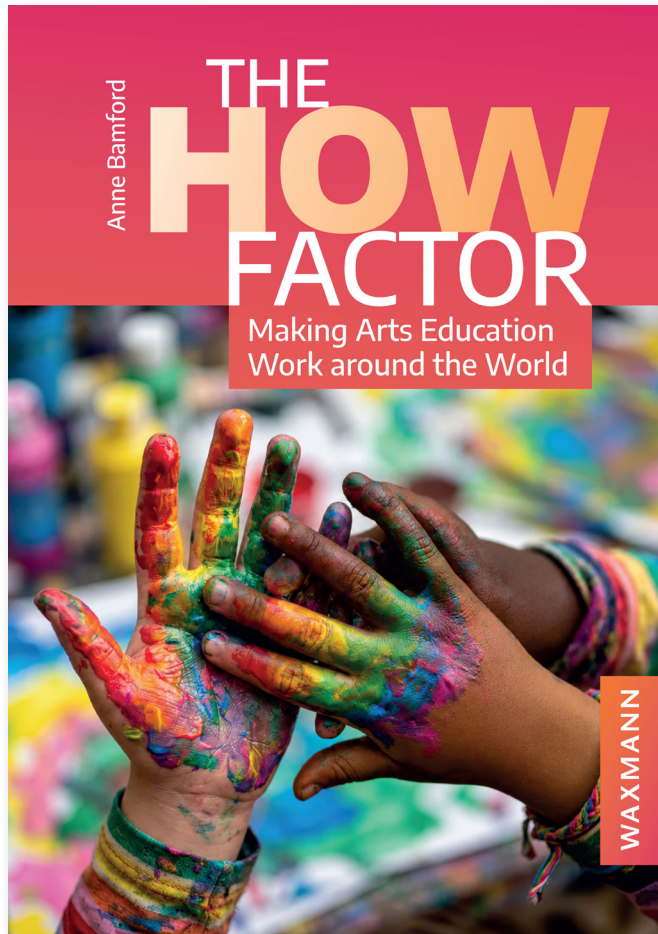




Anne Bamford

**The How
Factor**
Making Arts Education
Work around
the World

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Preface



WAXMANN

Steinfurter Str. 555
48159 Münster
Germany

Fon +49 (0) 2 51 – 2 65 04-0
Fax +49 (0) 2 51 – 2 65 04-26

info@waxmann.com
www.waxmann.com

Preface

UNESCO has been a leading force in development of policy initiatives in arts education and culture. In 1999, the Director General of UNESCO asked all stakeholders in the field of arts and cultural education to do what is necessary to ensure that the teaching of the arts gains a special place in the education of every child, from nursery school to the last year of secondary school (UNESCO, 1999). This was followed by a world conference in Lisbon in 2006 to mark the international collaboration between UNESCO and its partners in the field of arts education. The conference affirmed the need to establish the importance of arts education in all societies and provided the impetus for the *UNESCO Road Map for Arts Education* (UNESCO, 2006). The Road Map aimed to provide advocacy and guidance for strengthening arts education by asserting that arts education serves to uphold the human right to education and cultural participation; develop individual capabilities, improve the quality of education, and promote the expression of cultural diversity. The Road Map made a number of recommendations divided into three groups based on the responsible bodies charged with implementing the recommendations – namely educators, parents and artists in the first group, government ministries and policymakers in the second group, and UNESCO and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in the third group. In total there were more than 80 recommendations covering areas such as advocacy, support structures, partnerships, cooperation, implementation, evaluation, research and knowledge-sharing, recognition and valuing, policy development, and training and support for teachers, schools and artists. The Road Map was the result of extensive research and consultation, and the recommendations (although perhaps too numerous) were clear, practical and meaningful.

The Road Map was followed by a major global meeting held in 2010 in Seoul in South Korea. This meeting was aimed at, amongst other things, developing a way for the global community to monitor progress against the Lisbon Road Map. *The Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education* is the document that resulted from the Second World Conference on Arts Education in Seoul in 2010. The Seoul Agenda serves as the foundation for efforts in arts education. Building on the work of the Lisbon Road Map, the Seoul Agenda identified three overarching goals for arts education, namely: GOAL 1: Ensuring that arts education is accessible as a fundamental and sustainable component of a high quality renewal of education; GOAL 2: Assuring that arts education activities and programmes are of a high quality in conception and delivery; and, GOAL 3: The impact of arts education in that it is possible to apply arts education principles and practices to contribute to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing today's societies. Under each of the three commendable and core goals, there were 13 strategic aims that were highlighted. Under each strategic aim there were a total of 39 clearly identified actions.

In 2025, *Mondiacult 2025*, the *UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development*, was held in Barcelona, Spain. Its overall aim was to establish a global agenda for culture and follow-up on the *Mondiacult Declaration* from 2022. The conference examined a range of themes including cultural rights, digital technologies, culture and education, the economy of culture, culture and climate action, and culture for peace. Specifically, Mondiacult 2025 declared that arts education is central to cultural rights and called for the full integration of arts education across formal, non-formal and

informal learning. It underlined the importance of ensuring equitable access for all people and at all ages. It pointed to the far-reaching impacts of high-quality arts education including as a driver for sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, digital and green transitions, and in shaping creative, peaceful and resilient societies.

In 2004 and 2005 I had the pleasure to conduct a global review of the state of arts education. This resulted in the book *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education* (Bamford, 2006). The title of the “wow” factor came from a quote from a teacher, who explained that the arts often give ‘the wow factor’ in the classroom and in the learning of children. So, what is the wow factor? Firstly, it is intangible – but you can absolutely feel it when it occurs in a child’s learning. Surprise elements are without doubt one of the most effective ways to generate the “wow.” Experiencing something new and enjoyable remains with you as a memory and a “wow” factor. Similarly, significant experiences can also be the “wow factor”, especially when something affects us personally and touches us in a way that enriches our lives or stirs our emotions.

The energy generated around *The Wow Factor* (both the book and the feeling!) informed a number of processes at the time and subsequently. These included many countries examining in depth what was happening in arts education in their countries and in many cases making significant and positive reforms. These detailed country studies evidenced the power of culture and arts education to lead educational improvement and reform. It showed that for positive impacts to occur, arts education must be systematic, comprehensive and high-quality. This requires a conducive environment for implementation.

Reflections on the approaches to arts and cultural education is not new. In the field, there exists a significant history of debates, theoretical contributions, research evidence, and experience. The biggest problem seems to be the transposition of policies into practice. The role of the arts in education has been a permanent issue since the beginning of public schooling. For many years there has been a substantial and purposeful drive to bring more, high-quality art education both into the formal (compulsory) school and into the community and ‘informal’ learning contexts. This is a lifelong undertaking, starting with babies and young children and continuing to occur throughout life – and even into end-of-life situations.

In particular, I wanted to know what had happened around the world to arts education over the last 20 years. To capture this, *The How Factor* is divided into two halves. The first half is where we are now. Where have things gone better and where have they not improved or even declined over the past 20 years? *The How Factor* also extends the work of *The Wow Factor* by looking at many more countries and nations.

The second half of the book focuses explicitly on *how* in terms of the steps and actions that can occur to ensure every child has a wonderful experience of the arts and culture. It can be used by anyone interested in arts and culture and is applicable everywhere. *The How Factor* is filled with short case studies and multiple examples to learn from and adapt to your context. It is supremely practical and can be applied in local contexts and across a range of learning areas. You can read the book from cover to cover, or you can dip in and out of sections as your needs dictate. Play with the ideas in the book, reflect on some of the challenges raised and the relevance to you. Dig deeper if you want by hunting out the examples mentioned or by connecting to the many wonderful practices described.

It is hoped that this book can be used as a guide, a context, a challenge, and an inspiration for arts education. The case studies presented are varied, including by country and region, but also by different types of programmes, operating at different scales, linking to different art forms, and showing examples of integrated practices. At the end of each chapter there are links to projects and resources mentioned in that chapter so that you can delve into these in more detail as they are relevant for your context. The case studies also cover a range of different funding and resourcing models which should help to provide ideas to the most commonly cited challenge of not having enough money, resources and expertise. I do not believe in the notion of *best practice* as we can always learn and improve, but the case studies can connect you to locally relevant examples of '*next practice*.' 'Next practice' is less about perfectionism and more about activism (making you active) and experimentation. You, as a reader, can see into the world of arts education through the examples shared in this book. In taking this approach, I was recalling the words of the renowned arts educator, Elliot Eisner, when he was chatting to me more than 20 years ago: While driving in Sydney, Australia, he said, "The walls of a classroom have no mirrors, other than the mirrors in children's eyes. These mirrors are tiny and so often wonderful practices are neither revealed nor communicated." True communication is different from information, and it is my sincere hope that you enter into the communication that exists in the many examples shared by amazing arts educators and policy makers from all around the world. Start a conversation... reach out to the people and organisations mentioned. I can assure you, they are wonderful, friendly and enthusiastic people committed to making children's lives and learning. The world is a better place for this generosity of spirit.