

# **Looking *Yonder*: a Model of Arts Engagement with Teacher Artists and Professional Artists in Queensland Schools**

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## **Abstract**

Since 2007 Kite Arts Education Program (KITE), based at Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), has been engaged in delivering a series of theatre-based experiences for children in low socio-economic primary schools in Queensland. KITE @ QPAC is an early childhood arts initiative of The Queensland Department of Education that is supported by and located at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. KITE delivers relevant contemporary arts education experiences for Prep to Year 3 students and their teachers across Queensland. The theatre-based experiences form part of a three year artist-in-residency project titled *Yonder* that includes performances developed by the children with the support and leadership of Teacher Artists from KITE for their community and parents/carers in a peak community cultural institution. This paper provides an overview of the *Yonder* model and unpacks some challenges in activating the model for schools and cultural organisations.

*Keywords:* Drama education, arts education, Artist-in-Residence, teacher artist, arts curriculum

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## Introduction

*Yonder* was Kite Arts Education Program (KITE)'s three year arts-based learning project designed to operate within those communities with least access to the arts. The project sought to engage communities in deep, rich and meaningful arts participation through consultation, residencies, ideas generation and workshops with professional creative artists, culminating in a student performance at a significant cultural institution. In each year of the project there were two Artist-in-Residencies (AIR) – one in regional Queensland and one in Edge-City Brisbane<sup>1</sup>. In 2009, Queensland Performing Arts Centre partnered with Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Creative Industries Faculty (Drama) to conduct an evaluation of the *Yonder* project to understand the dynamics and operational nature as well as the artistic outcomes of the project. This paper harnesses evidence to answer one of three evaluative questions that situated the study. The research question was defined as: What are the working components the *Yonder* Model and what challenges emerge from the model's implementation in terms of system plasticity and adroitness?

## Methods Approach and Data Collection

Evaluative research of the *Yonder* project was conducted through a multi-modal method over a period of three years (2010-2012). These methods include action research, phenomenology and case study. Whilst the *Yonder* project has a history dating back to 2007, no formal external evaluation of the project outcomes and impacts in school communities had been undertaken. For the purpose of the external evaluation of the project, the researcher and research assistant remained on the outside of the project and were not embedded in the delivery of the project in either Edge-city Brisbane or regional Queensland.

The research was undertaken in seventeen different classroom contexts over three years. The schools in which the research was situated ranged from large urban schools with enrolments of 600 plus students to small regional

schools with populations under 100 students. In most cases the research was situated in a year three class, however, with some small schools the class in which the research was conducted was a composite year level.

The research was undertaken in three interrelated phases:

### **Phase One: (July – October 2009)**

In phase one, the researcher analysed Kite's existing documentation and quantitative data on the *Yonder* project to determine the operational nature of the project. This phase included site visits to the Edge-city Brisbane schools involved in order to observe the project delivery and key personnel.

### **Phase Two: (2010 – mid 2012)**

Phase two was undertaken in two parts. In part (a) the research team (researcher and research assistant) used data collection tools, including observational field notes, surveys, interviews, focus groups and still and moving images, to collect quantitative, qualitative and performative data on the participants' experience of the *Yonder* project. This included two site visits, ranging from one day per week to three days per week in Edge-city Brisbane (July – September 2010; August – October 2011) and three in regional Queensland (February – April 2010; February – May 2011; February – May 2012). The participants included teachers and school administration; focus groups of community stakeholders – students, parents/carers, school-based administrators and teachers; interviews of teacher artists, Kite Arts Education management at Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Education Queensland employees, community partners and professional artists employed on the project. Other data collected to support the evaluation was in the form of responsive student output – children's art work and children's writing; visual output – digital still photographs (both process and performance) and digital record of performance.

The research team coded the data collected via these methods according to the established categories of impact particularly focussed around

literacy attainment and social competency markers. Simultaneously a literature review was undertaken to identify like programs in Australia and internationally to locate benchmarks for research findings.

As part of phase two an interim report was developed that spanned three iterations of the project (2010 – mid 2011) that identified for the major stakeholders (teacher artists, Kite Arts Education management at Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Education Queensland employees) impacts and deficits of the project. This report contributed to an ongoing cycle of improvement for the *Yonder* project.

### **Phase Three (July – October 2012)**

The research team evaluated and reported on the evidenced outcomes of the project. The evaluation reports on the impact of the *Yonder* project related to outcomes in learning for students, engagement protocols with schools, teacher professional development, integration of professional artists and improvement measures. In doing so, the evaluation provides evidence of the significance of the *Yonder* project in educational and aesthetic terms for schools and their communities in Queensland.

To maintain the confidentiality of the interviewees (in accordance with Education Queensland research ethics) names have been replaced with title (teacher artist, professional artist, community partner, principal, teacher or child) and an alphabetical letter or number.

### **Key Roles in the Project – Teacher Artist, Professional Artist, and Key Teacher**

Throughout this paper three key terms– Teacher Artist, professional artist and key teacher – will appear that capture the nature of engagement from the adult staff involved in the project. The following definitions are provided to mark out points of differentiation between the roles.

## Teacher Artist Definition

KITE Teacher Artists were employed by Education Queensland<sup>2</sup> and were located at and managed by QPAC. By definition a Teacher Artist can be identified as a teacher who chooses to artfully and effectively use an aesthetic dimension to their teaching practice. Teacher Artist 2 (2009) described a Teacher Artist as “having an arts-based discipline..... within an educational context. You have some educational priorities in the execution of your discipline”. The development and implementation of performance concept, workshops and the resultant performance lay in the hands of the two Teacher Artists. The two Teacher Artists delivered the majority of the classroom workshop experiences.

## Professional Artist Definition

For the purpose of this paper a professional artist is defined according to the Australia Council for the Arts definition in *Don't give up your day job: an economic study of professional artists in Australia*:

The term professional is intended to indicate a degree of training, experience or talent and a manner of working that qualify artists to have their work judged against the highest professional standards of the relevant occupation. (Throsby & Hollister, 2003, p.13)

Professional artists in the *Yonder* project came from the disciplines of circus, dance/movement, film/digital screen media, magic and illusion and music. The professional artists were selected by the Teacher Artists based upon the artistic needs of each *Yonder* project and its conceptual focus in terms of which art form suited the exploration and development of ideas best.

## Key Teacher Definition

A key teacher was nominated by the participating school to spearhead the *Yonder* project in the educational environment. In most schools the key

teacher was a year three teacher. However, due to the changing nature of school profile of teaching staff the key teacher may be in one of the following roles within the school – classroom teacher, teacher librarian, specialist arts teacher (such as dance teacher or drama teacher), special needs teacher, head of curriculum or teaching principal.

## **What is the *Yonder* Model?**

A key part of the research was to articulate the shape of the model. The *Yonder* project was devised and delivered by the KITE @ Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) and was supported by the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body, through its Community Partnerships Section. In each year of the project there were two Artist-in-Residencies (AIR). Each AIR had three schools involved in school-based workshops conducted by the Teacher Artists and professional artists. Common to the AIR, regardless of school site is a nine-phase model. Whilst the model is articulated as a linear one it should be noted that the phases 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8 are almost continually engaged with throughout the AIR.

The nine phases can be identified as:

1. School selection;
2. School and community consultation;
3. Start Up Party for children, teachers, parents/carers/families, school administrators and community partners;
4. School-based arts workshops and after school/weekend arts workshops;
5. Playbuilding and rehearsal;
6. Performance;
7. Debrief and evaluation;
8. Professional development for teachers and administrators;
9. *Beyond Yonder* activities.

### **Phase 1: School Selection Process**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the schools

and KITE at QPAC (2010a) states: “[the *Yonder* project] is designed for those communities most at risk of social exclusion”. According to Saunders, Naidoo & Griffiths (2008, p. viii) “social exclusion exists when individuals do not participate in key activities in society”. In Australia the factors contributing to social exclusion include, but are not limited to, “low income, unemployment, education, ill-health, housing and homelessness” (Mangan & Stephen 2007, pp. 12-16). These factors informed the selection process by the Teacher Artists of schools included in the *Yonder* project. The schools selected were engaged in the project for three years.

## **Phase 2: School and Community Consultation**

According to the needs in each community this phase encompassed two to four weeks community consultation and project preparation. The consultation phase allowed Teacher Artists to understand the dynamics of the community and in particular the school and/or class profiles with which they will be working. The consultation also allowed for the on-going development of partnerships with cultural organisations and groups involved in the project. The consultation allowed the Teacher Artists to reflect upon how the *Yonder* model may be best tailored to suit the community. The consultation process was ongoing throughout the period that the AIR is directly engaged with a school and its community. Often this consultation is continuous throughout the year to maintain partnerships and to forward plan the next engagement in six months time.

## **Phase 3: Start Up Party for Children, Teachers, Parents/ Carers/Families, School Administrators and Community Partners**

The inauguration of the *Yonder* project for the each community began with a Start up Party (SUP). The aim of the SUP was to allow parents/carers and members of the community to connect with the project. Attendees comprise school students from the *Yonder* project schools, *Yonder* key teachers, school administrators, parents and family members of the students,

local artists involved in the *Yonder* project, local council representatives, representatives from the local art gallery and professional artists. Teacher Artists were able to talk about the project and show examples on DVD of performance outcomes from previous years so that parents had an understanding of some of the activities involved in the project. This also gave parents knowledge of what they might see in the performance. This is important, as most parents did not have previous experience of a live theatre event.

#### **Phase 4: School-based (AIR) Arts Workshops and After School/Weekend Arts Workshops**

**School-based (AIR) arts workshops.** The AIR workshop engagement was ten to twelve weeks in duration depending upon the length of a given school term. The AIR can be divided into four sections:

- Week 1-7 Classroom workshops with Teacher Artists and professional artists
- Week 8-9 Development and rehearsal for performance in schools
- Week 10 Dress rehearsal (one day) and performance (one morning)
- Week 11-12 Classroom debrief and response workshops with students and community.

The Teacher Artists and professional artists conducted two to three workshops in each school over three days of the week. The majority of the school-based workshops were anchored around the art form of drama. This is particularly appropriate as the Teacher Artists were qualified drama practitioners and educators and used their expert skill and knowledge base to advantage. The dramatic activity can be captured under the form known as story drama. David Booth (2005) describes story drama as being a process of common construction of story. Booth says, "As teachers, we work with students as co-constructors of a common story, represented through drama, based on and integrating pieces of the stories we have met and lived" (2005, p.13). As well as drama other art forms such as circus, dance, music, magic and illusion are used depending on the nature of the project. Where possible



the Teacher Artists engaged local professional practicing artists to work alongside them in the project.

**After school/weekend arts workshops.** The purpose of the after school and weekend Family Art Workshops was to encourage family involvement with their children in the project and to introduce parents/carers to the local art gallery and the activities it offers. The art workshops connected to the ideas and concepts explored in the classroom and the culminating performance. Logan City Gallery and Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery runs workshops in parallel to the classroom workshops conducted by the Teacher Artists. A professional artist or art gallery staff member facilitated the workshops. This builds connections between the local artistic community and local schools.

## **Phase 5: Playbuilding and Rehearsal**

In the last three weeks of the school-based workshop program the Teacher Artists turned their attention to shaping the students' knowledge and skills into a performance outcome to be shared with their community. Whilst undertaking the workshops the Teacher Artists, in consultation with professional artists and production staff, continually negotiated the shape and content of the performance. The performance content was developed from ideas that emerged from the students in the classroom workshop series. Teacher Artist 2 (2010) articulates this structure by saying:

The children [participate in the] workshops and their ideas [are] collated into the performance. They might not have control over which ideas are chosen or how it's structured but they nonetheless created the idea.

In developing the performance Teacher Artist 1 stated that "..... a Teacher Artist has to listen carefully because we want to hear what [the students] are giving us so that we can include their voices and honour them" (Teacher Artists 1 & 2). One example of this can be seen in the development of *Precious* (Kite Arts Education Program, 2010d). The title

emerged from a classroom workshop that used story drama as the art form. The children were undertaking activities based on the picture book *Sarah's Heavy Heart* (Carnavas, 2009) that explores the notion of childhood sadness and depression. The heavy heart drama made a real impact for the children because of its emotive qualities and created opportunities for deep thinking. In discussion the Teacher Artists asked the children how they helped others to feel happy. One child in grade four (aged 9 years) said that if something is precious to you, you look after it with all your might. In the afternoon the Teacher Artists reflected upon this response and "a decision not to investigate the ideas around 'from little things big things grow' and action/reaction in the performance was made. Instead the notion of preciousness and emotional connection to things that you love and find precious will be the heart of the performance" (Gattenhof, 2010). And so the performance of *Precious* was born.

Positioning the students as co-creators in the process provides a tangible opportunity for the children to take agency over their participation in the creative process. One of the professional artists in the project noted: "..... co-creating is about the children having an insight into a performance making process" (Professional artist E). By positioning the students as co-creators in the development of the performance *Yonder* is addressing its stated aim "to position children as both creators and consumers of art" (Kite Arts Education Program, 2009a). Likewise it also addresses the stated aim "to include children in the life of a peak cultural institution" (Kite Arts Education Program, 2009a).

## **Phase 6: Performance**

The performance outcome is described in the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between the schools and KITE at QPAC as follows:

KITE teacher-artists work with students, teachers and parents over an extended period of time to create a performance piece culminating in a presentation at a peak community cultural institution. The performance is for the school community and includes exhibitions of student work and a celebration post-

performance. (Kite Arts Education Program, 2010a)

The performance formed a culmination of the AIR workshop experiences in the classroom. The performances were presented to the school community and included exhibitions of student work and a celebration post-performance. The performance, approximately 45 minutes in length, was augmented with pre-recorded interview footage of children and some parents/carers reflectively responding to questions about concepts explored in the workshops and related community-based activities. Through the artistic networks and resources available to a large cultural organization such as QPAC the performance was supported with a professional stage design, stage manager and technical components such as lighting, sound and digital projection.

Teacher Artist 2 stated that the performance served two functions within the project:

The performance is important..... it's the culmination but it is also a motivation. I believe children want a real world outcome. They don't often understand what they are doing at school is important because it actually has nothing to do with the real world. (Teacher Artist 2)

A professional artist working on the project stated that the performance was paramount as the arc of the project continued to support notions of agency within an art-making process for the students:

The performance element is something that children can invest in, co-create and perform. I think at its best, performance has the potential to be a life changing experience for creators of work and also an audience. (Professional artist E)

**Performance themes and performance structure.** The performance themes cluster around notions of cause and effect (2009-2010) and change and adaptation (2011-2012). The choice for these themes was not arbitrary. Teacher Artist 3 noted; "It came about because of students' responses in workshops.

It became obvious that there was a lot that happened in their lives that they didn't have a lot of coping mechanisms for dealing with situations".

The themes were always child-centred and were nuanced according to the experiences of the students involved. For example the notion of cause and effect has been explored in two separate productions. *The Ripple* "explored cause and effect in a variety of ways and art forms, which led to questions about [the children's] power and their ability to have an effect in the world" (Kite Arts Education Program, 2009b). *Precious* explored the same theme through "promoting children's thinking around the importance of happiness and caring for oneself, whilst also being aware of the needs of others" (Kite Arts Education Program, 2010c).

Over the course of the project the performances developed a similar structure to enable the management of time Teacher Artists had in schools and how best to facilitate the students in the performance. Each performance is divided into three sections of approximately 8-10 minutes each of stage action. This allowed each school to have a defined section that then assisted with the approach to the rehearsal and delivery of the performance. The structure also allowed the art forms used in each project to be developed by the students in each of the sections. For example in the performance titled *Precious* section one, *Precious self* (dance), allowed students to convey what was precious to them as individuals through drama movement vocabulary. The second section, *Precious others*, conveyed ideas and feelings about how they help friends and family through movement and music. The final section, *Precious place* used shadow work to convey images of places in the town and activities that children named as being special to them. Each section was preceded by pre-recorded interviews of children's responses to questions based on the thematic responses for the section.

**Phase 7: Debrief and Evaluation – KITE Teacher Artists; Professional Artists (Musician, Choreographer/dancer, Designer, Film-maker, Magician/illusionist, Circus artists); School (Key Teachers and Administrators); Students and School Community (Parents and Carers); Partner Organisations**

The KITE team committed to “continuous reflection and questioning regarding the purpose, validity and feasibility of the project’s founding aims and objectives” (Kite Arts Education Program, 2010c, p. 5). Through observation of the Teacher Artists it can be said that they engaged reflective practice strategies to hone and refresh the project and the classroom workshop activities. This reflective practice was undertaken in two ways. Firstly, the reflection was undertaken as “reflection on action” (Schon, 1983) through the post *Yonder* project debrief sessions with key teachers, students and professional artists. The “reflection on action” was undertaken through discussion and informal written evaluation. Reflective activity was most usually undertaken by the Teacher Artists and included oral and written feedback from students and key teachers two to three weeks post performance; written feedback from school administrators; written feedback from key teachers; written feedback from students; feedback from KITE Reference Group (Brisbane-based); feedback from *Yonder* Steering Group Committee in both Edge-city Brisbane and regional Queensland and on-going conversations (both formal and informal) with QUT external project researcher about emerging findings.

Secondly, the reflection is undertaken whilst the project is running in schools in a cycle that is called “reflection in action” (Schon, 1983). The use of “reflection in action” allowed the Teacher Artists to be responsive to the outcomes of any classroom workshop. It ensured that the workshops were tailored to meet student needs and adaptive to changing environments and physical spaces within a school.

## **Phase 8: Professional Development for Teachers and Administrators**

To support teacher and school connectedness to the *Yonder* project the Teacher Artists run twice yearly full-day professional development programs for the key teachers and administrators from participating schools in Edgecity Brisbane and regional Queensland. The professional development events overtly addressed the *Yonder* aims “to provide teachers with support and professional development in arts education” (Kite Arts Education Program, 2009a).

## **Phase 9: *Beyond Yonder***

Developing capacity to extend the model beyond the direct delivery in schools is embedded in the model. The establishment through the community partnerships of the *Beyond Yonder Club* in regional Queensland “..... is a way of maintaining the art’s practice while we are not there. We introduced a group of people [parents and carers] to the gallery through the *Yonder* project. It is about sustaining arts practice” (Teacher Artist 2). Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery Public Programs Officer believes that these workshops are important in developing community creativity and connectedness, particularly for sectors of community that may not have previously accessed the resources. She stated: “In the long term, I think the children and parents and families that participated in the project are going to create a community where the arts are valued”.

## **Challenges for the *Yonder* Model**

The *Yonder* project had to respond and adapt to a number of shifting variables both inside individual project and across a number of projects. This plasticity and adroitness can be clustered around four themes:

1. Dynamic environments;
2. Teacher/school connectedness and program dissemination;
3. Adaptation to school demographics;

4. Retention and stability of Teacher Artists and professional artists.

## Dynamic Environments

Schools are dynamic environments and this was most keenly felt in the staffing profile of the school. The greatest challenge the *Yonder* project faced was the turnover of staff members in participating schools that was beyond KITE's influence or control. This change can occur at the end of a school year due to retirement and school transfer; or at times during the course of the project due to illness or maternity leave. Since mid 2009 the Teacher Artists responded to changes in key teachers in four of the twelve schools and five changes in principal in schools. The change in key teacher and/or school administrators can cause a fracture in the continuity of the project in the schools and "it can take up a disproportionate amount of our time" (Teacher Artist 1) in re-negotiating with the school to replace a key teacher or sometimes replace a participating school. In the words of one of the Teacher Artists, "the role of the key teacher is paramount" (Teacher Artist 1).

The dilemma of shifting staff profiles in schools and how to respond to it was also a difficulty for school administrators of participating schools. When being asked the question "Have your key teachers been able to modify any aspects of the *Yonder* model and tailor it to your school community without the intervention of the KITE artists?" one school principal noted:

This is going to be a tricky one for us because one of our key teachers has left. The key teacher is very much pivotal in the success of this being an ongoing project. (Principal C)

By contrast, key teachers who have remained with the project since its inception were able to value-add to the project and student experience:

This year we had [two key teachers] who had been on the project for twelve months, who had done the professional development, had seen a previous *Yonder* performance. I had wonderful conversations with both those women about pedagogy and investigations and how do we improve it and what can we do.

(Teacher Artist 1)

Teacher Artist 3 concurred with the importance of continuity of the key teacher in developing strong academic and artistic outcomes for their students. When being asked about the difference between two key teachers who had been involved for twelve months and one key teacher who was completely new the Teacher Artist noted:

There was a huge difference. It was very obvious that they knew exactly what it was all about. They were engaged throughout the entire project. They were fully supportive of the program. They followed up workshops. They were willing to have the students do all of the follow up activities in the journals. The journals were all kept up to date. They participated in the activities with us. And they knew that it was not just about supporting the activities but also the behaviour management side of it as well so they were right there with that. They were very enthusiastic to discuss how they'd applied the knowledge that they got from the workshops. Very different of course to what was happening with [key teacher] whom did not have any of that prior knowledge. She wasn't an experienced key teacher. There was no follow up of journal writing. (Teacher Artist 3)

Interestingly in one school the changing staff profile had been used to advantage in disseminating the materials and activities more broadly in the school. One key teacher had changed roles to become the teacher librarian in the school. This allowed the teacher to continue to develop and implement arts-based learning activities with other staff. This had added "benefit because her expertise now goes across the whole school so it is about using the skills that they have learnt through the KITE project to influence their own personal planning" (Principal B). This type of innovation in staff profile allowed for a broader engagement beyond the single class that had direct experience of *Yonder* in 2010.



## Teacher/school Connectedness and Program Dissemination

The professional development programme was the touchstone of continuous engagement with the *Yonder* project both prior to receiving direct engagement, during and post direct engagement. It also functioned as a forum for key teachers and school administrators to share ideas about how they are embedded arts experiences in their school curriculum, how they extended upon *Yonder* project activities and what academic and social outcomes they were witnessing in their students as a result of engagement with the program. This helped to develop a community of shared practice. From observation of the professional development workshops the events functioned in four ways:

1. To share teaching pedagogy around the dramatic form of story drama and other art forms engaged for each of the projects (e.g. dance or media);
2. To connect schools to each other, particularly those involved to develop a learning community;
3. To develop understandings and consensus about *Yonder* aims and objectives for schools and their communities;
4. To update key teachers on the nature of the *Yonder* project.

As a direct result of the professional development program 9 of the 11 key teachers reported that they gained a deep of understanding of the content and pedagogic approaches and how they were able to transfer these skills into other learning contexts. Teacher B stated: "I'm definitely going to be including story dramas into my planning in future and trying to integrate one or two per unit that I can do. And I'd also like to try and encourage other teachers to do that. The story drama I think is just such a powerful thing". Teacher J noted: "I feel more confident to include drama in my planning across other key learning areas especially literature. I have used the ideas from the Teacher Artists' visits with my class in visual art lessons and music/movement lessons".

For schools that experienced staffing change the professional

development program was vital in maintaining and redeveloping connections with the *Yonder* project. When asked “How do you see your school and your teachers continuing arts based learning activities for students in this year?” a principal grappling with replacing a key teacher stated:

The key is the doing professional development on an ongoing basis. So I think the first thing is going to be to try and engage a new Year one, two, three teacher in professional development so she can actually start to become familiar with the types of teaching strategies that can be used. But until that point, it is going to be difficult for her to really benefit or be able to apply what we have learnt from last year. (Principal C)

Whilst the majority of key teachers involved in the program were satisfied with the professional development approach, two key teachers stated that they would like the professional development to be more focussed on training them for what they were required to develop during the program when the Teacher Artists were not directly working with their students.

A concomitant issue for key teachers and school administrators was the notion of on-going direct engagement with the *Yonder* project in their school after they had the Teacher Artists and professional artists working directly in the school. In the six-month follow up interviews conducted for the research two key teachers and two principals indicated that they would like some level of continued involvement with the Teacher Artists after engagement with the program. This was best captured in two examples from the interviews:

It would be lovely to see them come back and touch base with the kids who were involved last year and maybe just an activity here and there with some other classes to see it come from those. To have [the Teacher Artists] come in and teach a lesson in some other classrooms I think would help to push the drama and the arts around all the classrooms. (Teacher C)

The greatest need is the continuation of the workshop for the

teachers as well as for the students. I know that in the case of the story drama techniques that we used the teachers would love to revisit some of them and hone in on how do you actually get the drama out of this portion of the story or what interpretation do I really need to do to get the best out of these visuals and those sorts of things. (Principal B)

The notion of on-going training for key teachers was also supported by one of the Teacher Artists. “[They need] more frequent practical workshops so that they can build up their confidence to feel ‘yes we can go ahead and do this, we don’t need the teacher/artist to be here we can do this ourselves, we can expand on this ourselves and keep carrying it through’” (Teacher Artist 3). The evidence signals that key teachers would like some level of direct on-going engagement with the program when it returns to their community in an effort to develop a deeper understanding of arts-based learning in their schools.

## **Adaptation to School Demographics**

Whilst the majority of students engaged in the *Yonder* project were Year 3 students, the model often had to adapt to the specific nature of school demographics. This was particularly the case in the small schools involved in the project in regional Queensland. Often the school population did not allow for a single Year 3 class to be formed so classes were mixed age groups such as Year 2/3/4 composite class. In one regional Queensland project (2011) the student composition was a Year 2/3/4/5 class. The inclusion of the older students in the model created some challenges for the Teacher Artists’ engagement of the older students that sat outside the stated nominated age demographic by KITE of Prep to Year 3 students. Teacher Artist 1 noted; “I think Year 5 needed more stretching. I think the social competency stuff probably weighed it out but you could not do it for much longer without them involved in a stronger pedagogical way”. Whilst this difficulty was acknowledged by the Teacher Artists it should be noted that the inclusion of older students in small school settings did not impeded the delivery of

the classroom workshops or the development of the performance, rather it should be noted as a variable that required imaginative responses from the Teacher Artists.

## **Retention and Stability of Teacher Artists and Professional Artists**

The issue of stability of key teachers in participating schools is not the only area of project that is affected by shifting human resources. The Teacher Artists' period of secondment was finite, that is, they are not attached KITE indefinitely. It was expected that at the end of their secondment period of approximately four years that they return to a school as a teacher for Education Queensland. A change in Teacher Artist occurred at the beginning of 2011 and had the potential to disrupt the continuity of the project. On reflection, the time of appointment (December 2010) to the time of commencement (January 2011 with an intervening six-week school holiday period) did not provide sufficient lead-time to enable the incoming Teacher Artist to develop a strong understanding of the philosophy and the physics of the project. Whilst the new Teacher Artist admitted; "it was a huge learning curve" (Teacher Artist 3) and "negotiation around two different teaching styles needed occur" (Teacher Artist 1) the robustness of the model enabled the project to move forward with minimal disruption.

Teacher Artist 1 remained with the project since its inception in 2009. This was important in maintaining continuity and relationships with schools, key teachers, professional artists and partners. Teacher Artist 1 noted: "Project is so complex that you need to have some level of consistency" (Teacher Artist 1). A tangible example of the development of a relational strategy was the engagement of two professional artists who remained constant in the project. Teacher Artist 1 said that this provided a level of comfort in a program that is constantly shifting. "These two people have had extreme longevity in the program. You know what you are doing is going to be all right. You do not have to re-negotiate" (Teacher Artist 1).

In an interview, a professional artist commented upon the importance of continuity of artists involved in the project to be able to undertake a continuous cycle of improvement through their own observations of the process and reflective dialogue with the Teacher Artists:

Working on a number of performances in the *Yonder* project has allowed me to develop with the philosophy of the project – that is rare. (Professional Artist A)

## Conclusion

These search findings from the *Yonder* project point to critical success factors that need to be taken into consideration by like projects both in Queensland and beyond. These include the replicable nature of the model whilst remaining open and flexible to adapt according to the needs of the school, needs and abilities of the students, and content choices of Teacher Artists. This required attention to development of template of practice and legacy of resources through partnering with local community providers (councils and cultural venues such as art galleries and libraries) enabling the model to have application to communities beyond the school classroom and to provide possible avenues for longevity. For such a model, plasticity and adroitness is key to the ability to deliver the program and for this reason the personnel (Teacher Artists and Professional Artists) need to be ready to respond to the stressful dynamics of change in school personnel and school circumstances. Key to this stability is the retention of the key teacher in participating schools to assist in developing shared program philosophies thereby maximizing engagement and outcomes for students.

## Notes

1. Edge-city Brisbane is the name given to suburbs on the fringes of Brisbane city proper. They are 40 or more kilometres from the centre of Brisbane.
2. Education Queensland is a state-based educational authority with oversight of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools in the state of Queensland, Australia.

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此為上文摘要中譯

## 看遠處：昆士蘭學校教學藝人與專業藝術家的藝術合作模式

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### 摘要

2007年起，以昆士蘭表演藝術中心為基地的風箏藝術教育計畫（KITE），為當地較低社經地位的小學生提供一系列的劇場經驗活動。此乃昆士蘭教育部的一項幼兒藝術倡議計畫，由昆士蘭表演藝術中心支援，於該中心進行。KITE 以當地學前至三年級學生及其教師為對象，提供相關的當代藝術教育經驗。當中的劇場經驗乃是一項為期三年、名為 *Yonder*（遠處）的藝術家駐場計畫的一部分，計畫包括在 KITE 教學藝人支援及領導下，由兒童創作演出，於社區文化機構內進行，觀眾為其社群及父母／監護人。本文概覽 *Yonder* 的計畫模式，並拆解在學校及文化組織中推行此模式的挑戰。

**關鍵詞：**戲劇教育、藝術教育、駐場藝術家、教學藝人、藝術課程

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