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BUILDING YOUTH RESILIENCE THROUGH CREATIVE FILM-MAKING

Evaluation of 5678 Film Club, 2017-2019

Laurie A. Chapin & Carolyn L. Deans

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

polyglot
Theatre is child's play

BUILDING YOUTH RESILIENCE THROUGH CREATIVE FILM-MAKING: EVALUATION OF 5678 FILM CLUB, 2017-2019

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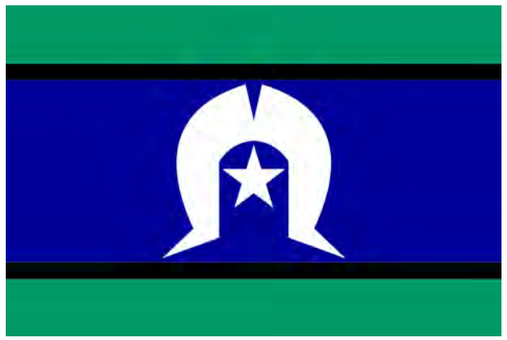
Acknowledgement of Country

Polyglot Theatre and Victoria University acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the traditional custodians of the lands and waters in which we live, work and play. We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the owners of the land on which the 5678 Film Club project was conceived, executed and displayed, and we pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.



Contributors

Many individuals have contributed to the success of this project.

This research and report were made possible by the very supportive staff at Polyglot Theatre, and especially Priya Namana and Kate Kantor who brought us on board and facilitated our access to the Film Club program.

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Helen Eastwood was the report editor.

Finally, thank you to the children, artists and educators who were involved in the research. We hope we have accurately represented your opinions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Foundations

Through their Kids Collaboration projects, Polyglot Theatre focuses on the children of specific communities and delivers creative programs that develop capacity, resilience and unique art, based on the child's worldview.

5678 Film Club was an extracurricular filmmaking project designed to support young people who were at risk of school disengagement and social isolation, especially those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The project comprised weekly afterschool workshops during which students had the opportunity to collaborate and create short films over the course of a school term.

Aged 10-14 years (Grades 5,6,7,8)

St Joseph's Primary School, Collingwood Victoria

Theory

Victoria University undertook a literature review of youth-developmental needs and the role of arts-based extracurricular activities in supporting young people, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, through this period of transition.

Research design

The researchers conducted a mixed-methods investigation to evaluate the outcomes and processes of Film Club during 2017–2019.

Year 1 (2017): qualitative and quantitative data methods with Film Club student participants (× 9) and a 'same-school' control student group (× 9)

Qualitative interviews focusing on:

- Socioemotional learning and development

Quantitative analysis of survey data from questionnaires focusing on:

- Developmental assets
- School engagement
- Strengths and difficulties

Years 2 and 3 (2018–2019): qualitative data methods

Qualitative interviews with Film Club participants (× 18) and facilitators (× 8), and educators (× 5):

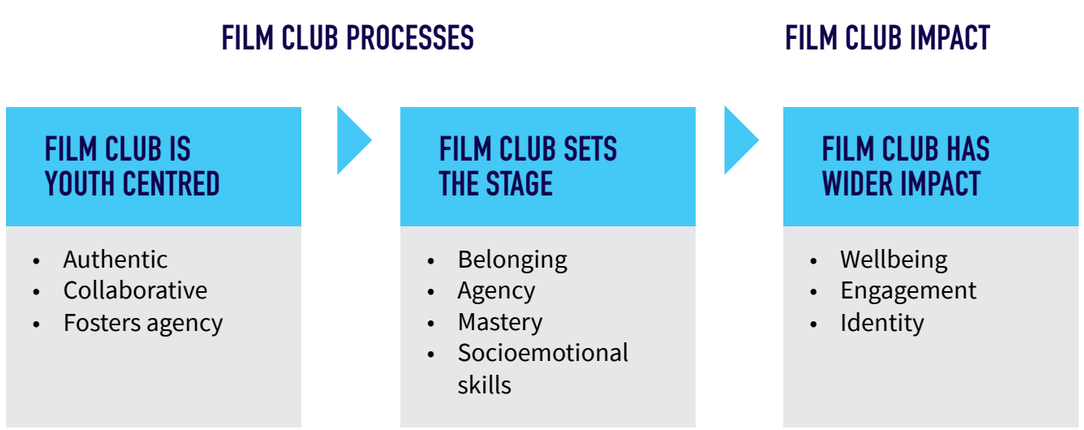
- Students' view of the impact on their lives of their participation in Film Club
- Facilitators' conceptual model of their relationship with the young people
- Educators' understanding of students' growth during their participation in Film Club

Analysis of findings

Findings were mapped against current developmental theory to determine mechanisms of change within the Film Club program, and to identify future opportunities.

Findings

Figure 1. Thematic representation of Film Club processes and impact



Youth centred

"I'm new here so let's work together, I'm going to learn a bit from you, you've got something to offer the space as much as I do."– Facilitator

"[The facilitators] have a lot of respect for children."

"[They see] that children have our own minds."

"They treat us like adults, they don't baby us."

– Participants

"We just keep filming and we keep bringing ideas to the table in Film Club. We're around the table, we're listening to people we know, sharing food just watching and belonging." – Participant

Sets the stage

"Before Film Club … I couldn't really manage myself but now I can manage myself a lot, I am very attentive and I listen more and I think before I say more and I am not the rational self that thinks like violence is the way to fix it now I know how to talk." – Participant

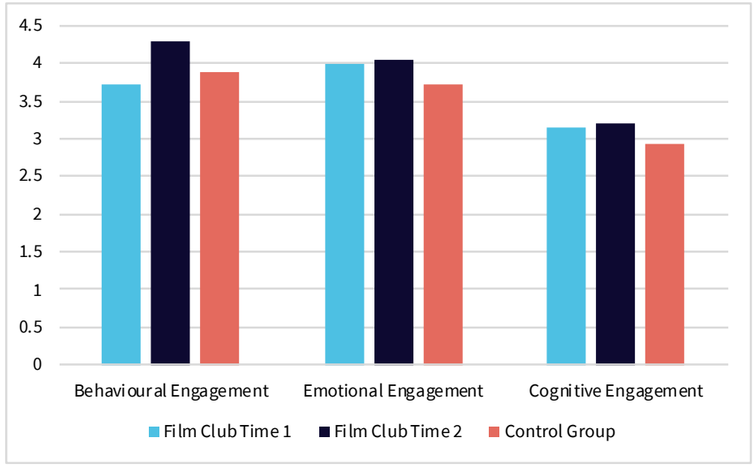
"[Film Club] made me more confident 'cause I didn't think that I could go in front of a camera 'cause I sounded weird and I didn't know what I was doing; but then after I tried that after Film Club I felt greater and more confident." – Participant

Photo credit: Theresa Harrison

Wider impact

- Film Club participants, facilitators and educators all reported that Film Club processes had an ongoing and positive impact on participants' lives outside of Film Club, including at school.
- Film Club participants reported feeling valued, a sense of belonging and an enhanced sense of agency, leading to increased confidence and school engagement as well as individual development and enhanced cultural identity.
- In a small sample, Film Club facilitated behavioural, emotional and cognitive School Engagement Measure (SEM) scores to higher levels for Film Club participants compared to a 'same-school' control student group:

Figure 2. Mean SEM-M scale scores (2017 data)



In a small sample surveyed over two years, Film Club students showed increases in total scores on the Developmental Assets Profile and in some subscales:

Table 1. Developmental Assets Profile scores for 2017 and 2018 Film Club participants

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET	CHANGE DURING 1 YEAR OF FILM CLUB
Support	Challenged Vulnerable Adequate Thriving 2017 → 2018
Boundaries	Challenged Vulnerable Adequate Thriving 2017 ——→ 2018
Learning commitment	Challenged Vulnerable Adequate Thriving 2017 → 2018
Positive values	Challenged Vulnerable Adequate Thriving 2017 ——→ 2018
Social competence	Challenged Vulnerable Adequate Thriving 2017 → 2018

Future directions

Recommendations for future directions are informed by the research findings and the literature review of youth-development needs and arts-based extracurricular activities, and include the following:

1. That an analysis be undertaken of the impact of Film Club on students who were in Grade 7 or 8 when Film Club began and who subsequently transitioned to high school.
2. That a longitudinal evaluation be conducted of students who participate in Film Club over Grades 5–8.
3. That a follow-up of Film Club participants be undertaken a year after finishing Film Club, especially of those participants who have subsequently transitioned to high school.
4. That a qualitative analysis of the films made by Film Club participants be undertaken.
5. That, should Film Club be run at another school, particularly one in a regional area of Victoria or a different city to Melbourne, a similar evaluation of the program be conducted to provide comparison, particularly in terms of demographic groups and the effect of contextual factors of the school environment.
6. That children who were unable to be engaged by Film Club be surveyed to provide comparison and also to inform ways that Film Club could extend its ability to attract and retain students within its target population.

ABOUT POLYGLOT THEATRE

Polyglot Theatre is a Melbourne-based company which creates, produces and tours Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) all over the world. Polyglot's mission is to make innovative and daring theatre which provides children worldwide the opportunity for imagination and adventure through participation. Polyglot's artistic approach comprises a child-centred practice and involves young people from creative development through to immersive performances.

Through its Kids Collaboration projects, Polyglot focuses on the children of specific communities and delivers creative programs aimed at developing capacity and resilience – and unique art. Many projects are multiyear and focus on supporting community cultural resilience. These projects involve collaborations with schools and communities which have little access to the arts. 5678 Film Club is one of Polyglot Theatre's Kids Collaboration projects.

Polyglot Theatre is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body and the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

5678 Film Club Supporters

5678 Film Club

Polyglot's 5678 Film Club ('Film Club') was initially run as a pilot program in 2016 at St Joseph's Primary School in Collingwood, Victoria. Based on the positive experiences of the children and the perceived benefits noted by St Joseph's School staff, the program received philanthropic funding to enable Film Club to continue for a further three years, 2017–2019. One of the deliverables of that funding was a requirement that a research evaluation of the project be undertaken, with a final report to be submitted, including outcomes and recommendations.

This report presents the findings of that research evaluation conducted by researchers at Victoria University led by Laurie Chapin and Carolyn Deans. Additional artefacts that demonstrate outcomes from Film Club include the films created by the program participants and additional documentary evidence collected by Polyglot Theatre.

Photo credit: Theresa-Harrison

INTRODUCTION TO 5678 FILM CLUB

The idea

5678 Film Club designed by Polyglot Theatre is a three-year extracurricular filmmaking project designed to support young people aged 10–14 (Grades 5, 6, 7, 8) who are at risk of school disengagement and social isolation or who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

5678 Film Club ('Film Club') is an interactive drama group that provides opportunities for creative learning and individual expression, with the aim of supporting psychological wellbeing, interpersonal engagement and identity development. The project comprises weekly afterschool Film Club workshops that run in line with the four school terms and take place on school premises. During the workshops, students are provided with the opportunity to collaborate with experienced filmmakers to create short films. Each year an average of 27 participants were involved with Film Club.

Polyglot Theatre engages professional filmmakers and artists to facilitate and support the children in achieving their cinematic vision. These professional facilitators help the children design and produce their short films while aiming for creative control to remain in the hands of the children. Facilitators also play a role in helping students collaborate with one another and in allowing every student the opportunity to contribute to the project.

The rationale

The aim of Film Club is to engage children in collaborative and creative activities that provide empowerment and build self-confidence, which, in turn, will assist the children with the challenging transition periods that take place between Grades 5 and 6 in primary school, and Grades 7 and 8 in high school.

Polyglot Theatre developed the Film Club program on the premise that the use of arts-based activities will help children to successfully manage these transitions, in a number of ways:

- The art of filmmaking carries feelings of accomplishment and mastery that help build confidence and self-identity.
- Filmmaking involves the development of new creative and technical skills (e.g. video editing, script writing, acting, directing).
- Filmmaking provides an avenue to learn life skills, including teamwork and persistence.
- The creation of films helps marginalised people find a voice within their community.

The activities

The central component of Film Club is the creation of short films over the course of a school term whereby students collaborate across a range of activities related to filmmaking:

- During pre-production, the children develop scripts outlining the plot of their short film.
- In conjunction with script development, professional filmmakers help the children design storyboards to outline the sequence of scenes and decide where scenes will be shot and what type of camera shot will be used.
- The characters and props used within the short films are developed by the children using materials provided by the school and occasionally by Polyglot Theatre.
- Children are given the opportunity to use the contemporary film equipment and develop skills in the art of filmmaking.
- Rehearsals take place and a scene is recorded numerous times.
- The children review the recorded footage and give their final approval for a scene.
- During the post-production stage, audio and visual edits are added to the recorded footage using various software packages.

Polyglot Theatre provides contemporary filming equipment (e.g. cameras, tripods, dollies, LED panels, reflectors, boom mics) to maximise production outcomes.

Upon completion, a final edit of the film is created and then uploaded to YouTube, and is also screened at school assemblies, local community events and independent film festivals. Collectively, the short films have been viewed by thousands of people.

Photo credit: Theresa-Harrison

The school

The program was undertaken over four years (2016–2019) at St Joseph's Primary School in Collingwood, Victoria. St Joseph's is a Catholic school although students' families have diverse religious affiliations, and the children from St Joseph's who participated in Film Club represented 13 different cultural backgrounds.

The enrolment at St Joseph's for Grades Prep–6 is approximately 100–110 students. The school has a relatively large cohort of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Eighty-three per cent of students have a language background other than English and 77 per cent of students are in the lowest quarter of the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage.[1] These students face a disproportionately higher risk of school disengagement and poorer transition into high school. Consequently, St Joseph's met criteria as having a cohort of students representative of the group towards which Film Club is targeted.

[1] The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) provides an indication of the socio-educational backgrounds of students. See https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/About_icsea_2014.pdf.

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Resilience in young people

Adolescence is often viewed as a turbulent time, characterised by an increase in risk-taking behaviours, disengagement from school and increased antisocial behaviour (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Luthar & Ansary, 2005; Reinke & Herman, 2002). Youth that demonstrate these undesirable expressions of development are labelled 'at-risk' and deemed vulnerable to negative outcomes (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008). However, risk-averse approaches highlight only the negative factors associated with adolescence, omitting the significant opportunities for growth afforded by this period (Damon, Menon, & Cotton Bronk, 2003).

In contrast to this deficit perspective, strength-based alternatives seek to protect young people by creating opportunities to enhance skills and abilities, respecting the interconnected nature of development and focusing on creating opportunities to enhance youth skills and abilities, while respecting developmental needs (Damon et al., 2003). Strength-based approaches to development have been shown to increase school engagement, which leads to greater feelings of competence (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008), connection and belonging (Benner & Graham, 2009; Ladd, 1990). These feelings create powerful academic and social motives and contribute to the development of prosocial behaviours (Wentzel, 1998).

'Resilience' is the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-enhancing resources, and the capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide those resources in meaningful ways (Ungar et al., 2006). The emphasis is not only on beating the odds but also on changing the odds stacked against vulnerable populations (Seccombe, 2002). Therefore, two processes explain resilience: navigation and negotiation. The individual must demonstrate the personal agency to navigate their way to resources such as positive attachments, experiences that bring self-esteem, education and participation in one's community and family. However, the youth's family and community must also be available and accessible if resources are to be located. A process of negotiation is required to ensure that the resources provided are meaningful to those requiring support (Ungar et al., 2008).

Transitions and school engagement

The transition from primary school to high school coincides with increased academic and social expectations, developing identities and greater socialisation outside of the family (Benner & Graham, 2009; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Researchers have consistently demonstrated an association between poor school transition and isolation, which leads to an increased risk of academic disengagement due to these students typically holding fewer aspirations to succeed within an academic environment (Edwards, Mumford, & Serra-Roldan, 2007; Kaylor & Flores, 2007; Luthar & Ansary, 2005). Behavioural problems, increased risk-taking behaviour and academic disengagement have been implicated in poor school transition (Miech, Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2015). These problems have the potential to reduce a child's psychological wellbeing (Bhugra, 2004; Rice, Frederickson, & Seymour, 2011). Academically disengaged children have also been found to have poorer social support (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). Thus, an initial poor school transition can result in a cycle of isolating behaviours and dissatisfaction with academic environments.

Culturally and linguistically diverse children

Children from low socioeconomic and culturally diverse backgrounds disproportionately suffer from poorer transitions from primary school to secondary school (Dronkers, 2010). This is presumably due to increased social barriers, such as communication difficulties, reduced accessibility to extracurricular activities or feelings of being 'different', which may result in greater exclusion and limit social and emotional development (Dronkers, 2010). Children from culturally diverse backgrounds can experience racism, which exacerbates any potential sense of difference (Tseng, 2004). Social inclusion is especially important for culturally diverse students as levels of peer support predict children's adjustment to subsequent school years (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

Arts-based extracurricular activities

Recent research has highlighted the benefits of children engaging in extracurricular activities. Specifically, participation in group activities outside of school hours has been linked to social and emotional development in children that eases the transition between primary school and high school (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Matsuoka, Nakamuro, & Inui, 2015). Other suggested developmental benefits for children participating in extracurricular activities include increased agency, resilience and self-efficacy (Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003; Luthar & Ansary, 2005; Roeser et al., 2000; Sharp, 2014). The positive impact of some extracurricular programs on school engagement, commitment to learning and overall wellbeing has been well established (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 2000; Larson, 2000; Taylor, Obere, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017).

Within semi-structured group settings, children may be able to create a sense of safety, belonging and common purpose which they cannot do within more formal settings (Greene, Lee, Constance, & Hynes, 2013; Matsuoka et al., 2015). This is theorised to allow for a focus on emotional recognition and prosocial skill development (Noam & Tillinger, 2004). Reduced structure and a shared intention for fun may allow young people the interpersonal experiences necessary for the development of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (Larson, 2000; Mahoney, Lord, & Carryl, 2005; Matsuoka et al., 2015; Rhodes, 2004). Extracurricular activities have the potential to support social, emotional and identity development while simultaneously maintaining engagement in community and academic pursuits (Edwards et al., 2007; Jones & Deutsch, 2010; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Of note is that extracurricular activities have been shown to assist the development of children from low socioeconomic and culturally diverse backgrounds who can often experience difficulty in expanding their social circles (Dronkers, 2010).

Providing children with the opportunity to creatively explore has been suggested to expand their identity, increase agency and develop social and affective regulation skills (Wolin & Wolin, 1993; Wright et al., 2013; Zannettino et al., 2013). Engagement with arts-based extracurricular activities has been associated with improved executive functioning, including cognitive flexibility, fluency and critical thinking (Burton et al., 2000; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). Arts-based extracurricular activities provide an opportunity for children to express themselves in unique ways and also to build new social connections, thereby increasing their overall engagement with the community and the school (Zannettino et al., 2013).

Arts-based extracurricular activities provide opportunities for young people to learn skills they may otherwise not have been exposed to within traditional schooling (Metzl & Morrell, 2008). The benefits of youth involvement in creative pursuits have been widely demonstrated, including **performing art**s and **theatre** (Salmon, Orme, Kimberlee, Jones, & Murphy, 2005; Wright et al., 2013), **dance, music** (Grunstein & Nutbeam, 2007) and film (Blum-Ross, 2013). The link between creativity and the development of resilience has received recent research attention, suggesting that it is through supporting creativity that individuals develop skills such as adaptability and problem solving, and the ability to emotionally distance themselves from life's problems (Burton et al., 2000; Masten & Powell, 2003; Metzl & Morrell, 2008).

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

Youth developmental needs

Primary school in Australia typically spans ages 5–13. Developmental theorists state that the age bracket 10–15 years comprises a critical developmental period (Stevens, 2008). The experiences children face at this time will help shape their unique identities and have long-term implications in terms of a child's levels of social support, self-efficacy and academic achievement (Bhugra, 2004; Rice et al., 2011). During the teenage years, children have an increased desire for peer approval as they seek to develop their identity through experiences with others and the outside world (Steinberg, 1990; Wentzel, 1998). If children successfully build relationships with peers and develop new skills, they typically experience enhanced self-efficacy and resilience (Benner & Graham, 2009). If children are unsuccessful at building friendships or frequently receive negative feedback, their emotional and social development may be stifled and they may be subject to increased risk of mental health issues (Benner & Graham, 2009; Reinke & Herman, 2002). The key learnings that occur during the teenage years are often referred to as socioemotional learning.

Social and emotional learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) proposes a strength-based perspective for healthy engagement and prosocial development (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008). SEL refers to the development of the ability to recognise and manage emotions, build positive relationships with others and fine-tune responsible decision-making skills (Zins & Elias, 2007). SEL suggests that, in order to create genuine and holistic learning environments, adults need to value and support young people's broader social and emotional asset development, rather than focusing on academic outcomes alone (Zins & Elias, 2007). These socioemotional assets are linked to increased empathy, prosocial behaviour and reduced behavioural problems during adolescence (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015; Zins & Elias, 2007).

Weissberg and colleagues (2015) identified five core interrelated cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies that are key focus areas in the development of SEL. These core competencies are:

- Self-awareness: the recognition of one's own emotions and ability to understand the connection between thoughts and feelings.
- Self-management: the ability to regulate emotions and control behaviour, delay gratification and manage stress.
- Social awareness: the ability to integrate social and emotional norms into knowledge and understanding, as well as the ability to empathise with and understand the perspectives of others.
- Relationship skills: the ability to form and maintain healthy relationships and interact with others in socially appropriate ways.
- Responsible decision-making: the ability to make well-thought-out decisions that respect relevant cultural and social norms.

These core competencies provide guidance for those seeking to address youth developmental needs as well as a theoretical basis for understanding approaches to youth engagement and healthy development.

Research shows that these socioemotional skills can be taught through caring relationships that provide a foundation for meaningful learning and the opportunity to fine-tune developing skills without fear of judgment (Sharp, 2014; Zins & Elias, 2007). It is through interacting with others that humans are able to develop a sense of self (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008). The ability to believe that one can change provides youth with a broader and more adaptive view of self and the world (Bruner, 1996; Carr, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1995). Interpersonal relationships provide a social context within which meaningful learning can take place (Jones & Deutsch, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). Supportive relationships that establish a sense of safety and unconditional care provide youth with the security they need to engage in new learning and expand their social and emotional abilities (Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004). However, interpersonal needs are often not the focus in academic settings.

Adult-youth relationships

Supportive relationships between young people and adults are an essential part of positive youth development (Lerner et al., 2011). Approaches to learning that support the social and emotional learning (SEL) of youth all contain critical relationships with adults (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Weybright, Trauntvein, & Deen, 2017).

SEL suggests that youth development is best fostered through supportive and meaningful relationships that create opportunities for growth (Sharp, 2014). Extracurricular programs are one way to achieve this. Within these semi-structured settings, adults may be positioned to create a sense of safety, belonging and common purpose (Greene et al., 2013; Matsuoka et al., 2015), allowing for a focus on emotional recognition and prosocial skill development (Noam & Tillinger, 2004).

Research has demonstrated the positive impact that involvement in extracurricular programs has on school engagement, commitment to learning and overall wellbeing (Chapin, Deans, & Fabris, 2019; Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 2017), with some researchers suggesting that involvement in creative activities may be particularly beneficial for young people (Larson, 2000; Metzl & Morrell, 2008). Creative extracurricular settings allow for exploration and self-expression within a supportive interpersonal setting, encouraging the development of self-awareness and interpersonal understanding (Blum-Ross, 2013; Grunstein & Nutbeam, 2007; Wright et al., 2013) while also increasing cognitive flexibility, critical thinking and the ability to imagine new possibilities (Burton et al., 2000; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). These settings provide an alternative to the home or school environment, allowing an opportunity for young people to engage with different adults, build relationships and take chances in a fun and informal setting (Sharp, 2014). This focus on the development of socioemotional assets is suggested to support the psychological readiness of children transitioning into high school (Matsuoka et al., 2015) by helping to bridge the gap between academic and interpersonal domains (Rhodes, 2004; Hurd & Deutsch, 2017).

Agency and mastery

Simply being exposed to adults within an extracurricular setting does not guarantee the development of supportive relationships. Important relationship factors include trust (Griffith, Larson, & Johnson, 2018), respect and supporting autonomy (Deutsch & Jones, 2008), acceptance, engagement and compassion (Pryce & Keller, 2011). Youth–adult relationships exist on a continuum from adult-led to youth-led collaborations. Research suggests that quality youth–adult partnerships, which fall in the middle of this continuum, contribute directly to positive youth development (Weybright et al., 2016).

A number of models of youth participation now exist to describe the factors which maximise youth outcomes in these relationships (Ramey, Lawford, & Vachon, 2017). Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010) present an empowerment framework focused on shifting control and access to resources in both process and outcomes. At the apex of this framework is pluralistic, adult–youth control.

There are fewer models that identify the particular strategies which adults might use to maximise outcomes. Zeldin, Christens and Powers (2013) suggest that, in order to maximise agency, adults should view their work through a social justice lens by acting collectively in the work. However, Zeldin and colleagues (2016) acknowledge there is a paucity of research that examines what makes up a successful extracurricular program. Jones & Deutsch (2010) interviewed young people and observed sessions to determine strategies used by staff when facilitating an extracurricular group. The researchers identified three factors contributing to engagement and youth development: making an effort to reduce hierarchical power dynamics, respecting youth autonomy while supporting social inclusion and maintaining an awareness of group dynamics and relationship difficulties. Limited research in Australian programs has explored the ways in which arts-based extracurricular programs operate and their impact on developmental outcomes.

Photo credit: Theresa-Harrison

EVALUATION DESIGN

Aim of this evaluation

The aim of the evaluation of 5678 Film Club at St Joseph's Primary School was to explore how students and staff within Film Club perceived the benefits of this arts-based extracurricular program, the processes that led to those beneficial outcomes and whether – or how – the perceptions align with existing models of adult–youth relationships or creative programs for children.

Evaluation focus areas

The review of the literature suggests a number of areas of focus for this evaluation of the Film Club program. There are multidirectional relationships between these focus areas, and an effective evaluation framework acknowledges this. Areas identified for focus during the evaluation are:

- transition to secondary school
- school engagement
- social inclusion
- social and emotional learning
- agency and mastery
- vocational exposure and educational aspirations
- youth resilience and wellbeing.

This was the first evaluation conducted of Film Club, and it focused on the processes at play in the program and on understanding the outcomes being sought. A major consideration of this evaluation project was – in line with Polyglot Theatre's philosophy – to give voice to the participants of the program, most especially the children involved.

THE STEPS IN THIS EVALUATION WERE GUIDED BY A STRUCTURED FRAMEWORK OUTLINED BY THE CDCP FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH (CDCP, 1999) FOR UTILITY, FEASIBILITY, PROPRIETY, AND ACCURACY OF MEASURES, AND ON THE AES GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL CONDUCT OF EVALUATIONS (AES, 2010), ENSURING THAT ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WERE CONSIDERED

Mixed methodology

The evaluation took a mixed-methods approach, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data. Each year about one-third of the Film Club participants were involved with the evaluation. This evaluation followed the Film Club program for a three-year period, from early 2017 to the end of 2019, documenting a range of processes and outcomes. A summary of the method and timing of the data collection is presented in **Table 2.**The focus was on the collection of credible evidence to inform and support relevant recommendations for future directions.

Table 2. Method and timing of data collection for the Film Club evaluation

TIME POINT	PARTICIPANTS IN THE EVALUATION	DATA METHOD	FOCUS AREA
2016 (PILOT)	10 Film Club participants	Semi-structured interviews	School engagement
2017	9 Film Club participants (comprising some Film Club participants from 2016 + some new Film Club participants)	Semi-structured interviews + Survey questionnaires (pre and post participation in Film Club)	Resilience Socioemotional development
	9 non-Film Club participants (a control group comprising students from the same school)	Semi-structured interviews + Survey questionnaire	Resilience Socioemotional development
2018	10 Film Club participants	Semi-structured interviews	Film Club processes (Film Club as a transitional space)
	8 Film Club facilitators	Semi-structured interviews	Facilitator processes
2019	8 Film Club participants	Semi-structured interviews	Film Club processes
	5 educators from the participants' school	Survey questionnaire	Growth and outcomes

Overall findings were mapped against current developmental theories to determine both the mechanisms of change within the Film Club program and future opportunities.

A detailed description of the methodology used for the evaluation, as well as consideration of the limitations of the research design, are presented in **Appendix A. Appendix B** provides detailed quantitative findings.

OUTCOMES OF FILM CLUB

Introduction

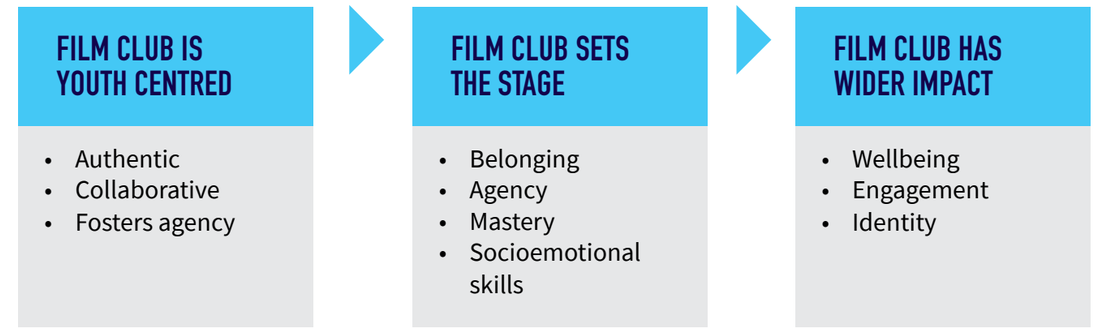
This evaluation explored the process of using an arts-based extracurricular program to support youth development, looking at both perceived benefits of the program and some mechanisms through which the program was able to achieve its aims. A summary of the findings is presented below.

Note: Some of the findings presented here are captured in the journal article, '"After Film Club I actually got better at everything": School engagement and the impact of an after-school film club' (Chapin, Deans, & Fabris, 2019).

Interconnected themes

Film Club participants, Film Club facilitators and St Joseph's educators described the ways that Film Club worked to achieve its impact. Children described a sense of a child-centred processes which contributed to their feelings that they belonged, had agency and had developed confidence and social and emotional skills. Facilitators described the use of strategies and approaches which supported authentic adult–youth relationships, and that were collaborative and focused on fostering agency. Common themes emerged from the reports of facilitators, children and educators. They are summarised in **Figure 3.**

Figure 3. Thematic representation of Film Club processes and impact



Film Club is youth centred

Authentic relationships

All facilitators commented on the importance of developing relationships with the young people in Film Club. These relationships were described as being "long-term", "safe" and "consistent", with facilitators commenting on the unique opportunities provided within these "very different relationships".

We're not school … we don't want the same relationship that a teacher has with a child. We're really trying to make a relationship where mutual understanding can happen." – Program Director

Facilitators did not use the word 'mentor' when describing their role; rather, they described their relationship with the young people in Film Club as caring, non-judgmental and accepting. They also reported the importance of attending to, and showing interest in, the young people. This relationship provided a context within which safe and empowered learning could occur.

The idea of fostering engagement through encouraging "fun", "freedom" and "excitement" was noted by all facilitators as being vital for the creation of meaningful connection. This was described as an intuitive process, born out of a reflected sense of openness, interest and enthusiasm modelled by the facilitators themselves. Facilitators are "interested and excited" adults who are willing to meet Film Club participants where they are at, and to engage in play and "make jokes" while genuinely valuing youth energy.

"Enthusiasm and investment can actually break down a lot of those walls without [you] actually having to work very hard." – Facilitator

Facilitators reported an intention to create a space where fun could be the shared intention, stating that facilitators' emotionally open attitude and respectful engagement led the young participants to understand this relationship as being "actually sincere".

All facilitators commented on the importance of communication, with a strong emphasis placed on listening, talking to the young people about their interests and making an effort to "talk their language". The establishment of a genuine relationship was reported to be what "allows [for] open and frank discussion" to take place. Facilitators placed importance on ensuring that youth felt heard, seen and accepted by "someone who's genuinely interested in their stories". One facilitator noted the importance of "respectful engagement", stating:

"Speaking to them like they're adults, and not speaking down to them is really important." – Facilitator

"Nobody ever shouts at a child, everybody talks reasonably … it's this constant modelling of respectful behaviour." – Program Director

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

Collaborative relationships

Film Club facilitators emphasised the importance of encouraging collaboration between the young Film Club participants and themselves, describing this as an equal relationship that involved the young people "in every part of the process", "treating them like peers, like collaborators".

"Rather than saying these are the school rules and you must do these things … We say we're going to make our own Film Club rules. In making our own rules, I think they feel they have power and have been listened to."– Program Director

This approach sought to meet young people on an equal footing within a space where their ideas were valued, and adults were open to learn. While facilitators brought expertise, it was the children who drove the creative content. Prominent throughout all interviews was the idea that the power dynamic between adults and young people within Film Club was in some way different to what the young participants experienced in the rest of their lives. A conscious effort was made by facilitators to not be authoritarian or directive, but instead to treat the young people as being equally powerful and in control.

"If a program involves students at their level it has the potential to make a lot of change."
– Facilitator

Film Club directors were occasionally called on to ensure safety and to reinforce agreed-upon group rules, leaving facilitators free to engage with the young people at their level and thereby creating a rare sense of freedom within this adult–youth relationship.

Facilitators developed a "creative equality" by "taking the time to talk to [the young people] and engage with them at [their] level" and "meeting them as an equal as much as possible". Facilitators spoke of the importance of Film Club being driven by the young people, with this universal perspective emphasising the importance of encouraging, validating and valuing youth ideas, providing praise for effort and believing in what the young people had to offer. "Writing everything down" was noted as a prominent means of encouraging and validating youth ideas.

"Allowing their [the young people's] ideas to be valid enough to jot down and kind of solidify and grow."
– Program Director

Qualities of "mutual respect" and "genuine interest" were also discussed, with facilitators emphasising the importance of being flexible, getting to know each individual and varying their approaches to fit the person, day and mood. All facilitators spoke about the need to create a sense of community, ownership and support among those involved in Film Club.

Facilitators spoke of building a team mentality within Film Club and also a sense of solidarity through shared purpose.

"Establishing that they're a family, that they are a team, really early on, and then making them accountable to that … using those words [team, family] a lot." – Facilitator

Facilitators used this shared sense of 'team' to address social fractions within groups, reporting that this established a sense of peer–peer safety and support. The idea of 'team' was also reinforced by facilitators' own modelling of positive behaviour towards each other, which encouraged an atmosphere of community, tolerance and safety.

Relationships that foster agency

Overall, the children highlighted repeatedly that the relationship between themselves and Film Club facilitators was important. Film Club facilitators were instructed by Polyglot Theatre to provide a student-centred environment where children had autonomy. The children's accounts indicate that this style of relationship was achieved. Children also reported that this relationship style allowed them to develop friendships within Film Club.

Comments from the children included describing the facilitators as having "a lot of respect for children" and seeing that children "have our own minds". There was a shared appreciation by all participants that "they treat us like adults, they don't baby us".

The St Joseph's educators highlighted that, central to the program, was ensuring that the children were able to express, explore and grow their ideas. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that the artists and facilitators were respectful and encouraging, and made Film Club an encouraging environment. One teacher observed: "It was amazing to see the artists take the children's ideas and then ask the right questions or prompt the students to ask their own, as a way of getting the kids to do the heavy lifting when it came to the developing of ideas."

"I'M NEW HERE SO LET'S WORK TOGETHER, I'M GOING TO LEARN A BIT FROM YOU, YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO OFFER THE SPACE AS MUCH AS I DO"

Facilitator

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

Film Club sets the stage

Film Club appeared to 'set the stage' for participants' development of key social and emotional skills. Participants placed significant importance on their supportive relationships with the Film Club facilitators. The children spoke about how facilitators role-modelled appropriate behaviour and were instrumental for skill-building.

"I didn't used to like [to] ask for help but if I do something there is [name] to ask and if she is not here there is always different people to ask and it will make your life way better." – Participant

The Film Club facilitators role-modelled patience and demonstrated caring behaviours, which encouraged the children to adopt similar behaviours.

Film Club participant: "I have learnt to be quiet and be patient and stuff."

Interviewer: "Has that been tough in the past?"

Participant: "Yeah but my skills at that have gotten better."

Interviewer: "What do you think helped with that?"

Participant: "Being nice and not yelling at me, there was one time I think they wanted to kick me out but they didn't and yeah I want to be here."

Sense of belonging

Overwhelmingly participants spoke about Film Club as being a safe space they felt they belonged to: "I love that everybody in Film Club can respect everybody's religions, races, age and gender." The children spoke to the values they learned that helped foster feelings of belonging at Film Club, "to treat everyone the same" and "to do good things that will change the people, like do good deeds and to not fight". The Film Club environment was discussed as being different to other places in that there were clear expectations of behaviour, respect and equality: "We all know, and if we do something it could literally send us out of Film Club." Belonging to Film Club was spoken about as being a privilege and a valuable opportunity that nobody wanted to "wreck for other people" and themselves.

The children spoke about how the facilitators directly intervened to help resolve quarrels and to end behaviour resembling bullying. Such intervention was crucial in managing relationships between participants. Initially, open and frank relationships between Film Club facilitators and the children were viewed as being scary. However, the children acknowledged the importance of these mentoring relationships.

"I don't like to tell if I don't like something, it's like because I don't want them to get angry at me but I still do tell them just to make me feel a little bit better like a lot of weight lifted from my shoulders as I don't have to keep it a secret that much." – Participant

The children also mentioned times when Film Club facilitators noticed difficulties and intervened immediately without the children needing to ask for help, which made the children feel valued.

"They (facilitators) know sometimes I get angry here with the other students but everyone else here treats me with respect and they are also caring, I don't really know what I feel, if we talk about hate that is a really strong word so like I … umm … don't really hate anyone. I just don't like all the students sometimes but is a great place, they still want me to come." – Participant

Many of the participants described how their involvement in Film Club helped increase their resilience to negative evaluation from others, and also helped them to focus less on negative judgments from their peers.

All participants described their sense of belonging in Film Club as a unique community with structure and rituals.

A key element to fostering this feeling of belonging was the relationship between Film Club children and adult facilitators: "When we are down, they cheer us up" and "They're very nurturing." Children discussed the connections they made with both facilitators and peers through the medium of their art-form: "We have something to connect on, not like school and work, but here it's all about film, it's all about connecting with each other, we all have connections through filming so yeah." As one Film Club member succinctly stated:

"Film Club is a very including program. They include Somalians and blacks, Caucasians, Asians, Aboriginals … it's brought children together to be more comfortable with each other's races. Making movies with each other has really bonded us a lot, and I think it's played a big part in knowing others' races and other people that aren't exactly like us." - Participant

Film Club, through its emphasis on treating the children as equals and giving them the autonomy to explore filmmaking, fostered an environment of friendship and belonging, bringing together children from different cultural groups and enhancing their social knowledge and school engagement. This is a crucial finding as students from low socioeconomic and culturally diverse backgrounds sometimes struggle with feeling that they belong.

> "WE JUST KEEP FILMING AND WE KEEP BRINGING IDEAS TO THE TABLE IN FILM CLUB. WE'RE AROUND THE TABLE, WE'RE LISTENING TO PEOPLE WE KNOW, SHARING FOOD JUST WATCHING AND BELONGING. YOU GET ACCEPTED AS YOU SIT DOWN AND NO MATTER WHO IS SITTING NEXT TO YOU"
>
> Film Club Participant

Promoting child agency

A critical feature of Film Club was that children were encouraged to freely express ideas. All participants at multiple times discussed the "freedom" of Film Club and the messages they received to "be yourself – be proud". Some other sentiments the children expressed included: "You can express yourself – like you can do anything you want … it's helped express myself" and "[At Film Club] sometimes I feel like I'm wild, I'm free over here." Participants often talked about how Film Club was different to anywhere else due to the emphasis on free creative expression: "It provides us with really fun activities – and yeah – I haven't been to a program that had experiences this good – like I go to one program right now but it's not as fun" and "My creativeness comes alive, I just want to do it as soon as they tell us, I just want to do it like now and not wait."

The children highlighted the importance of being able to come to a place where they felt accepted and where they could be themselves without fearing judgment or ostracism. The children perceived that being different or having unusual ideas was not favourable within a general school environment and were comforted by the fact that Film Club focused on creativity where unusual ideas were received positively.

"It just like makes me feel good and people that I do enjoy like I enjoy having more people to play with, cos sometimes when you play with people then you don't after that and it's like I dunno why, but you don't, but Film Club is really nice, they like you no matter what, everyone wants to play with you." – Participant

"My friend I met her here and she is really crazy, at first I thought she was crazy cos she does different kind of stuff, not like others, then I saw myself in her a bit, then we started to talk a bit, and she likes me a lot and I like her a lot, she is very good at acting." – Participant

The children also described relishing the opportunity to express themselves in a myriad of different ways that may be unavailable to them in their everyday lives, and appreciating the encouragement to do so.

"Well it is a fun subject to say for sure well I like the part where we do the acting and we think of stories to do, anything and make things to go in the videos and yeah mostly that oh and I like to do the photo, ah videoing and I like to share like ideas and Film Club is the right place to do all those things I just said." – Participant

"Film Club is fun … You get to do a lot of filming and editing and sound and you kind of get to do a little bit of whatever you want but get help with it." – Participant

Facilitators reported making efforts to promote youth creative freedom, allowing a safe space for self-exploration and expression, and supporting the young participants to "find their voice" within an environment that allowed them creative freedom.

"Planting the seed, [and] letting the child develop it. Polyglot gives a bit of pruning along the way. But the tree's still the child's tree."– Facilitator

All facilitators commented on the importance of encouraging the young people's sense of responsibility within Film Club. Facilitators noted that providing opportunities for responsibility and "making them accountable" provided "purpose and meaning", and the opportunity to experience empowerment.

"It gives them that feeling of, I'm a part of this, I'm important, what I think matters." – Facilitator

Examples of fostering responsibility included encouraging Film Club participants to share their unique knowledge and skills with others, to support other Film Club participants, to take on additional roles within film production and to "set an example" for the younger Film Club participants. All facilitators commented on the necessity of finding a balance between fun and enjoyable engagement, and achieving an outcome of success through the creation of a film that the young people could be proud of.

"It's about the journey; it's not necessarily all about the result. But you know it's hard to get people inspired when they don't believe in the end result." – Facilitator

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

“

YOU’RE TAKING RISKS WITH THINGS… FOR THEM TO SEE THAT MATERIALISED ON THE SCREEN AND LOOK GOOD, KIND OF REINFORCES THAT IT’S OK TO TAKE RISKS

”

Program Director

Building confidence

Facilitators aimed for a sense of accomplishment by the young people “doing something difficult and succeeding”. Through encouraging youth ownership of the creative content, facilitators aimed for “a sense of pride in something they have created” which they hoped affected the children’s perceptions of self, ability and their own potential.

The belief that the young people involved in Film Club developed greater confidence, assertiveness and belief in their own thoughts, ideas and potential, permeated through interviews.

“Some of it is about the future, and some of it really is just about thinking about yourself as a person with a lot to offer … Because you’ve done some difficult things it means that you can do those difficult things, you have greater confidence in yourself.”
– Program Director

The support and encouragement the children received within Film Club appeared to build their self-confidence. Simply put, one 10-year-old student said, “I’m better at confidence.” Another participant in Grade 5 said it was hard even just to start Film Club: “It’s the first time, first experience and you think oh my gosh, you think you’re gonna mess up.” When asked how she overcame this initial feeling, she replied, “I just tried my best. See how I go. And I did well … It helps your confidence more.”

“[The screening of Film Club films] is at the town hall, St Joseph’s we go there and see films see what is going on in the community and what every grade in the school’s doing and yeah and they go like see the stuff and I’m scared like I used to be really scared like I might be shown … and what would people think of me and all that bad stuff but like now I don’t care what people think of me all that much, I do it anyway, so yeah.”
– Participant

“[Film Club] made me more confident cos I didn’t think that I could go in front of a camera cos I sounded weird and I didn’t know what I was doing but then after I tried that after Film Club I felt greater and more confident, I loved more things, people were being, people were changing and everything was getting better at that point, it was just getting better.” – Participant

A major highlight for the children was having the opportunity to write their own stories under the supportive conditions of Film Club. This freed them from the anxiety of having to perform to someone else’s expectations, which helped them develop confidence in their own abilities.

“If I want to write a story I know how to think and know what I should write, cos at the moment Film Club has changed my mind cos I used to think what should I write, what should I write, but then Film Club changed that and now I know what to write every single time I have a thought in my head! I write it and I’m gonna add more thoughts and more thoughts and lots but like I don’t like to plan my story I just like start my story and then as I stop my paragraph I do, so I don’t think I just add on, and on not just thinking should I do this or not do this.”
– Participant

Self-confidence was also demonstrated in their ability to manage feelings of failure.

“Yeah I love it like it makes me love it and feel good that I know so much cos like not everyone is interested and not everyone can do it you have to love it and sometimes I’m not very good but sometimes I am but I like [to] come back anyway.” – Participant

“I still have that proudness in me that I’ve done it, even when it didn’t turn out that great I still did it, and I’m ok with that now.” – Participant

All participants talked about an increase in confidence explicitly: “Ever since I started Film Club, I’ve been more confident” and “It makes me feel great about myself.” Many expressed initial self-doubt: “I thought I wasn’t going to be good … but when I tried – I was like oh yeah this is fun, I want to do more.”

This confidence also related to children seeing themselves as people of colour on screen. One participant described how, since Film Club, she and her sister had become more confident: “[B]ecause me and her, we both don’t really like photos that much … we became more confident with taking photos and not being shy to be in photos.” Self-image was often referred to: “Just because I’m different, I can still do whatever I want to do. I can still be a movie star even walk on the red carpet … so what, I’m different – and that makes me unique. I can still do whatever I want to do and be what I want to be.”

In addition, the school’s educators were unanimous in reporting that the students involved in Film Club demonstrated increased confidence. ‘Confidence’ was mentioned as a benefit in general of participating, but there were also more specific observations. Two teachers observed that students were more confident in expressing themselves, both at Film Club and in the classroom. One teacher thought the increased confidence was unique to what Film Club was about: “I observed the students’ confidence grow. I think this was in part to do with them being more comfortable with the artists and seeing themselves represented in films.” Two teachers also noted that the confidence was long-lasting and continued to grow if the students were involved in Film Club for longer than one year.

WORDS EDUCATORS USED TO DESCRIBE THE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE IN FILM CLUB

- **Motivated**
- **Sense of belonging**
- **Take safe risks**
- **Fun**
- **Comfort**
- **Creativity**
- **Perseverance**
- **Own their learning**
- **Self-belief**
- **Enthusiasm**
- **Expression**
- **Respected**

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

Three teachers were clear that they believed all students benefited from being in Film Club, adding that, if some benefited more than others, it was those students who were normally quiet as they were able to "blossom", a term all three teachers used. This is an interesting point as Film Club would seem to be the perfect activity for outgoing and animated children – but the setting was actually a place where the more-reserved children found support to grow in confidence. One teacher said, "It particularly benefited the students who were quiet creatives, they seemed to really blossom, and this seemed to compound with every film made. It also benefited the students who were socially isolated in the mainstream school setting." Another teacher had a moving observation: "The most cogent changes I observed were with students who are quieter in the classroom and less willing [or] able to express their ideas and thoughts out loud. It was wonderful to watch these students express and develop their ideas within the Film Club. They 'blossomed' throughout the process and were often the creators of strong, vibrant ideas."

Photo credit: Theresa-Harrison

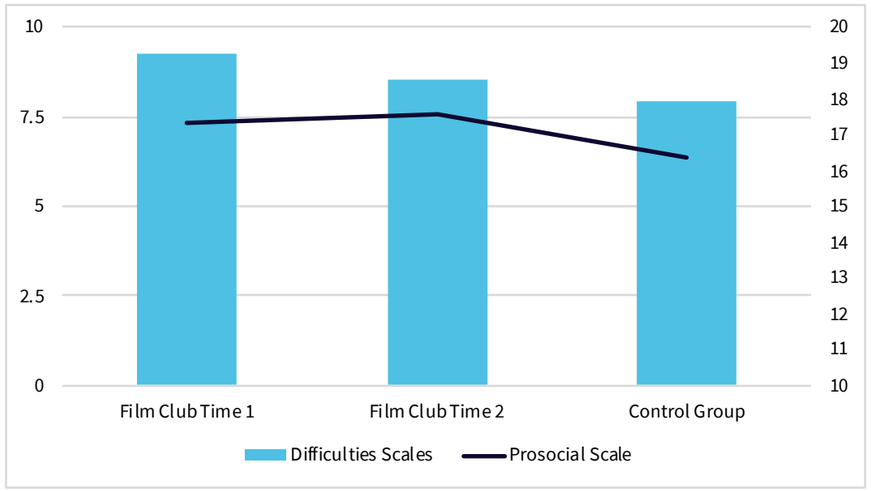
IMPACT OF FILM CLUB

Critical to the goals of Film Club was facilitating a positive impact on socioemotional wellbeing and school engagement. Ultimately, the individual development, cultural identity development and improved confidence reported by Film Club participants are setting the stage for a successful transition from primary school to high school and increase the likelihood of increased social and academic success. The discussion that follows presents a summary of the overall findings; for more details, the reader is referred to **Appendix A** (research methodology) and **Appendix B** (quantitative findings).

Socioemotional wellbeing

The researchers used the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to assist them in understanding how Film Club might impact participants' socioemotional wellbeing. Nine of the 10 children invited to complete the questionnaire during the 2017 program accepted the invitation. The results are shown in **Figure 4**. The total SDQ score for Film Club participants appeared to decrease from Time 1 (mean = 19.25) to Time 2 (mean = 18.57), although this is not a statistically significant difference ($t(8) = 0.235$, $p = .820$) and no significant difference was found between Film Club participants and the control group ($t(15) = 0.426$, $p = .669$). All participants' and control group scores fell into the borderline category, indicating the surveyed students are an at-risk group.

Figure 4. Mean SDQ scores (2017 data)



Interviews conducted each year provided qualitative information about how Film Club might contribute to positive wellbeing. Film Club facilitators described how they created an environment that provided support for the young people to be able to safely express and manage their emotions. All facilitators discussed the importance of acknowledging and addressing emotional distress during sessions. Facilitators spoke of using the shared creative focus within Film Club, as well as their established relationships with Film Club participants, to acknowledge, explore and 'hold' big emotions. Included within this idea of holding space for emotion was "empathising" and "try[ing] not to move away from the uncomfortableness too quickly", ensuring youth were "not being rejected when they have a big emotion" and using a creative space to explore emotional understanding and work through social and emotional issues.

"I normally sit, quietly, my default response is to observe what's happening, and to give them the space. Sometimes I feel like adults fill the space with speaking."
– Program Director

The educators also made observations about challenges Film Club participants might have. Two educators mentioned that students who were less-skilled with self-management or were easily distracted could struggle with Film Club. As one teacher said, "Students with self-management issues around behaviour found the freedom and flexibility of the Film Club environment difficult." Two teachers also thought more structure and support would help the students involved: "I believe that our students would have benefited from more guidance and perhaps boundaries to help deepen their thinking."

The children themselves had fascinating insights into how their participation changed their behaviour; for example: "Before Film Club I did different stuff, I couldn't really manage myself but now I can manage myself a lot, I am very attentive and I listen more and I think before I say more and I am not the rational self that thinks like violence is the way to fix it now I know how to talk."

Participants learned to tolerate feelings of isolation and social anxiety, demonstrating improvements in emotional regulation.

"When I came here first it was hard to find friends and all that so then now I have a lot of friends and now I know nearly the whole school … like at the start of [Film Club], before, they told you to get into groups and showed you how to … um … like match up and talk to other people and work with other people you don't know, I didn't like it … I don't worry now and know how to do it, I'm good at it." – Participant

One participant talked about his family often commenting on how "I've changed because I used to be really angry, and not anymore … they ask, what they [Film Club] have been doing, and they've talked to [program director] about it". Film Club, for some, seemed to alleviate feelings of stress and pressure, and the need to perform highly in other culturally appropriate activities "because my dad is always like study, study now, and I've got to fit in my daily piano practice so it's kind of like hectic for me".

Photo credit: Theresa-Harrison

Developmental assets

The Development Assets Profile (DAP) gives a profile of the 40 types of assets, or resilience resources, available to young people (Scales, 2011). This analysis was exploratory, as potentially any of the external and internal assets could be impacted to varying degrees by Film Club. External assets are those provided by family, school, neighbourhood and extracurricular activities, and include support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. Internal assets are those developed over time in the young person, and include commitment to learning, positive values, social competence and positive identity. Scores can be categorised as challenged, vulnerable, adequate or exceeding.

These assets were measured over two years of the Film Club program (in 2017 and 2018), and the summarised results are presented in Table 3. Many children participated in Film Club for longer than one year and were included in both surveys. The scores from the 2018 survey were higher than those for the 2017 survey, with total scores plus a number of subscales showing a change in risk category. This may suggest that, over two years, participants gained in developmental assets due to their participation in Film Club.

Table 3. Developmental Assets Profile scores for 2017 and 2018 Film Club participants

ASSET	CHANGES ACROSS TIME			
Support	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017 →		2018	
Empowerment	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017/2018			
Boundaries	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017 →			2018
Constructive time use	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017/2018			
Learning commitment	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017 →		2018	
Positive values	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017 →			2018
Social competence	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017 →		2018	
Positive identity	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017/2018			
Total score	Challenged	Vulnerable	Adequate	Thriving
	2017 →			2018

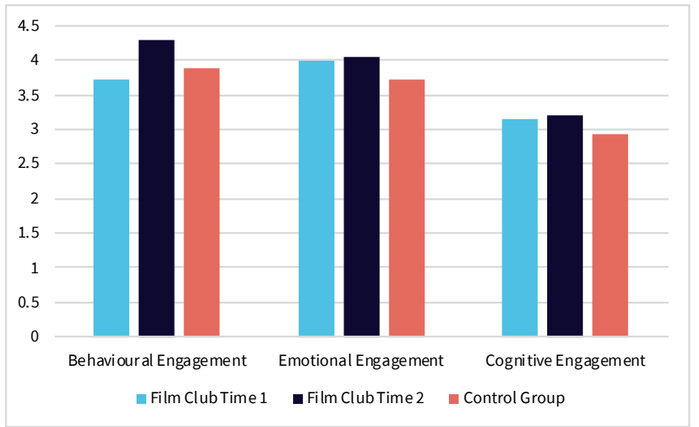
The qualitative aspects of the evaluation show consistency with this growth in positive developmental qualities. Social competence is one asset that the children had the opportunity to work on, as collaboration and teamwork were essential to the filmmaking process. Many students benefited from and developed emotionally due to the opportunity to work closely with each other and with the artists. Collaboration might involve problem solving or working on ideas, and the adults ensured the work revolved around the children as the focus. One teacher noted: "The kids feel heard and respected as creative collaborators and own the finished work." However, not all children are skilled at collaborating, and one teacher observed that some students struggled with Film Club as a result.

Although the children spoke about practical skill development, interviews highlighted improvements in interpersonal skills that have major impacts on their lives.

"I had to learn that I am not always going to be in the spotlight and I am not always going to be the favourite or not always going to be front and centre and that other people have to be there too and that I am not always going to get attention cos like I was always like a big attention freak when I was young I always wanted the spotlight cos they have like other things going on and I also had to learn that people are going to have other opportunities than me and I have to understand that and I have to understand that I am not always going to have everything for myself and that other people can get other things than me."
– Participant

In another example, one participant said "teamwork" was something they learned at Film Club, and gave an example of having to work on a film clip with a boy they didn't like: "I just like went on with it … Pretend he's my best friend."

Figure 5. Mean SEM-M scale scores (2017 data)



Increasing School Engagement

The School Engagement Measure (SEM-M; Fredricks, Bulmenfeld, Friedel, & Paris, 2005) was developed as a short measure of the behavioural, emotional and cognitive aspects of school engagement. The scores on all three domains increased for Film Club participants between Time 1 and Time 2 in 2017 (see **Figure 5**). The initial level of school engagement for Film Club participants was generally higher than that of the control group, which could have factored into the former cohort's decision to enrol in Film Club. This suggests that any intervention aiming to enhance school engagement and transition should focus on reaching those students who may have particularly low levels of school commitment. However, potentially due to the small sample size, changes detected in the current analysis were not statistically significant ($p < .05$).

The participants emphasised the importance to them of participating in Film Club due to the practical skills they learned throughout the year (e.g. writing, filming, editing, acting). These skills were perceived as being valuable for their academic careers and future employment opportunities. One student said: "I didn't like the writing man, writing was too much, but now I know how, yeah I like to write cos I like stories, now I want to try my best at school."

"It gives me a great experience and we get to be seen by music festivals and film festivals and we recently just went to a kids film festival which was very fun also we like it will give me more opportunities when I am older if I want to be an actor or actress then it will be easier and I will be more fluent in auditions and stuff so."– Participant

"It's good cos you can tell your high schools that you came here and … umm … you could make money from it like when you grow up and it just gives children a chance to discover something new and yeah." – Participant

Having the opportunity for self-expression and participating in a creative extracurricular activity led to increased engagement in other academic areas.

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

“

IT HELPS ME SOMETIMES CONCENTRATE, COS SOMETIMES I AM BORED AT HOME AND MY MUM TELLS ME TO DO HOMEWORK AND I CAN’T REALLY CONCENTRATE THAT MUCH, BUT IF I COME THEN WHEN I GET HOME SOMETIMES I DO HOMEWORK AND I CONCENTRATE A LOT BETTER … LIKE DOING SOMETHING FUN THEN GOING BACK HOME AND DOING SOMETHING HARD, IT MAKES IT EASIER

”

- Participant

Children also commented on how they had improved their connections with school: “I’m more respectful and like listening … I’m a bit more focused … and I don’t get angry as much.” Collective participation in the classroom was also expressed: “At school I normally wouldn’t take part in conversations and discussions, but the teachers have even told me that I have more depth in my thinking and planning in my writing and reading.” Participants discussed how Film Club helped with “getting smarter” at school. Many commented on improvement in speeches and class presentations: “I was really shy and then [after Film Club] I just said to myself to just pretend I am acting … and I got through it.”

Cultural identity developed

Children spoke about identity development through their implicit learning of acculturation strategies due to their participation in Film Club. While this learning has never been explicitly taught in Film Club, the transitional space and novel activities inherent in Film Club’s arts-based program seemed to mediate the development of identity and served as a protector against acculturative stress commonly experienced by culturally diverse children.

The cultural and social diversity facilitated through mixing of groups was often commented on by Film Club participants: “It isn’t just like a group of Africans and Muslims – everybody is split up – everybody is working with different kids.” Amid this mixing of cultures, participants discussed being pushed out of their social comfort zone yet feeling safe to confront their social fears. Once participant discussed feeling “scared” in a group with two girls from a different background. However, participants became better tooled to integrate into the wider community and work with individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds, and to become comfortable with their own ethnic identity.

The following quote exemplifies that Film Club was an implicit vehicle to the exploration of barriers and helped children overcome boundaries they may face in society:

“[Film Club] says you can do whatever you want … I think and that’s what it’s saying to black people – they can do whatever they want – like no one can say you can’t do this and you have to stop, like they can actually do whatever they want.” – Participant

Participants talked about how their parents were encouraging and proud of their involvement, often due to what the parents perceived as taking part “in the Aussie culture”. Participants described the “pride” they felt when their parents introduced them to overseas family or friends by saying that “they’re in a Film Club” or that they watched their films, and also expressed anticipation for when their parents would watch their film-work. They often “hoped” this would help their parents see value in creative arts. Participants expressed how their families appreciated a positive, more confident change in their children. One participant talked about how she was taking a more-empowered stance and assuming greater “responsibilities” at home. The changes participants experienced were attributed to being treated “as an adult” in Film Club.

Many students attributed their recent comfort in socialising with the wider community to their participation in Film Club: “Since I’ve gone to Film Club I’ve been saying hello to my neighbours and being polite and greeting them.” Participants discussed improvement in new peer friendships, not only in school but also outside of school: “Now I have a lot of different kinds of cultural friends.” One participant elaborated on his socialising, and thus greater socioemotional wellbeing: “Like I go out more, I don’t stay indoors anymore … I used to stay home a lot.” Female participants discussed how they felt more comfortable around various people, and particularly around males, than they had before their involvement in Film Club: “Film Club kind of made me more comfortable around people of other races, skin colours and ages. Now I’m a lot more comfortable around a lot of older men because there’s a lot of men in Film Club.” Transferable changes beyond Film Club were often expressed.

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

“

AT BASKETBALL I SOMETIMES NEED TO TALK, BECAUSE I PLAY POINT GUARD AND YOU SOMETIMES NEED TO BE LOUD, I WASN’T GOOD AT IT AND I DIDN’T HAVE A LOUD VOICE, BUT NOW, SINCE I’VE BEEN TALKING MORE, I’M NOT AS LIKE, NOT AS SHY TO SAY WHAT I HAVE TO SAY

”

- Participant

Photo credit: Theresa-Harrison

CONCLUSION

Main findings

This report presents the findings from a three-year observational, qualitative and quantitative investigation and evaluation of Polyglot Theatre’s 5678 Film Club conducted at St Joseph’s Primary School in Collingwood, Victoria. The report aims to provide a voice to the children who participated in the Film Club program, while also evaluating the processes used by facilitators and the outcomes observed by educators at the children’s school.

Strong parallels were evident in the reports of participants, facilitators and educators. All parties reported that the processes in Film Club had an ongoing and positive impact on the lives of the participants outside of Film Club, including at school.

Film Club appeared to have made use of the creativity and energy of the participants, but it also met a number of developmental needs for the participants, especially in the area of socioemotional learning. The participants indicated they felt valued, had developed a sense of belonging and also had enhanced their sense of agency as a result of their participation. The result was increased confidence to try new tasks as well as new activities that previously they may have found socially intimidating. The experience contributed to their school engagement and led to individual development and enhanced cultural identity. The impact was not measurable with statistics; however, providing the children, adult facilitators and teachers with the opportunity to describe their experiences and observations in a structured way indicated their clear support of the positive impact of Film Club.

Future directions

If the Film Club program were undertaken at the same or another school in the future, there are a number of interesting areas for exploration. The recommendations provided here are aligned with the findings from this evaluation, and the review of research on arts-based extracurricular activities and youth development needs.

1. Film Club is designed as a school transition program that allows children to gain skills in assisting with the transition to high school. During the course of this evaluation, there were too few high-school students involved in Film Club to allow for evaluation of their experiences as a separate group. An analysis of the impact of the program on students who were in Grade 7 or 8 when Film Club began at this school and who subsequently transitioned to high school is recommended.
2. Given that the participant cohort changed during the three years of this evaluation, it was not possible to conduct a longitudinal evaluation across Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. Future programs that have higher numbers of student participants may allow evaluation of students who complete four years in the program to determine whether the program has impact over time.
3. A follow-up of the students a year after finishing Film Club, especially those students who transitioned to high school after the program, would provide information on the impact of Film Club on transition.
4. The content of the films made by participants was not part of this evaluation. Given the youth-led approach, participants had significant involvement in the conceptualisation, scripting and editing of their films. A qualitative analysis of the stories that participants chose to make would assist in elevating the voices of the young participants. These stories may also contain information related to the experience of culturally and linguistically diverse youth in primary school.
5. If Film Club were run at a different school, especially one in a regional area of Victoria or a different city to Melbourne, a similar evaluation of the program would provide rich material for comparison. Such comparison might determine whether the focus of the program is suitable to different demographics of participant, or whether the adult–youth relationships change according to the contextual factors of the school environment.
6. As Film Club is targeted at increasing school engagement, it would be useful to explore the experiences of those children who were unable to be engaged by Film Club – for example, through interviews with or by surveying children who self-selected in to Film Club but subsequently dropped out, as well as those children who chose not to participate in Film Club. Such investigation may provide valuable information on ways that Film Club could extend its ability to attract and retain students within its target population.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants for the evaluation

Participants for this evaluation were recruited each of the three years that Film Club was operating. Children and Film Club facilitators were recruited from the weekly afterschool workshops conducted as part of the Film Club program. Of note is that not all Film Club participants were involved in the evaluation, opting to decline being interviewed or complete survey questionnaires. Further, over the duration of the evaluation, some Film Club facilitators and children discontinued the Film Club program while others joined the program. Consequently, each year, the sample group used for the evaluation comprised different study participants, with both new and returning Film Club participants.

Each year, participants in the evaluation were assigned unique pseudonyms so that their participation in the study remained anonymous. This applied to both new and continuing study participants, which meant there was no way to link an individual's responses over the years if they chose to continue participating in the evaluation.

Inclusion criteria for the evaluation required study participants to participate in Film Club and attend the weekly Film Club workshops. Children participants in the study were all St Joseph's Primary School students in Grades 5 and 6 and aged 10–12 years. Film Club facilitators were adult artists with various film, drama and production experience who were selected for facilitator roles based on their previous experience working with youth, and who had an interest in working in a youth-led creative space. No formal training was provided to facilitators; however, an induction process allowed new facilitators to observe Film Club sessions before beginning the role. Several facilitators acted as program directors, taking a broader approach to facilitation by ensuring that all Film Club youth and facilitators participants were supported, and holding a more disciplinary role when necessary. Generally, facilitators worked with small groups of Film Club participants to develop films and encourage youth creativity. This structure allowed facilitators to maintain a greater sense of creative freedom in their relationship with the young Film Club participants, while program directors ensured safety. St Joseph's teaching staff occasionally participated in Film Club workshops and were designated the role of facilitator support.

Tables 4 and **5** present the demographics of the study participants (Film Club participants and facilitators, respectively) who were interviewed over the period 2016–2019. **Table 6** presents the demographics of the study participants (Film Club participants) who completed the 2017 survey questionnaires, and **Table 7** presents the demographics of the related control group (drawn from students attending St Joseph's Primary School and who were not Film Club participants) who also completed the 2017 survey questionnaires.

Five educators, three of whom were classroom teachers, one a literacy leader and one a principal, completed a follow-up survey in 2019. These individuals had been working as educators for 10–31 years (mean = 25.2 years). The educators' involvement in Film Club ranged from slight to very involved and included a variety of activities: observing, communicating information to parents, attending and supporting Film Club sessions, and designing the program in collaboration with Polyglot Theatre.

Table 4. Film Club Interview Participants' Demographic Information

2016 – FILM CLUB PARTICIPANTS

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Grade	Country of Birth	Ethnic Background	Year of participation in Film Club
1	Female	10	5	China	China, Vietnam	1st year
2	Male	12	6	Vietnam	Vietnam	1st year
3	Male	10	5	Vietnam	Vietnam	1st year
4	Male	14	8	Australia	China	1st year
5	Male	14	8	Australia	Vietnam	1st year
6	Female	11	6	Vietnam	Vietnam	1st year
7	Female	11	6	Australia	Somalia, Kenya	1st year
8	Female	12	6	Australia	South Sudan	1st year
9	Male	12	6	Egypt	South Sudan	1st year
10	Female	10	5	Australia	South Sudan	1st year

2017 – FILM CLUB PARTICIPANTS

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Grade	Country of Birth	Ethnic Background	Year of participation in Film Club
1	Male	11	6	Australia	South Sudan	2nd year
2	Female	10	5	Australia	Portugal	1st year
3	Female	10	5	Australia	New Zealand	1st year
4	Male	11	6	Australia	Vietnamese	2nd year
5	Female	11	5	Australia	South Sudan	1st year
6	Male	10	5	Egypt	South Sudan	1st year
7	Female	11	5	Iraq	Iraq	1st year
8	Male	11	6	Vietnam	Vietnam	2nd year
9	Female	10	5	Egypt	Egypt	1st year

2018 – FILM CLUB PARTICIPANTS

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Grade	Country of Birth	Ethnic Background	Year of participation in Film Club
1	Female	12	6	Australia	South Sudan	2nd year
2	Female	11	6	Egypt	North Sudan	2nd year
3	Female	12	6	Iraq	Iraq	2nd year
4	Female	10	5	Australia	Sudan	1st year
5	Male	11	6	Australia	China	2nd year
6	Male	10	5	Australia	Australia	1st year
7	Male	10	5	Australia	Sudan	1st year
8	Female	10	5	Australia	Sudan	1st year
9	Male	10	5	Australia	Turkey	1st year
10	Male	12	6	Australia	South Sudan	2nd year

2019 – FILM CLUB PARTICIPANTS

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Grade	Year of participation in Film Club
1	Male	10	5	1st year
2	Male	11	6	2nd year
3	Female	12	6	2nd year
4	Female	11	5	1st year
5	Female	10	5	1st year
6	Female	11	5	1st year
7	Female	11	5	1st year
8	Female	11	5	1st year

Table 5. Demographic information for interviewed Film Club facilitators, 2018

2018 — FILM CLUB FACILITATORS				
Participant Number	Gender	Role in Film Club	Ethnic Background	Duration of involvement at time of interview
1	Male	Facilitator	Anglo-Australian	6 months
2	Female	Program Director	Anglo-Australian	9 months
3	Female	Program Director	Anglo-Australian	12 months
4	Female	Program Director	Indian-Australian	12 months
5	Male	Facilitator Support	Anglo-Australian	12 months
6	Female	Facilitator	Anglo-Australian	12 months
7	Female	Facilitator	Anglo-Australian	12 months
8	Male	Facilitator	Anglo-Australian	6 months

Table 6. Demographic information for Film Club participants who completed survey questionnaires, 2017

2017 — FILM CLUB PARTICIPANTS						
Participant Number	Gender	Age	Grade	Country of Birth	Ethnic Background	Year of participation in Film Club
1	Male	11	6	Australia	South Sudan	1st year
2	Female	10	5	Australia	Portugal	1st year
3	Female	10	5	Australia	New Zealand	1st year
4	Male	11	6	Australia	Vietnamese	1st year
5	Female	11	5	Australia	South Sudan	1st year
6	Male	10	5	Egypt	South Sudan	1st year
7	Female	11	5	Iraq	Iraq	1st year
8	Male	11	6	Vietnam	Vietnam	1st year
9	Female	10	5	Egypt	Egypt	1st year

Table 7. Demographic information for same-school 'control group' students who completed survey questionnaires, 2017

2017 — SAME SCHOOL 'CONTROL GROUP' PARTICIPANTS					
Participant Number	Gender	Age	Grade	Country of Birth	Ethnic Background
1	Male	11	5	Australia	Irish
2	Male	11	6	Australia	Australian, Filipino
3	Female	11	6	Vietnam	Chinese, Vietnamese
4	Female	10	5	Australia	Aboriginal, Irish, Spanish
5	Female	11	6	Australia	Vietnamese, Australian
6	Male	11	6	Philippines	Filipino, Australian
7	Male	12	6	Australia	English, Vietnamese
8	Female	11	5	South Africa	Ethiopian
9	Male	11	5	Australia	Irish

Procedure

Students and facilitators

A purposeful sampling approach was taken, such that each year individuals involved in Film Club were approached during the weekly Film Club workshops and asked if they would be interested in participating in the evaluation to share their experiences from Film Club. Film Club facilitators who expressed interest were emailed and provided with details of the goals and procedure of the study. The children participants of the Film Club who expressed interest supplied contact details for their legal guardians, and both the children and their legal guardians were provided with details of the study.

Once consent was obtained from the participants (and from the legal guardian for participants aged under 18), a suitable time was arranged with each participant to complete a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in May–August each year that the Film Club operated. Each year, prior to conducting the interviews, the researchers would observe the Film Club to gain familiarity with the program and the participants involved. The interviews took place during Film Club operating hours in a private area of St Joseph's Primary School's library to ensure confidentiality, and were generally 20–60 minutes in duration. To thank children participants for their participation in the interviews they were presented with two movie tickets.

The interview questions evolved over the three-year evaluation of the Film Club project to focus on specific areas of interest. Open-ended questions were used to allow participants to expand on their experiences within Film Club. Potential probing questions were also developed, and these provided the interviewers with the opportunity to direct the conversation depending on participants' responses. This approach optimised the researchers' ability to capture participants' unique experiences during Film Club.

In 2017, the interviews focused on children's thoughts about Film Club, their personal development from participating in Film Club and how Film Club helped prepare children for school and the future.

Surveys were also conducted during 2017 to compare Film Club participants and a control group (also from St Joseph's Primary School but not Film Club participants) on the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and School Engagement Measure–Macarthur (SEM-M). All participants completed surveys twice during the year: at the beginning of Term 1 in February (Time 1) and again seven months later, midway though Term 4 (Time 2). The control group completed the survey once, at Time 2. It should be noted that, due to the number of participants each year, 2017 was the only year in which these surveys were conducted.

In 2018, both participants and adult facilitators from Film Club were interviewed. The children interviews focused on their identity and experiences in Film Club. The adult facilitator interviews focused on their background experiences, their role as mentors and how to support youth engagement and positive development. Interviews with Film Club participants were also conducted in 2019, focusing on Film Club processes.

Educators

Seven educators from St Joseph's Primary School who were knowledgeable about Film Club and the students who participated in it were invited by email to complete an online survey once Film Club finished in 2019. Five of these educators completed the survey. The educators were permitted to complete the survey at a time that was convenient to them. The data was collected securely using Qualtrics.

The survey comprised six open-ended questions about what the educators thought about Film Club and the students involved, plus three questions about their own roles and experiences with Film Club.

Ethical considerations

Ethics approval for the study was gained through the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (HRE16-053 and HRE16-267).

Upon meeting with the researcher, participants were informed that interviews would be audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and coded for data analysis purposes. Participants were also informed that transcriptions would be de-identified to maximise confidentiality. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and subsequently asked to provide written consent for participation. For children participants (under age 18), consent was also obtained from their legal guardian. At the start of each interview, participants were reminded that they could skip any question, and also could delay or withdraw from the interview at any point without repercussions.

The interview process acknowledged the young age of the participants (most were under age 16) and the fact that they were predominantly from disadvantaged and marginalised communities in the following ways. Extra time was allowed at the start of the interview for the researcher to focus on building a rapport with each participant. Stationery (paper and coloured pencils) was provided, and children were encouraged to draw to assist in their responses. Activities such as drawing have been shown to help relax and focus children during interviews in other research projects (Hesketh, Water, Green, Salmon, & Williams, 2005). Finally, to reduce the potential for participants to feel coerced, non-direct open-ended questions were used across all interviews.

Quantitative measures

Developmental Assets Profile

The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) gives a profile of the types of resilience resources, or assets, available to young people (Scales, 2011). Assets are categorised as either external or internal. External assets are those provided by location, context or other people in the young person's life, and include support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. Internal assets are those developed over time in the young person, and include commitment to learning, positive values, social competence and positive identity. All of the external and internal assets are targeted to varying degrees by the 5678 Film Club project.

The DAP gives a total mean score within a range of 0–30 and a mean score for each of the external and internal assets. Scores can be categorised as challenged, vulnerable, adequate or exceeding. The researchers adopted the ranges shown in **Table 8** as mean scores on all four scales. It is expected that typically 5–15 per cent of children score in the challenged or thriving range, with most young people scoring in the vulnerable or adequate range.

Table 8. DAP profile ranges

	CHALLENGED	VULNERABLE	ADEQUATE	THRIVING
Score	0-14	15-20	21-25	26-30

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) measure of resilience and emotional wellbeing in children provides a total score, plus scores across five subcategories: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and prosocial activities (Goodman, 1997). The total score includes only the first four subscales.

The researchers classified scores into normal, borderline and abnormal categories to indicate the level of functioning of the group. See **Table 9**. An abnormal score on the total difficulties scale suggests the likelihood of a mental health disorder. Approximately 10 per cent of a community sample would be expected to score in the abnormal band and 10 per cent in the borderline range, although the relative proportions in each category vary by country (i.e. study location), age and gender of the participants in the sample group.

Table 9. SDQ wellbeing categories

SCALE	NORMAL	BORDERLINE	ABNORMAL
Total scale	0-15	16-19	20-40
Prosocial scale	6-10	5	0-4

School Engagement Measure–Macarthur (SEM-M)

The School Engagement Measure–Macarthur (Fredricks et al., 2005) was developed as a short measure of the behavioural, emotional and cognitive aspects of school engagement. It is one of the few scales to address engagement as a multifaceted construct based on evidence in the literature.

The scale was validated on a sample of US inner-city, at-risk students in Grades 3, 4 and 5, although it is valid for upper primary and lower secondary schoolchildren. Average mean scores for the validation sample are presented in **Table 10.**

Table 10. Mean SEM-M scores for at-risk children in Fredricks et al (2005)

ENGAGEMENT SCALE	M	SD
Behavioural engagement	4.00	0.76
Emotional engagement	3.76	0.85
Cognitive engagement	3.49	0.79

Data Analysis

Data from participants' questionnaires was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics Version 24. Multiple t-tests were conducted to test for significant differences between Film Club participants at Time 1 compared with Time 2, and differences between Film Club participants at Time 2 and the control group (also at Time 2), on the DAP, SDQ and SEM-M. Unfortunately, the small sample size limited the statistical power of these analyses.

Thematic analysis was conducted to identify key themes within the verbatim transcripts of the semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis allowed for a deeper exploration of repeated spoken patterns within and across transcripts, which in turn provided some insight into individuals' experiences within Film Club. It is acknowledged that there is a degree of interpretation within thematic analysis, and so this study was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach, which explores and develops themes in a deliberate and systematic manner using inductive reasoning. The six steps followed for the thematic analysis of the Film Club interviews are summarised below:

1. The researchers familiarised themselves with the transcripts, and initial thoughts were noted.
2. Initial codes were generated from close examination of the raw data, where certain quotes were grouped and highlighted as interesting elements.
3. Further meaning was extracted and interpreted through grouping codes using NVivo.
4. Refinement of these themes occurred so there was coherence between them. A thematic map was used to help in fitting the data set.
5. Final themes were defined and named, and a detailed analysis was written outlining each theme, including its scope, content and its representation within the broader narrative.
6. The presentation of a case in answer to the research questions was made through a full write-up, including illustrative excerpts attached to outlined themes (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Limitations

It is important to note that this study was limited to one specific extracurricular program, and was further limited to the specific implementation of Film Club at St Joseph's Primary School. This means that the researchers worked within a single, shared sociocultural timepoint, which limits the scope of any longer-term implication of the conclusions. The study did not involve a follow-up assessment of children involved in Film Club after their completion of Film Club. Nor did it interview or survey children who attended Film Club and dropped out, or interview those who had not chosen to participate in Film Club. These are appropriate activities for future research.

There were a number of challenges related to the quantitative evaluation of Film Club, including multiple changes in attendance during each term. The fluid approach taken by facilitators meant that young people were able to spend time in Film Club deciding if it met their interests and needs, and attendance rates fluctuated across terms. For the purpose of evaluating the overall impact of Film Club, participants were included in the evaluation only if they had attended over 75 per cent of Film Club sessions. Thus, a small number of participants were available for data collection. After 2017, evaluation focused on qualitative means of data gathering.

In 2018, none of the St Joseph's parents volunteered to let their (non-Film-Club-attending) children participate in the control group. The school was very supportive of the overall Film Club evaluation in terms of allowing access to the children and sending home printed materials, but acknowledged that the parents were not likely to respond. Thus, surveys for only the Film Club participants were completed.

In 2019, school enrolment had dropped and the Film Club facilitators indicated that, again, a control group for comparison would not be feasible. Further, the small sample size (fewer than 10 children) made it difficult to measure changes. For these reasons, the 2019 evaluation focused on qualitative methods. Due to the demographic diversity, small sample size and the dynamic nature of Film Club itself, semi-structured interviews were considered to be the most effective methodology. Giving the young participants a voice through the interviews was also more in line with the child-centred approach taken in Film Club.

Another change in the focus of evaluation was to look exclusively at children in Grades 5 and 6, and not include those in Grades 7 and 8. The reason for this was that, in 2017 and 2018, there were minimal numbers of Grade 7 and Grade 8 students involved in Film Club and their participation was inconsistent. In 2019, only children in Grades 5 and 6 were participants in Film Club. In 2019, plans were made to conduct a case study with one Grade 7 participant who had been in Film Club in both Grade 5 and Grade 6 to learn about their perspective of the impact of Film Club a year later. However, several interviews scheduled with the participant were cancelled and subsequent communication about rescheduling went unanswered, so this element of the evaluation was dropped.

Polyglot Theatre facilitators found it difficult to recruit new participants from Grades 7 and 8 in local schools, and participants from St Joseph's Primary School who were involved in Grade 5 and/or Grade 6 found it difficult to stay involved once they left primary school. Some possible reasons for this difficulty included travel to St Joseph's Primary School (where Film Club took place) from their new schools, opportunities with other afterschool activities, family responsibilities and other motivations.

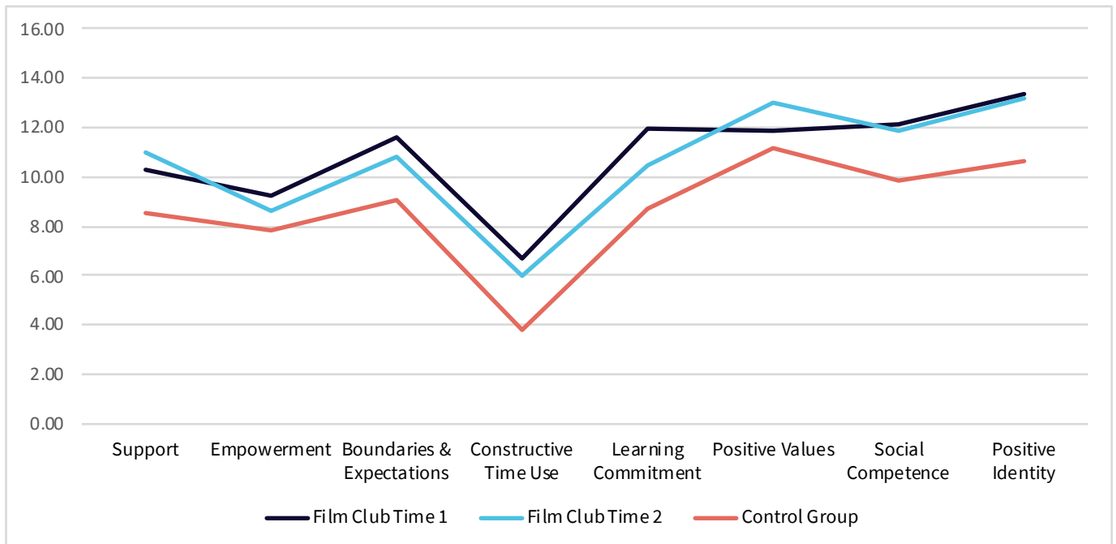
APPENDIX B: DETAILED QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

This appendix provides more-detailed information on the quantitative outcomes of the 2017 survey of nine Film Club participants and nine students (as a control group) from the same school as the participants.

Developmental Assets Profile

Figure 6 provides the mean scores for young people in this survey. All mean scores were within the challenged range, for both Film Club participants and the control group. No student recorded a score of 16 or over, which reflects the vulnerable status of the children at St Joseph's Primary School. At both time points, Film Club participants reported higher mean scores than the control group (whose scores were measured at Time 2). It should be noted that the pre-program survey was taken after students had enrolled and started attending Film Club, and it is possible that this initial time in Film Club may have provided these children with 'instant' resources that increased their scores. It is also possible that more highly functioning children had chosen to attend Film Club.

Figure 6. DAP Profiles for 2017 students



Mean scores were compared across time for all DAP subscales, and the total score for Film Club participants. Mean score changes are presented in **Table 11**; no changes are statistically significant.

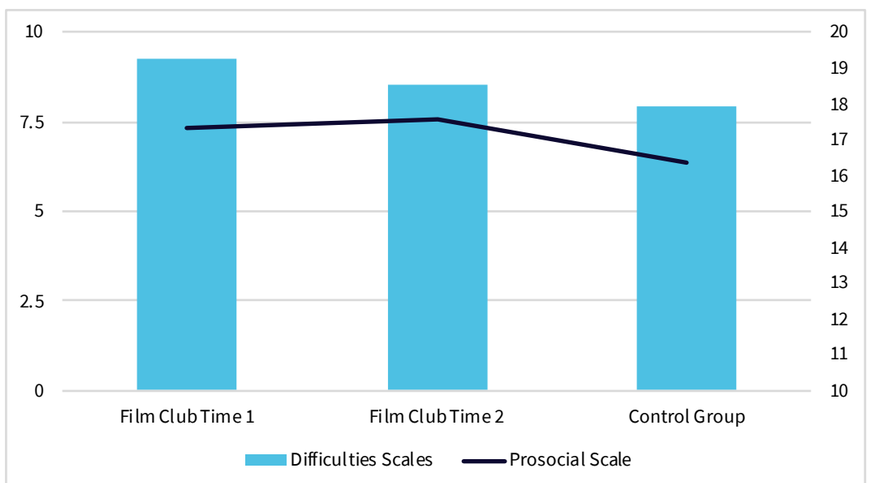
Table 11. DAP Profile changes for Film Club 2017

VARIABLE	MEAN CHANGE	STANDARD DEVIATION	*t*	SIG
DAP Total score	0.29	1.39	.623	.551
Support	–0.76	2.17	–1.058	.321
Empowerment	0.58	4.95	.354	.732
Boundaries & Expectations	0.78	2.37	.982	.355
Constructive use of time	0.73	3.94	.555	.594
Commitment to learning	1.51	2.33	1.953	.087
Positive values	–1.10	2.58	–1.279	.237
Social competence	0.28	2.11	.397	.702
Positive identity	0.30	2.05	.433	.676

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Mean scores for the SDQ are shown in **Figure 7**. The mean score for Film Club participants reduced from pre-program (Time 1) to post-program (Time 2), although the difference is not statistically significant ($t(8) = 0.235$, $p = .820$). The post-program mean score for Film Club participants was similar to the score of the control group of children at the same primary school who did not attend Film Club ($t(15) = 0.426$, $p = .669$). The control group completed the SDQ at Time 2. All scores (pre-program, post-program and the control group) fell into the borderline category, indicating that these children are an at-risk group.

Figure 7. Mean SDQ scores (2017 data)



The mean prosocial score for Film Club participants showed a statistically non-significant increase over time ($t(8) = –0.347$, $p = .738$). Film Club participants started at a (statistically) non-significantly higher level of prosocial behaviour ($t(15) = 0.987$, $p = .339$) than the control group students.

School Engagement Measure–Macarthur (SEM-M)

The mean scores on all School Engagement Measure subscales for students are shown in **Figure 8**. Scores for Film Club students improved across their time in the program. It is interesting to note that initial scores for Film Club participants (Time 1) were generally higher than those for the control group (who completed the SEM-M at Time 2), indicating that Film Club participants had a comparatively higher level of school engagement to begin with. However and possibly due to the small changes and the sample size, these changes were not statistically significant. See **Table 12**.

Figure 8. Mean SEM-M scale scores (2017 data)

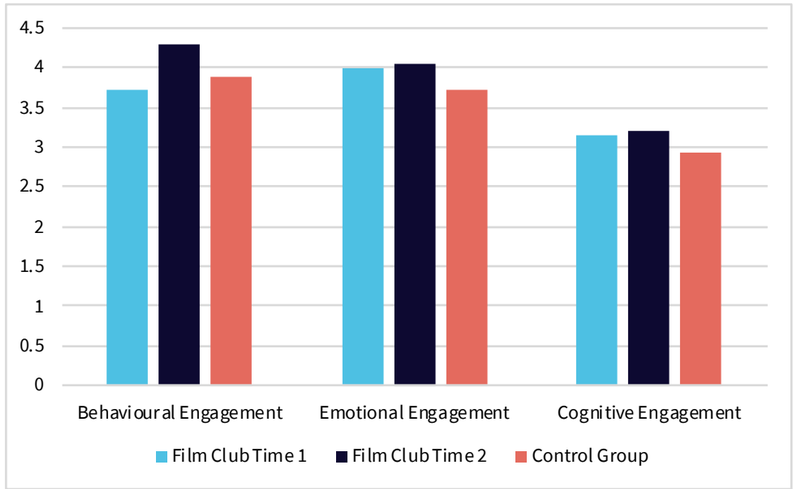


Table 12. Change in scores on SEM-M (2017 film club students)

VARIABLE	MEAN CHANGE	SD	t	SIG
Behavioural engagement	0.56	1.05	1.59	.152
Emotional engagement	0.06	1.27	0.15	.886
Cognitive engagement	0.44	0.70	0.19	.855

Photo credit: Polyglot Theatre

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