Chapter 7
Everybody Can Do It –
The Arts and Technology in Your Classroom:
A Tool for Reflexive Practice

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ABSTRACT
This chapter presents a “tool for practice” with the purpose of stimulating pedagogical decision-making in the design, delivery, and evaluation of primary school learning experiences that integrate technology with arts education. The tool highlights the unique and innovative practices of arts and technology education currently occurring in primary schools and classrooms in Australia. This identification provides a foundation from which teachers can begin their journey and conversations around the planned, meaningful integration of technologies into and throughout their arts teaching. The tool has the additional potential to support ongoing professional development through the application of the tool to act as an evidence-based scaffold for reflexive practice. It encourages users to work collaboratively and collectively to look at their practice from multiple points of view, with careful and calculated consideration of the nine domains of Bamford and Glinkowski’s (2010) Effect and Impact Tracking Matrix (EITM) – catalytic, negative loss, social, ethical, cultural, economic, educational, innovation, and personal.

INTRODUCTION
This chapter stems from the belief that unique and innovative pedagogical practices of arts and technology education are occurring in Australian primary schools and classrooms, however for many teachers identifying such occurrences in their practice appears to be obscure. It is with this in mind that the authors promote the utilization of Bamford and Glinkowski’s (2010) Effect
and Impact Tracking Matrix (EITM) to not only identify such unique and innovative pedagogical practices of arts and technology education through it’s application, but to support on-going professional development through a commitment to reflexive practice. An overview and background to the tool is provided first. This paves the way for the expansion of contemporary literature, which leads to the documentation of an application of the EITM specific to the first author’s doctoral research project. A discussion of the tool’s development then follows, highlighting its origins, explanations and intricacies through real examples. A three-pronged tool for reflexive practice is presented, together with an explanation of the scaffold process for implementation. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research directions, and closing remarks.

BACKGROUND

In 2012, the lead author spent several months collecting data for her doctoral thesis researching arts education practices in primary school classrooms in Australia. This involved extended periods of time closely observing everyday practices in generalist and specialist classrooms within two case sites. In response to the plethora of literature affirming the current lack of arts education in primary schools both within Australia and internationally, the researcher entered the case sites with an abundance-model mindset (rather than one of deficit) – i.e. the researcher firmly believed that arts education was there to be found within any primary school classroom; one only needed to look for it.

A significant body of research extols the benefits of arts education for primary school students. Quality arts education learning experiences are said to contribute to increased academic success (Bransom et al., 2010; Catterall, 2009; Israel, 2008), with neurological research indicating positive outcomes of arts education enhancing learning and skills transfer (Asbury & Rich, 2008; Rudacliffe, 2010; Shanahan et al., 2010). In addition, there is increasing recognition of the need for education to develop students’ creative capacities in order to equip them for life and work in the 21st century, and to ensure that the future needs of our industries are met (ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, 2007; Burnard, 2006; Ewing, 2010). “Creativity, interpretation, innovation and cultural understanding are all sought-after skills for new and emerging industries of the 21st century. Arts education provides students with the tools to develop these skills” (Pratt, 2009).

Arts education not only provides explicit instruction and exposure to arts processes, but it is also responsible for teaching and developing modes of thinking otherwise not evident in “core curriculum” (Winner & Hetland, 2008). Additionally, a number of studies assert a link between arts education and critical thinking skills (Lampert, 2006). Those who display creative habits of mind are curious, highly motivated, willing to take risks, and able to think outside the square; they can combine unusual ideas with more conventional ways of thinking, are more likely to see ideas to fruition, and possess the ability to probe ideas more deeply, ask open-ended questions, seek multiple responses, and listen to their inner voice (Ewing, 2010).

Certainly, the teachers I spoke with during my doctoral research project (Power, 2014) advocated the benefits of arts education for their primary school students also. Grade 5/6 teacher Mrs Winters speaks of the social impact for students of performing – “They’ve gotta learn to do things in a different team, often, that type of thing… they’ve had to practise, they’ve had to plan… certainly makes those connections between them.” Mrs Winters expressed that it is important for students to have an appreciation of what is required to produce works of art – “persistence in learning something and not giving up”, for example when learning a musical instrument.