

Case study

Making Me

Details

What:

Supported through investment from the Artist in Residence program, visual artist Lisa Burnett, film maker Luke Monsour and story teller Gail Robinson collaborated with students from the Edmund Rice Flexible Learning Centre on the Making Me project. These three artists worked closely with a group of at-risk young people on this reflective creative project to examine ideas of self-image and community.

The project was developed by Deception Bay Community Youth Programs, the D'Bay Reads Group and the Deception Bay Child and Family Alliance. In an informal workshop environment, young people shared stories about their past, present and future and created symbolic statements of their lives and their identities through the art of doll making. The project culminated in an exhibition including an installation of the dolls and short documentary film segments, providing a window into the hearts and souls of the young people, arts workers and teachers involved.

It is the artists' observation that creative practices typically introduced to young people in this at-risk group tend towards aerosol art, hip hop music, dance and new media. Making Me introduced young people to potentially new modes of creativity such as doll making, documentary film making and set/exhibition design, as well as project management skills development.

When:

September 2013 to June 2014



Students used a range of mediums to create their own unique and beautiful dolls, Deception Bay Flexible Learning Centre. Photo by Luke Monsour.

Where:

Edmund Rice Flexible Learning Centre, Deception Bay, Queensland

Key stats:

- 40 students
- 10 teachers
- 3 artists

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$19,725 – Artist in Residence program

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Outcomes

- These creative experiences supported young people to manage their own wellbeing, understand ways they relate to others, develop conversations and make informed decisions about their lives. These outcomes complement the Queensland and Australian curricula focused on student self-direction and self-expression.
- The use of technologies such as film making and visual diaries, as well as curating of an exhibition, created a sense of community achievement and bonding. This aligns with a key learning outcome in the Early Years Learning Framework (COAG 2009) – children who have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, and are connected with and contribute to their world, are confident and involved learners and effective communicators.
- Students developed capabilities in critical and creative thinking as they explored and evaluated knowledge. They also practiced the skill of tenderness as they created, interacted with and cared for their small doll sculptures.



Dolls and documentary segments were displayed in an installation handcrafted by students and artists, Deception Bay Flexible Learning Centre. Photo by Luke Monsour.

Learnings and reflections

The artists provided the following reflections about the project:

'This project was inspired by the successful delivery of a Doll Making Project 'Yarns of the Heart' in an Indigenous community setting in Western Australia. We recognised that although the project was delivered in a different community setting, the core principles would be transferrable to an environment with at-risk young people. Taking on this idea was a potential risk, however the flexible delivery, the skill of the arts workers and the richness of the collaboration ensured the success. Advice provided by Arts Queensland in the application process in relation to reducing the project scale was beneficial.'

'This project showed that young people can become involved in any form of creativity with the right facilitation. It was important that the arts worker was onsite over a long period of time – this gave the students time to build relationships and trust and maintain their connection with the creative process. Evaluation indicated that the doll making was preferred over film making and this was a surprise finding.'

'The environment of a flexi school provided challenges and benefits for the project. It was uncertain who would attend or engage in each creative session; art workers simply had to be consistent in attendance and approach. Word quickly spread among the students about the project and this was vital to its success. The flexible school environment meant that the project structure and schedule could be altered as needed.'