like soul searching in a way, you get to know yourself and then other people as a result. . . .”

“I feel that my relationships to my family and friends have changed for the better. Maybe I can feel a bit more detached in a positive way, if that makes any sense. I think they see a positive change.”

So, the final words in this manual rest with the artist participants. It is important to remember that each person has his or her own creative process. It is the work of the artist animators to share techniques and tools to help the participants discover their creative potential. Each artist participant can expand his or her view of the medium, and by association, his or her self and others, including colleagues inside and outside of the sessions.

We hope this manual will spark initiatives to create greater opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities. Through working together, the work of professional artists with and without disabilities may come to reflect the face of a more inclusive culture.

There is one particular woman who, prior to my exposure [exposing] to her to in the Arts Ability program. . . we would hand her actual pictures. . . and be expected her to remain relatively within the lines [when drawing]. . . there was a level of frustration there. . . When we got her into this program, there’s no hand over hand, there’s no specific direction, and all of a sudden, I’m seeing this rainbow of colours come out and I’m watching her, and I’m seeing that the colour selection isn’t random, like I thought it was, it is really specific.

(Support Staff)



Bibliography

Boal, August. The Theatre of the Oppressed. New York: Urizen Books.

Bookwala, J., Yee, J. L., & Schultz, R. 2000. "Caregiving and detrimental mental and physical health outcomes." In D. M. Williamson, P. A. Parmelee, & D. R. Shaffer (Eds.), Physical illness and depression in older adults: A handbook of theory, research and practice (pp. 93-131). New York: Plenum.

Broadhead, Tim. 2003. "Creating Community" in Abilities. Spring.

Fetterman, D. 2001. Foundations of empowerment evaluation. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Fetterman, Kaftarian & Wandersman, 1996. Empowerment evaluation: Knowledge and tools for self-assessment and accountability. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Frazee, Catherine.

Freire, P. 1993. Pedagogy of the City. Trans. Donaldo Macedo. New York: Continuum

Katz, Elias & Florence Ludins-Katz, 1990. Art and Disabilities: Establishing the Creative Art Centre for People with Disabilities. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.

Keating, N., Fast, J., Frederick, J., Cranswick, K., & Perrier, C. 1999. Eldercare in Canada: Context, content and consequences. Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada.

Krogh, K. 2001a, April. "Beyond four walls: Impact of home support on work, health and citizenship of people with disabilities." (Multimedia research report distributed at the World Health Organization's Rethinking Care from the Perspectives of People with Disabilities: A Global Congress).



Retrieved May 6, 2003, from <http://www.ryerson.ca/~kkrogh>

Krogh, K., Johnson, J., & Bowman, T. 2003. "Redefining home care for women with disabilities: A call for citizenship." In K. Grant, C. Amaratunga, P. Armstrong, M. Boscoe, A. Pederson, & K. Willson (Eds.), Caring for/caring about: Women, home care and unpaid caregiving. Aurora: Garamond Press.

Landry, C., Bianchini, F., & MacGuire, M. (1995). "The social impact of the arts: a discussion document." Comedia, Stroud.

National Alliance for Care Giving, and the American Association of Retired Persons. 1997. Family care giving in the U.S.: Findings from a national survey (Final Report). Bethesda, MD: National Alliance for Care Giving.

Newman, T., Curtis, K., & Stephens, J. (2003). "Do community-based arts projects result in social gains? A review of the literature." Community Development Journal, 38(4), 310-322. Newman, Curtis & Stephens, 2003.

Oliver, M. 1992. "Changing the social relations of research production?" Disability, Handicap and Society, 7, 101-114.

Rioux, M. H. 1997. "Disability: The place of judgment in a world of fact." Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 41 (part 2), 101-111.

Roehrer Institute, and Status of Women Canada. 2001, February. "Disability-related support arrangements, policy options, and implications for women's equality" (Report prepared by the Roehrer Institute for Status of Women Canada). Retrieved May 6, 2003, from the Status of Women Canada Web site: http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/0662653238/200102_0662653238_e.html

Schultz, R., & Beach, S. R. 1999. "Caregiving as a risk factor for mortality: The Caregiver Health Effects Study." Journal of the American Medical Association, 282, 2215-2219.

Sobsey, D., & Doe, T. 1991. "Patterns of sexual abuse and assault." Disability and Sexuality, 9, 243-259.

Twig, J. 2000. Bathing: The body and community care. London: Routledge.





Appendix

Disability Arts Resource Organizations

Reprinted from “art smarts: inspiration and ideas for Canadian artists with disabilities” The Society for Disability Arts and Culture 2002, Vancouver.

Please Note:

The following are lists of national or international organizations that serve as resources for smaller organizations, individual artists or groups, art educators, and/or others. The Society for Disability Arts and Culture is compiling a database of individual artists with disabilities from across Canada.

Association of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Worldwide (AMFPA)

The Association acquires the reproduction rights to artwork and distributes the art internationally through their partner publishers as an art print, postcard or calendar. The AMFPA represents 500 mouth and food painting artists in 60 countries around the world. The artists receive grants or are taken on as

members and receive a regular income for their art.

Canadian Office (Toronto) 416.362.9992

Fax: 416.362.8053

mfpa@on.aibn.com

www.amfpa.com

International Guild of Disabled Artists and Performers

IGODAP is a collective of artists and performers who identify as being disabled or having a disability. Its members are professional and amateur artists and performers of all genres, and producers, directors and others working in the arts and entertainment industries. In addition the Guild has associate members who are involved in or supportive of disability art and performance, but who do not themselves identify as disabled or having a disability. At present IGODAP exists only as an email list and a simple webpage. Until the collective grows and forms a governing group, the interim aim of IGODAP is to be the globally recognized collective voice of artists and performers with disabilities.

www.diversitynz.com/igodap



The John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts

The Center works towards making the performing arts accessible to people with disabilities. Its initiatives include the Vilar Internship Program, the Performing Artists with Disabilities on Stage series, and the Experiential Education Initiative (EEI) internship program for individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition, the Kennedy Center has a strong commitment to creating innovative and effective educational programs, models and tools for the performing arts community. They publish *Opening Stages*, a quarterly newsletter for people with disabilities pursuing careers in the performing arts. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' office is in Washington, DC.

202-416-8727

TTY:202-416-8728

Fax: 202-416-8802

access@kennedy-center.org

www.kennedy-center.org

The National Arts and Disability Center

The NADC is a national information dissemination, technical assistance and referral center specializing in the field of arts and disability. The NADC promotes the inclusion of children and adults with disabilities into the visual, performing, media, and literary arts communities. Its resource directories, annotated bibliographies, related links and conferences serve to advance arts with disabilities and accessibility to the arts. The NADC is a project of the University of California, at Los Angeles

(UCLA), Tarjan Center for Developmental Disabilities. They offer an online calendar of accessible performances and venues, as well as events featuring artists and performers with disabilities. You can post art and disability events directly to their site. You can also submit questions about the arts and people with disabilities.

310-794-1141 or 310-825-5054

oraynor@mednet.ucla.edu

bstoffmacher@mednet.ucla.edu

<http://nadc.ucla.edu/>

NADC's Arts and Disabilities Web Tour

A tour of sites featuring the work of artists with disabilities. The links are organized by artistic discipline--visual arts, music, performing arts, media arts/film, literary and multidisciplinary.

<http://nadcl.ucla.edu/links.htm>

Coalition of Inclusive Performing Arts

(formerly the Association for Theatre and Accessibility)

The mission of the Coalition is to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities in the performing arts by encouraging the professional growth and development of artists and administrators, and by educating and advocating for accessible accommodations at performances. The administrative office is located at the National Arts and Disability Center (see contact information above).

The National Institute of Art and Disabilities (NIAD)

NIAD is a pioneering visual arts center for adults with





developmental and physical disabilities from diverse cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Located near Berkeley, California, NIAD's mission is to provide an art environment for people with developmental disabilities which promotes creative expression, independence, dignity and community integration. NIAD provides training in painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, decorative arts and more. Their artwork is actively promoted through an exhibitions program. NIAD Art and Disabilities Collections (books, monographs, videotapes and archives relating to arts and disabilities) have been donated to the Disability Studies Department (DiSC) at the University of California, Berkeley.

510.620.290
 Fax: 510-620-0326
 redden@niadart.org
 www.niadart.org

VSA Arts

VSA Arts is an international organization that creates learning opportunities through the arts for people with disabilities. The organization offers arts-based programs in creative writing, dance, drama, music and the visual arts implemented primarily through their affiliates located throughout the U.S. and internationally. VSA Arts' programs now serve 4.3 million Americans and 1.3 million people in other parts of the world.

www.vsarts.org

VSA Arts of Ontario (Toronto)
 Creative Spirit Art Centre
 416.588.8801 Fax: 416.588.8966
 csac@creativespirit.on.ca

VSA Arts du Quebec (Montreal)
 Visions sur l'Art Quebec
 514.350.5520 Fax: 514.350.5522
 vsaq@qc.aira.com

Additional Resources

Interact Centre for the Visual and Performing Arts, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Interact is "one of the few visual and performing art centers in the world designed to facilitate adult artists with disabilities as they explore and expand their creativity as actors, writers, painters, sculptors and musicians." [For more information, visit the interact web site, which includes an online gallery and an online theatre. <http://www.interactcentre.com/>]

Stage Left Productions in Calgary. From their web site <http://www.stage-left.org>, they are described as "a participatory, performing arts-based community development [organization, offering] constructive, creative, and solution-oriented avenues of self-expression... Stage Left works extensively with people with physical and developmental disabilities, brain injuries and/or mental illness; street-involved youth; culturally diverse



youth; immigrants and new comers; First Nations; the elderly; the homeless; lesbian/gay/bi/transgender youth; and other marginalized communities so as to engage people in an arts-based process designed to explore personal and social concerns and to imagine, actualize, and practice or rehearse solutions to them.”

An extensive literature review on Disability Arts & Culture is currently being completed at the Institute for Disability Studies Research & Education at Ryerson University. Once complete, this resource will point to a wide range of examples of work by disabled artists, and will be available online at <http://www.ryerson.ca/institute>.

